



RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

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WEDNESDAY, 22 APRIL 2009

The Legislative Assembly met at 9.30 am.

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

Mr Speaker acknowledged the traditional owners of the land upon which this parliament is assembled and the custodians of the sacred lands of our state.

ASSENT TO BILLS

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

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

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

Date of Assent: 23 February 2009

"A Bill for An Act to amend the Criminal Proceeds Confiscation Act 2002, the Fair Trading Act 1989, the Security Providers Act 1993 and the Trusts Act 1973 for particular purposes"

"A Bill for An Act to facilitate greenhouse gas geological storage and to amend the Aboriginal Land Act 1991, Coastal Protection and Management Act 1995, Dangerous Goods Safety Management Act 2001, Duties Act 2001, Electrical Safety Act 2002, Electricity Act 1994, Environmental Protection Act 1994, Fire and Rescue Service Act 1990, Foreign Ownership of Land Register Act 1988, Forestry Act 1959, Geothermal Exploration Act 2004, Integrated Planning Act 1997, Land Act 1994, Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Act 2002, Land Title Act 1994, Local Government Act 1993, Mineral Resources Act 1989, Nature Conservation Act 1992, Petroleum Act 1923, Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Act 2004, Queensland Competition Authority Act 1997, Queensland Heritage Act 1992, State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971, Survey and Mapping Infrastructure Act 2003, Torres Strait Islander Land Act 1991, Valuation of Land Act 1944, Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008, Whistleblowers Protection Act 1994 and the Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995"

"A Bill for An Act to make provision to allow persons with a disability to be accompanied by guide, hearing and assistance dogs at certain places and for related purposes, and to repeal the Legacy Trust Fund Act 2001"

"A Bill for An Act to amend the Acquisition of Land Act 1967 and the Land Act 1994 for particular purposes and to make consequential amendments to the Integrated Planning Act 1997 and the South Bank Corporation Act 1989"

"A Bill for An Act to protect the existing use of the Milton Brewery"

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

Yours sincerely

Governor

23 February 2009

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 23 February 2009, from Her Excellency the Governor to Mr Speaker advising of assent to bills on 23 February 2009 [\[8\]](#).

COMMISSION TO ADMINISTER OATH OR AFFIRMATION

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have to report that Her Excellency the Governor has been pleased to issue a commission under the public seal of the state authorising me to administer the oath or affirmation of allegiance to such members as might hereafter present themselves to be sworn. I now ask the Clerk to read the commission to the House.

The Clerk read the following commission—

Queensland

Constitution of Queensland 2001

To the Honourable REGINALD JOHN MICKEL, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland.

I, PENELOPE WENSLEY, Governor, acting under section 22 of the *Constitution of Queensland 2001*, authorise you to administer to any member of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland the Oath or Affirmation of Allegiance and of Office that is required to be taken or made by every member before the member is permitted to sit or vote in the Legislative Assembly.

(Sgd)

Signed and sealed with the Public Seal of the State on 21 April 2009.

By Command

(Sgd)

A Bligh

RECORDED in the Register of Patents, No. 47, page 150, on 21 April 2009

Tabled paper: Commission under the Public Seal of the State, dated 21 April 2009, authorising Reginald John Mickel to administer to any member the oath or affirmation [\[9\]](#).

GOVERNOR'S OPENING SPEECH

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have to report that Her Excellency the Governor on Tuesday, 21 April 2009 delivered a speech to parliament of which for greater accuracy I have obtained a copy. I now table a copy for the information of honourable members.

Tabled paper: Governor's Speech to the opening of the first session of the 53rd Parliament, dated 21 April 2009 [\[10\]](#).

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

Speaker's Expectations

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have ordered that a statement outlining my expectations at the commencement of this parliament be circulated to all honourable members in the chamber. As outlined in that statement, this will be my preferred method of making rulings and statements. I seek leave to have the statement incorporated in the parliamentary record.

Leave granted.

Honourable Members,

At the first full business day of the 53rd Parliament, I believe it appropriate that I set out my expectations as Speaker and foreshadow procedural changes that I wish to see implemented.

The role of the Speaker

Contrary to the title, I intend to operate the Office of the Speaker in the House on the basis that the less I say the better. That is, I intend to be seen, but not heard from unless necessary.

For this reason, I intend to adopt the practice of circulating Statements and Rulings in the House. Rather than speaking to them, I intend to seek leave to incorporate these Statements and Rulings in the Parliamentary Record.

In terms of order in the House, I do not intend to engage in shouting matches with members or continually call members to order, collectively or individually.

When I desire order in the House, I will rise in my place. At which time I require all members, in accordance with Standing Order 244(3) to fall silent.

Members who do not fall silent when I rise, run the risk of being warned under Standing Orders 252 and 253. In circumstances where a member or members fail to fall silent and their conduct amounts to disregarding the authority of the Chair, I shall not hesitate in naming them under the provisions of Standing Order 254.

Points of Order

A member who wishes to raise a point of order may do so under Standing Order 248. I will give the courtesy of hearing a member's point of order in accordance with Standing Order 249, including hearing other members on valid and substantial points of order.

I expect other members to also hear the point of order, in silence.

However, I will not tolerate obviously frivolous, trivial or disruptive points of order. I will not only dispose of the point of order summarily in such circumstances, but warn the member in accordance with Standing Order 252 or 253.

Furthermore, I would ask all members to keep their opinion on points of order or matters for the Chair to themselves until such time as they are called upon for an opinion. I do not desire and will not appreciate gratuitous procedural interjections from members. Members that do so may also be warned under Standing Order 252 or 253.

I have directed the Clerks at the Table that the clock is to be stopped when a point of order is raised and whilst it is being considered.

Unparliamentary language

I will not tolerate unparliamentary language in this House, whether I am in the Chair or not. I will be instructing all Deputy Speakers acting on my behalf, to be vigilant about language. I have instructed the Clerk and his officers to monitor language throughout the sitting day, bringing incidences of un-parliamentary language not dealt with immediately to my attention for remedy.

Questions on Notice

I have instructed the Clerk and his officers to monitor Questions on Notice to ensure that such questions comply with Standing Orders.

I will be particularly stringent on lengthy preambles, and multi-part questions which are really asking more than one question.

Question Time

Question Time is a very important part of parliamentary democracy. It is where the government of the day is held accountable to the people of Queensland.

Members asking questions are entitled to be heard. Ministers answering questions are also entitled to be heard.

This is, however, a House of robust debate. I will not, therefore, expect total silence in Question Time, nor prevent interjections.

My approach will be simple. If members or Ministers provoke interjections or accept interjections I will not interfere in debate. If a member or Minister cannot speak or be heard because of interjections or if interjections are unprovoked and unwelcome or disruptive, I will rise to my feet.

As noted above, when I rise to my feet, I expect the House to come to order and for members to be silent.

School Tours

I do not intend to disrupt the important first two hours of the sitting by announcing school tours. I will, at the commencement of each day indicate to the House the school groups that will be visiting that morning.

Badges

I endorse rulings made by earlier Speakers regarding the wearing of badges or ribbons for charities etc on special days. Those rulings also forbid the wearing of political badges.

I invite all members to encourage charities to set up displays in the parliamentary annexe on their special days.

Members are free to distribute material on behalf of those charities. My office, will not, however, distribute badges, ribbons or other to the House.

Standing Orders

I believe that this House must, in order to remain relevant, regularly consider changes to its Standing Orders, practice and procedure.

The appropriate vehicle for consideration of changes is the Standing Orders Committee. It is via this Committee that long term appropriate change can be achieved, hopefully in a bipartisan manner.

I have long advocated that this Committee must meet more regularly, and as Chair of the Committee, I intend to call this Committee together more regularly—at least twice a year.

I wish to flag the following matters for consideration of the Committee:

- An opportunity for personal explanations to be given, not just at the commencement of the day, but at other times, such as after Question Time.
- A Standing Order to authorise the Speaker to order the withdrawal of members for one hour, rather than for the entire day.
- A better system for programming business, so that members know at the beginning of the week what business will be considered and how much time will be spent on that business.

Parliament as part of the community

Parliament must not only represent the community of Queensland. We members who represent the community must ensure that we remain an active part of the community. The community needs to know that we are their parliament, not some aloof institution.

I will be seeking to establish a multi-faith service within the next few weeks, to celebrate the commencement of the 53rd Parliament. I will continue to promote engagement with the community, especially those parts of the community that are disadvantaged.

APPOINTMENTS

Deputy Speaker and Chairman of Committees

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.33 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

That Mr Jason O'Brien be appointed Deputy Speaker and Chairman of Committees.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Panel of Temporary Speakers

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, in accordance with standing order 11, I advise that I have appointed the following members to the panel of Temporary Speakers: the honourable member for Bulimba, the honourable member for Keppel, the honourable member for Townsville, the honourable member for Kallangur, the honourable member for Mulgrave, the honourable member for Morayfield, the honourable member for Redcliffe and the honourable member for Ipswich West.

Ministry

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.34 am): I wish to advise the House of ministerial arrangements. I table the details of the gazettal. I seek leave to incorporate the details of the appointments in the *Record of Proceedings*.

Leave granted.

CHANGES IN MINISTRY; APPOINTMENT OF PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARIES; AND ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

Mr Speaker, I wish to inform the House that, on 26 March 2009, in accordance with the Constitution of Queensland 2001, Her Excellency the Governor—

- (a) Accepted the resignations of—
- The Honourable ANNA MARIA BLIGH, as Premier of Queensland;
 - The Honourable PAUL THOMAS LUCAS, as Deputy Premier and Minister for Infrastructure and Planning;
 - The Honourable Robert Evan Schwarten, as Minister for Public Works, Housing and Information and Communication Technology;
 - The Honourable Judith Caroline Spence, as Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Sport;
 - The Honourable Andrew Peter Fraser, as Treasurer;
 - The Honourable Rodney Jon Welford, as Minister for Education and Training Minister for the Arts;
 - The Honourable Stephen Robertson, as Minister for Health;
 - The Honourable Reginald John Mickel, as Minister for Transport, Trade, Employment and Industrial Relations;
 - The Honourable Frederick Warren Pitt, as Minister for Main Roads and Local Government;
 - The Honourable Margaret Majella Keech, as Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Women;
 - The Honourable Desley Carole Boyle, as Minister for Tourism, Regional Development and Industry;
 - The Honourable Timothy Sean Mulherin, as Minister for Primary Industries and Fisheries;
 - The Honourable Geoffrey James Wilson, as Minister for Mines and Energy;
 - The Honourable Kerry Gerard Shine, as Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister Assisting the Premier in Western Queensland;
 - The Honourable Lindel Helena Nelson-Carr, as Minister for Communities, Minister for Disability Services, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Seniors and Youth;
 - The Honourable Craig Andrew Wallace, as Minister for Natural Resources and Water and Minister Assisting the Premier in North Queensland;
 - The Honourable Neil Stuart Roberts, as Minister for Emergency Services; and
 - The Honourable Andrew Ian McNamara, as Minister for Sustainability, Climate Change and Innovation.
- (b) Accepted the resignations of—
- The Honourable Judith Caroline Spence;
 - The Honourable Rodney Jon Welford;
 - The Honourable Reginald John Mickel;
 - The Honourable Frederick Warren Pitt;
 - The Honourable Margaret Majella Keech;
 - The Honourable Kerry Gerard Shine;
 - The Honourable Lindel Helena Nelson-Carr; and
 - The Honourable Andrew Ian McNamara,
- as members of the Executive Council;
- and
- (c) Appointed—
- The Honourable ANNA MARIA BLIGH, to be Premier and Minister for the Arts;
 - The Honourable PAUL THOMAS LUCAS, to be Deputy Premier and Minister for Health;
 - The Honourable Andrew Peter Fraser, to be Treasurer and Minister for Employment and Economic Development;
 - The Honourable Robert Evan Schwarten, to be Minister for Public Works and Information and Communication Technology;
 - The Honourable Stephen Robertson, to be Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy and Minister for Trade;
 - The Honourable Geoffrey James Wilson, to be Minister for Education and Training;

The Honourable Neil Stuart Roberts, to be Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services;

The Honourable Craig Andrew Wallace, to be Minister for Main Roads;

The Honourable Timothy Sean Mulherin, to be Minister for Primary Industries, Fisheries and Rural and Regional Queensland;

The Honourable Desley Carole Boyle, to be Minister for Local Government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships;

The Honourable Stirling James Hinchliffe, to be Minister for Infrastructure and Planning;

The Honourable Rachel Genevieve Nolan, to be Minister for Transport;

The Honourable Peter Joseph Lawlor, to be Minister for Tourism and Fair Trading;

The Honourable Philip Gerard Reeves, to be Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Sport;

The Honourable Karen Lee Struthers, to be Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women;

The Honourable Anastacia Palaszczuk, to be Minister for Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs;

The Honourable Kate Jennifer Jones, to be Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability; and

The Honourable Cameron Robert Dick, to be Attorney-General and Minister for Industrial Relations, and

(d) Also appointed those Ministers to be members of the Executive Council.

I also inform the House that on 2 April 2009, in accordance with the Constitution of Queensland 2001, Her Excellency the Governor, acting by and with the advice of the Executive Council, appointed—

Judith Caroline Spence MP to be Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier and Minister for the Arts.

In addition, on 9 April 2009, in accordance with the same provisions, the Governor in Council appointed—

Murray Patrick Watt MP to be Parliamentary Secretary for Health;

Janice Heather Jarratt MP to be Parliamentary Secretary for Employment and Economic Development;

Michael Wai-Man Choi MP to be Parliamentary Secretary for Natural Resources, Water and Energy and Trade;

Julie Maree Attwood MP to be Parliamentary Secretary for Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs;

Carolyn Therese Male MP to be Parliamentary Secretary for Education;

Peta-Kaye Croft MP to be Parliamentary Secretary for Emergency Services;

Simon David Finn MP to be Parliamentary Secretary for Industrial Relations; and

Stephen Peter Arthur Wettenhall MP to be Parliamentary Secretary for Tourism.

I also inform the House that, in accordance with the Constitution of Queensland 2001, Her Excellency the Governor, acting by and with the advice of the Executive Council, approved:

- on 26 March 2009, Administrative Arrangements Order (No. 1) 2009; and
- on 16 April 2009, Administrative Arrangements Amendment Order (No. 1) 2009.

I lay upon the table of the House copies of the relevant notifications from the Queensland Government Gazette.

Tabled paper: Extraordinary Queensland Government Gazette, dated Thursday, 9 April 2009 [69].

Tabled paper: Extraordinary Queensland Government Gazette, dated Thursday, 26 March 2009 [70].

Leader of the House

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.34 am): I have to inform the House that arrangements have been made, and the honourable Speaker informed accordingly, for Ms Judy Spence, Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier and Minister for the Arts and member for Sunnybank, to be Leader of the House.

Government Whip and Deputy Government Whips

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.35 am): I have to inform the House that Mrs Margaret Keech has been appointed Government Whip and Ms Betty Kiernan and Ms Vicky Darling have been appointed deputy government whips.

Opposition

Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (9.35 am): I seek leave to present the opposition appointments to the House at a later stage.

Leave granted.

MOTION

Sessional Orders

Ms SPENCE (Sunnybank—ALP) (Leader of the House) (9.35 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

That for this session unless otherwise ordered, and notwithstanding anything contained in the standing orders, the sessional orders for the 53rd Parliament circulated in my name be adopted.

SESSIONAL ORDERS—53RD PARLIAMENT (FIRST SESSION)

EFFECTIVE FROM 22 APRIL 2009

Days and Hours of Sitting and Order of Business

1.(a) The House shall sit on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 9.30am until by its own resolution the House adjourns.

(b) The Order of Business for each Sitting Day shall be as follows—

9.30am—10.30am (each day)—

Prayers

Messages from the Governor

Matters concerning privilege

Speaker's Statements

Appointments

Petitions

Notification and tabling of papers by the Clerk

Ministerial Papers

Ministerial Notices of Motion

Ministerial Statements

Any other Government Business

Personal Explanations

Tabling of Reports

Debating of Committee Reports (on each Thursday only)

Notices of Motion (including motions for debate from 5.30pm to 6.30pm on Wednesday)

10.30am—11.30am (each day)—

Question Time

11.30am—12.30pm (Tuesday)—

Matters of Public Interest

12.30pm—1.00pm (Tuesday)—

Government Business

11.30am—12.00pm (Wednesday)—

Private Members' Statements (Leader of the Opposition or nominee having first call)

12.00pm—1.00pm (Wednesday)—

Government Business

11.30am—1.00pm (Thursday)—

Government Business

1.00pm—2.30pm (each day)—

Lunch break

2.30pm—6.30pm (Tuesday)—

Government Business

2.30pm—5.30pm (Wednesday)—

Government Business

5.30pm—6.30pm (Wednesday)—

Private Members' Motion

2.30pm until adjournment moved (Thursday)—

Government Business

6.30pm—7.30pm (Tuesday and Wednesday)—

Dinner break

7.30pm—10.00pm (Tuesday)—

Government Business

7.30pm—10.00pm (Wednesday)—

Disallowance Motions, Private Members' Bills or Government Business (in accordance with Sessional Order 1(c))

- (c) On a Wednesday after debate of Private Members' Motion—
- (i) if there are no Disallowance Motions or Private Members Bills to debate (in accordance with the requirements of Standing Order 59 or Sessional Order 3), the adjournment may be either moved immediately or otherwise the House will break for dinner between 6.30pm and 7.30pm and then commence with Government Business until 10.00pm when the adjournment will be moved;
 - (ii) if there are Disallowance Motions or Private Members Bills to debate (in accordance with the requirements of Standing Order 59 or Sessional Order 3), the House will break for dinner between 6.30pm and 7.30pm and then commence with Disallowance Motions, Private Members' Bills or Government Business until 10.00pm when the adjournment will be moved.
- (d) The motion "That the House do now adjourn" may only be moved by the Member occupying the position of Leader or Acting Leader of the House in the House.
- (e) As soon as the motion in (d) is moved, there will be an Adjournment Debate for 30 minutes and then the question shall be put.
- (f) The motion "That the House do now adjourn" may be moved by the Leader or Acting Leader of the House at any time despite the order of business.
- (g) If the House sits on any day other than a Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday, then unless otherwise ordered, the order of business shall be as follows:

From 9.30am to 10.30 am—

Prayers
 Messages from the Governor
 Matters concerning privilege
 Speaker's Statements
 Petitions
 Notification and tabling of papers by the Clerk
 Ministerial Papers
 Ministerial Notices of Motion
 Ministerial Statements
 Any other Government Business
 Personal Explanations
 Tabling of Reports
 Notices of Motion
 Question Time (for remaining time until 10.30 am)

10.30am—1.00pm—

Government Business

1.00pm—2.30pm—

Lunch break

2.30pm—until Adjournment moved—

Government Business

Debate of Parliamentary committee reports

- 2.(1) On tabling a committee report or, where a committee report is tabled when the House is not sitting, on the next sitting day, the member tabling the report may give notice of motion that the House take note of the report.
- (2) Debate of motions that the House take note of committee reports may be moved and debated without amendment on each Thursday following Tabling of Reports in the order in which the notice of motion was given.
- (3) A debate of a motion in (2) not completed may be adjourned to the following Thursday.
- (4) A motion in (2) cannot be amended.

Private Members' Bills

- 3.(1) A member who is not a Minister may introduce a Bill during time set aside in the Order of Business for Private Members' Statements. In such a case the Member introducing the Bill may either:
 - (a) speak on the Bill for the time allotted each member (two minutes) and then incorporate the remainder of their second reading speech, so long as the speech has been shown to the Speaker in accordance with Standing Order 25(2); or
 - (b) speak for a maximum of 15 minutes, in which case any time spoken in excess of the time normally allotted (two minutes) shall:
 - in the case of a non-Government Member, be deducted from the time normally allocated to non-Government Members in the total time allocated for Private Members' Statements; or
 - in the case of a Government Member, be deducted from the time normally allocated to Government Members in the total time allocated for Private Members' Statements;
 - (c) speak for any time remaining for:
 - in the case of a non-Government Member, the time normally allocated to non-Government Members in the total time allocated for Private Members' Statements; or
 - in the case of a Government Member, the time normally allocated to Government Members in the total time allocated for Private Members' Statements.
- (2) If a Bill introduced by a member who is not a Minister has laid upon the Table of the House for a period exceeding ninety days and has not passed all stages, that Bill will be brought on for debate on the following sitting Wednesday evening.

- (3) The House will continue to debate the Bill on each following sitting Wednesday evening until consideration of that Bill has been finalised.

Condolence Motions

- 4.(1) A motion of condolence may be moved as the first item of business after Speaker's Statements in the Order of Business.
- (2) If a motion of condolence is moved in accordance with (1), the debate on such motion will last no more than one hour, after which time the question shall be put.
- (3) After a motion of condolence is moved, debated and resolved in accordance with (1) and (2), the Order of Business for the day shall then resume, with Question Time commencing one hour after the motion of condolence was resolved and with starting times for all other items, except lunch and dinner breaks, in the Order of Business adjusting accordingly.

Maximum time limits for debates, speeches and statements

5. The maximum time limits that apply to debates, speeches and statements are contained in the schedule below.

Subject	Relevant Standing or Sessional Orders	Time
Election of Speaker—each member	SO 39	5 minutes
Private Members' Statements—each member	Sessional Order 1	2 minutes
Debating of Committee Reports—each member	Sessional Order 1	3 minutes
Tabling of Reports—member tabling report	Sessional Order 1	2 minutes
Tabling of Reports—Chairperson of Committee on presentation of committee report	Sessional Order 1 & 2	5 minutes
Personal Explanations—each member	Sessional Order 1	At discretion of Speaker
Matters concerning privilege	Sessional Order 1 & SO 248 & 267	At discretion of Speaker
Questions Without Notice		
—Question time (total time)	Sessional Order 1 & SO 113	1 hour Time remaining until 10.30 am
—Member asking question	Sessional Order 1 & SO 113	At discretion of Speaker
—Minister answering question	Sessional Order 1 & SO 113	3 minutes
Matters of Public Interest		
—Total time	Sessional Order 1	1 hour
—Leader of Opposition or nominee	Sessional Order 1	10 minutes
—Other Members	Sessional Order 1	5 minutes
Adjournment debate		
—Total time	SO 56 & Sessional Order 1	30 minutes
—Each member	SO 56 & Sessional Order 1	3 minutes
Private Members' Motions (Wednesday 5.30—6.30 pm)		
—Total time	Sessional Order 1	1 hour
—Mover	Sessional Order 1	10 minutes
—Other member	Sessional Order 1	5 minutes
Dissent to ruling of Speaker		
—Total time	SO 250	1 hour
—Each member	SO 250	10 minutes
Disallowance of statutory instruments		
—Total time	SO 59	2 hours
—Mover	SO 59	15 minutes
—Other member	SO 59	10 minutes
—Minister in reply	SO 59	20 minutes
Motions		
—Mover	Chapter 15	20 minutes
—Other members	Chapter 15	20 minutes
—Mover in reply	Chapter 15	30 minutes

Bills (Private Members) Second reading debate	Sessional Order 1 & 3	
—Mover	Sessional Order 1 & 3	1 hour
—Other Members	Sessional Order 1 & 3	10 minutes
—Mover in reply	Sessional Order 1 & 3	30 minutes
Consideration in Detail		
—Mover	Sessional Order 1 & 3	no limit
—Minister responsible for policy area (on each question)	Sessional Order 1 & 3	1 x 20 minutes; or 2 x 10 minutes; or 1 x 10 minutes and 2 x 5 minutes
—Other Members (on each question)	Sessional Order 1 & 3	1 x 10 minutes or 2 x 5 minutes
Bills (Government) Second reading debate		
—Mover (Minister)	SO 128(5)	1 hour
—Leader of the Opposition (or nominee)	SO 131	1 hour
—Other Members	SO 131	20 minutes
—Mover in reply	SO 131	30 minutes
Consideration in Detail		
—Mover (Minister)	SO 139	no limit
—Leader of the Opposition (or nominee) (on each question)	SO 139	1 x 20 minutes; or 2 x 10 minutes; or 1 x 10 minutes and 2 x 5 minutes
—Other Members (on each question)		1 x 10 minutes or 2 x 5 minutes
Address in Reply Debate		
—Total time	SO 47	28 hours
—Mover	SO 47	20 minutes
—Other members	SO 47	20 minutes
—Mover in reply	SO 47	30 minutes

Dress standards

6. Dress standards in the parliamentary chamber should be appropriate to the Queensland climate and reflect general community standards. All members and staff are expected to dress in business attire. Male members and staff may wear a long-sleeve business shirt and tie or coat and long-sleeve business shirt without tie.

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.36 am): I second the motion moved by the Leader of the House.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

PETITIONS

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

Cooktown, Review of Fisheries Entitlements

Mr O'Brien, 2 petitions, 18 and 984, from 1,002 petitioners in total, requesting the House to review the current commercial fisheries entitlements of commercial net operators in the Cooktown area. [11, 12]

Manly Boat Harbour, Coast Guard Pontoon

Mr Lucas, from 399 petitioners, requesting the House to expedite negotiations with the lease holder of the Coast Guard pontoon at Manly Boat Harbour and the Port of Brisbane Corporation so that facilities can be upgraded to accommodate the demand for services provided by Sailability Bayside [13].

Traveston Dam

Mr Gibson, from 1,823 petitioners, requesting the House to abandon plans for the Traveston Dam [14].

Woolooga-Cooroy South, Powerlink

Mr Wellington, from 132 petitioners, requesting the House to implement policies which support an alternative to Powerlink's proposed Woolooga to South Cooroy Transmission Line and Substation Project; and support initiatives that ensure a sustainable future for all Sunshine Coast residents, flora and fauna [16].

Gold Coast Hospital

Mr Stevens, a paper petition from 1,332 petitioners, and an e-petition from 562 petitioners, requesting the House to assure the people of the Gold Coast that the Southport campus of the Gold Coast Hospital will be retained as a substantial acute medical and surgical in-patient and out-patient facility for public usage in addition to the new Gold Coast University Hospital after the new hospital is completed in 2012 [15, 17].

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

Redcliffe Hospital

Mr Langbroek, from 146 petitioners, requesting the House to urgently increase funding and local services at Redcliffe Hospital [18].

Alexandra Headland, Proposed Highway

Ms Simpson, from 722 petitioners, requesting the House to oppose the proposal for a six-lane highway through Alexandra Headland [19].

Schools, Education Inquiry

Mr Pitt, from 288 petitioners, requesting the House to initiate an inquiry into school education [20].

Royal Children's Hospital

Mr McArdle, from 10,759 petitioners, requesting the House to protect and enhance facilities at the Royal Children's Hospital and consider more carefully the decision to close the Hospital [21].

Ormeau, LORDS School

Mr Langbroek, from 125 petitioners, requesting the House to honour Premier Bligh's commitment of 2006 to approve the establishment of LORDS School in Ormeau [22].

Bimblebox Nature Refuge

Mr Lee, from 655 petitioners, requesting the House to protect the Bimblebox Nature Refuge, along with all nature refuges, from future mining activities [23].

Fuel Subsidy Scheme

Ms Simpson, from 314 petitioners, requesting the House to retain the current Fuel Subsidy system paid directly to service stations, which then pass it on to motorists [24].

Adoption Laws

Mr Dempsey, from 229 petitioners, requesting the House to implement adoption legislation based on the findings of the Adoption Consultation Feedback Report [25].

Bundaberg, Driver Training Course

Mr Dempsey, from 229 petitioners, requesting the House to support the construction and operation of a specialised course in Bundaberg for training in the operation of motorcycles and motor vehicles [26].

Licensed Venues, Restrictions on Use of Glass

Ms Barry, from 189 petitioners, requesting the House to require licensed venues to restrict the use of glass after the hour of 10:00 pm [27].

Petitions received.

TABLED PAPERS

PAPERS TABLED DURING THE 52ND PARLIAMENT

The Clerk informed the House that the following papers, received after the last sitting day of the 52nd Parliament on 12 February 2009, and prior to the dissolution of the 52nd Parliament on 23 February 2009, were tabled on the dates indicated—

16 February 2009—

[5134](#) Response from the Minister for Mines and Energy (Mr Wilson) to a paper petition (1172-08) presented by Mr Wellington from 342 petitioners regarding the proposed Powerlink Woolooga to Cooroy South transmission line and substation project

17 February 2009—

[5135](#) Response from the Minister for Mines and Energy (Mr Wilson) to a paper petition (1158-08) presented by Mr Wellington from 260 petitioners regarding the proposed Powerlink Woolooga to Cooroy South transmission line and substation project

[5136](#) Response from the Minister for Mines and Energy (Mr Wilson) to a paper petition (1159-08) presented by Mr Wellington from 305 petitioners regarding the proposed Powerlink Woolooga to Cooroy South transmission line and substation project

[5137](#) Response from the Minister for Mines and Energy (Mr Wilson) to a paper petition (1169-08) presented by Mr Wellington from 269 petitioners regarding high voltage power lines proposed by Powerlink

19 February 2009—

- [5138](#) Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions—Annual Report 2007-08
- [5139](#) District Court of Queensland—Annual Report 2007-08
- [5140](#) Supreme Court of Queensland—Annual Report 2007-08
- [5141](#) Magistrates Court of Queensland—Annual Report 2007-08
- [5142](#) Letter, dated 18 February 2009, from the Premier (Ms Bligh) to the Clerk of the Parliament enclosing from the Commonwealth Parliament's Joint Standing Committee on Treaties the National Interest Analyses from proposed international treaty actions tabled in both houses of Federal Parliament on 26 November 2008 and 3 December 2008

20 February 2009—

- [5143](#) Budget 2008-09: Economic and Fiscal Update, dated 20 February 2009
- [5144](#) Mount Isa Water—Annual Report 2007-08
- [5145](#) Mount Isa Water—Annual Report 2007-08: Late tabling statement from the Minister for Natural Resources and Water and Minister Assisting the Premier in North Queensland (Mr Wallace)

PAPERS TABLED PRIOR TO THE CONSTITUTION OF THE 53RD PARLIAMENT

The Clerk informed the House that the following papers, received after the dissolution of the 52nd Parliament of Queensland on 23 February 2009 and prior to the constitution of the 53rd Parliament on 21 April 2009, were tabled on the dates indicated—

20 April 2009—

- [1](#) Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee: Report No. 79—Three Year Review of the Crime and Misconduct Commission
- [2](#) Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee: Report No. 79—Three Year Review of the Crime and Misconduct Commission: Submission from Crime and Misconduct Commission, 2 December 2008
- [3](#) Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee: Report No. 79—Three Year Review of the Crime and Misconduct Commission: Submission from the Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Commissioner, dated 24 February 2009

PAPERS TABLED BY THE CLERK

The following papers, received on the dates indicated after the dissolution of the 52nd Parliament of Queensland on 23 February 2009 and before the constitution of the 53rd Parliament on 21 April 2009, were tabled by the Clerk—

23 February 2009—

- [28](#) Proclamation (Dissolution of Parliament) dated 23 February 2009

3 March 2009—

- [29](#) Response from the Minister for Education (Mr Welford) to a paper petition (1197-09) presented by Mrs Sullivan from 123 petitioners regarding a kindergarten/community centre for Beachmere

5 March 2009—

- [30](#) Quarterly Report to the Minister for Transport, Trade, Employment and Industrial Relations (1 October to 31 December 2008)—Activities carried out by the Queensland Workplace Rights Office

9 March 2009—

- [31](#) Public Accounts Committee: Interim Government Response, dated 5 March 2009, from the Minister for Education and Training Minister for the Arts (Mr Welford) to Report No. 81 titled 'Review of the Auditor-General Report 7 for 2007—Addressing Skills Shortages in Queensland'
- [32](#) Public Works Committee: Interim Government Response, dated 5 March 2009, from the Minister for Education and Training Minister for the Arts (Mr Welford) to Report No. 100 titled 'Prep School Year Capital Works Program'

10 March 2009—

- [33](#) Response from the Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Sport (Ms Spence) to a paper petition (1134-08) presented by Mrs Menkens from 2835 petitioners requesting support for the Burdekin Community Action Group Against Crime

1 April 2009—

- [34](#) Response from the Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Women (Ms Keech) to an ePetition (1059-08) sponsored by Mr Dempsey from 212 petitioners requesting the inclusion of section 39 of the Adoption of Children Act 1964 in the current review of Queensland's adoption law

3 April 2009—

- [35](#) Response from the Minister for Public Works and Information and Communication Technology (Mr Schwarten) to an ePetition (1160-08) sponsored by Ms Boyle from 313 petitioners requesting support for a fair and equitable renegotiation of the Cairns Taipans lease agreement at the Cairns Convention Centre

8 April 2009—

- [36](#) Response from the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy and Minister for Trade (Mr Robertson) to a paper petition (1198-09) presented by Mr Pearce from 77 petitioners regarding the decision to discontinue the telephone services at the Riverslea gauging station on the Fitzroy River and the failure to consult with users of the service

15 April 2009—

- [37](#) Document from the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy and Minister for Trade (Mr Robertson) titled 'List of service providers without a registered drought management plan or exemption as at 1 January 2009'

16 April 2009—

- [38](#) Response from the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy and Minister for Trade (Mr Robertson) to an ePetition (1074-08) sponsored by Ms Male from 5553 petitioners requesting that no mining applications be granted on any part of the Steve Irwin Wildlife Reserve

20 April 2009—

- [96](#) Report by the Deputy Premier and former Minister for Infrastructure and Planning (Mr Lucas), pursuant to s3.6.9 of the Integrated Planning Act 1997, in relation to the Ministerial Call In of a development application by PDI (Qld) Pty Ltd—Main Street, Anderson Street, Holman Street and Wharf Street, Yungaba, Kangaroo Point

REPORT TABLED BY THE CLERK

The following report was tabled by the Clerk—

- [39](#) Report pursuant to Standing Order 158 (Clerical errors or formal changes to any bill) detailing amendments to certain Bills, made by the Clerk, prior to assent by Her Excellency the Governor, viz—

Planning (Urban Encroachment-Milton Brewery) Bill 2008

Amendments made to Bill

Short title and consequential references to short title—

Omit—

'Planning (Urban Encroachment-Milton Brewery) Act 2008'

Insert—

'Planning (Urban Encroachment-Milton Brewery) Act 2009'.

Criminal Proceeds Confiscation and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2008

Amendments made to Bill

Short title and consequential references to short title—

Omit—

'Criminal Proceeds Confiscation and Other Acts Amendment Act 2008'

Insert—

'Criminal Proceeds Confiscation and Other Acts Amendment Act 2009'.

Greenhouse Gas Storage Bill 2008

Amendments made to Bill

Short title and consequential references to short title—

Omit—

'Greenhouse Gas Storage Act 2008'

Insert—

'Greenhouse Gas Storage Act 2009'.

Guide, Hearing and Assistance Dogs Bill 2008

Amendments made to Bill

Short title and consequential references to short title—

Omit—

'Guide, Hearing and Assistance Dogs Act 2008'

Insert—

'Guide, Hearing and Assistance Dogs Act 2009'.

Acquisition of Land and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2008

Amendments made to Bill

Short title and consequential references to short title—

Omit—

'Acquisition of Land and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2008'

Insert—

'Acquisition of Land and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2009'.

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

The following statutory instruments were tabled by the Clerk—

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

- [40](#) Contract Cleaning Industry (Portable Long Service Leave) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2009, No. 11

Energy Ombudsman Act 2006—

- [41](#) Energy Ombudsman Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2009, No. 12

Superannuation (State Public Sector) Act 1990—

- [42](#) Superannuation (State Public Sector) Amendment of Deed Regulation (No. 1) 2009, No. 13

Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act 2003—

[43](#) Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2009, No. 14

Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act 2003—

[44](#) Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2009, No. 14-Explanatory Notes

Nature Conservation Act 1992—

[45](#) Nature Conservation (Protected Areas Management) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2009, No. 15

Forestry Act 1959, Nature Conservation Act 1992—

[46](#) Forestry and Nature Conservation Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2009, No. 16

Building Act 1975, Integrated Planning Act 1997, Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002—

[47](#) Building and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2009, No. 17

Mental Health Act 2000—

[48](#) Mental Health Review Tribunal Rule 2009, No. 18

Fisheries Act 1994—

[49](#) Fisheries Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2009, No. 19

Public Trustee Act 1978—

[50](#) Public Trustee Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2009, No. 20

Lotteries Act 1997—

[51](#) Lotteries Amendment Rule (No. 1) 2009, No. 21

Urban Land Development Authority Act 2007—

[52](#) Urban Land Development Authority Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2009, No. 22

Liquor Act 1992—

[53](#) Liquor Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2009, No. 23

Public Trustee Act 1978—

[54](#) Public Trustee Amendment Regulation (No. 3) 2009, No. 24

Disaster Management Act 2003—

[55](#) Disaster Management (Extension of Disaster Situation-Brisbane) Regulation 2009, No. 25

Disaster Management Act 2003—

[56](#) Disaster Management (Further Extension of Disaster Situation-Brisbane) Regulation 2009, No. 26

Motor Accident Insurance Act 1994—

[57](#) Motor Accident Insurance Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2009, No. 27

Nature Conservation Act 1992—

[58](#) Nature Conservation (Protected Plants Harvest Period) Notice 2009, No. 28

Disaster Management Act 2003—

[59](#) Disaster Management (Further Extension of Disaster Situation-Brisbane) Regulation (No. 2) 2009, No. 29

Disaster Management Act 2003—

[60](#) Disaster Management (Further Extension of Disaster Situation-Brisbane) Regulation (No. 3) 2009, No. 30

Pest Management Act 2001—

[61](#) Pest Management Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2009, No. 31

Rural and Regional Adjustment Act 1994—

[62](#) Rural and Regional Adjustment Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2009, No. 32

Fisheries Act 1994, Food Production (Safety) Act 2000—

[63](#) Primary Industries and Fisheries Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2009, No. 33

Fisheries Act 1994, Food Production (Safety) Act 2000—

[64](#) Primary Industries and Fisheries Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2009, No. 33-Regulatory Impact Statement

Fisheries Act 1994, Food Production (Safety) Act 2000—

[65](#) Primary Industries and Fisheries Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2009, No. 33-Explanatory Notes

Planning (Urban Encroachment-Milton Brewery) Act 2009—

[66](#) Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 34

Local Government Act 1993—

[67](#) Local Government Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2009, No. 35

Disaster Management Act 2003—

[68](#) Disaster Management (Further Extension of Disaster Situation-Brisbane) Regulation (No.4) 2009, No. 36

MINISTERIAL PAPER

Ministerial Expenses

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.39 am): I lay upon the table of the House the public report of ministerial expenses for the period 1 July 2008 to 31 December 2008. This report shows that ministerial expenditure has been reasonable during the period and that fiscal responsibility remains a cornerstone of my government's approach. When compared to the same period in 2007, overall expenditure has increased by 5.3 per cent. However, more than two-thirds of this increase relates to unavoidable expenses such as enterprise bargaining pay increases for staff and office rental increases. There has also been an increase in domestic travel. That is because my ministers and I make it a priority to get around the state as much as possible, honouring my commitment to be a government for all of Queensland. I commend the report to the House.

Tabled paper: Public report of ministerial expenses for the period 1 July 2008 to 31 December 2008 [\[71\]](#).

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Bligh Labor Government

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.40 am): It is four weeks tomorrow since my new cabinet was sworn in. This followed the 21 March state election. In that time this government has hit the ground running. The core of our election promises was jobs—job protection and job creation. Jobs generation and protecting Queenslanders' jobs will drive our efforts as we steer Queensland through the effects of the worst global financial crisis. We also recognise that inherent in our election victory was a very clear message from the people of Queensland. Queenslanders want my government to work harder, and that is what we will do. We are in very tough times. Government has to show a lead during these times. More than ever, Queenslanders expect us to show a lead in the area of jobs.

In the first fortnight after the election I convened a third meeting of my Jobs Squad. This is a group of industrial leaders who have given government a number of areas for consideration that we are currently developing proposals on. We already have the nation's leading capital works program underway, and we are determined to keep that infrastructure rolling.

Since the election I have visited Queensland Rail's largest infrastructure project currently under construction—the \$500 million Jilalan Rail Yard upgrade, where I witnessed the first trains on the duplication of the line. This project will deliver a huge 38 million tonne boost to Central Queensland's coal haulage capacity, getting us ready for when we return to world demand. The upgrade project has created nearly 1,600 jobs. I was also on hand earlier this month when track laying began on the new 4.1 kilometre rail extension south of Robina to Varsity Lakes on the Gold Coast—a project creating more than 2,000 jobs as well as supporting local industries and injecting money into the local Gold Coast economy.

Despite conjecture about the future of BrisConnections and numerous corporate manoeuvres, the Airport Link project is alive and well and is progressing with the tunnel headers already at work. It is not just these job-generating examples; we are looking to new and exciting industries and major events opportunities in our jobs focus.

The state's Coordinator-General this month declared the \$35 billion Australia-Pacific LNG project a project of state significance. Up to 5,000 construction jobs could be created in the largest coal seam gas to liquefied natural gas project yet proposed for Australia. My government will do everything in its power to encourage an LNG industry and create jobs across Queensland. That is why we have cleared the way for a gas superhighway and committed up to \$30 million to buy the corridor for an underground gas pipeline from Callide to Curtis Island, where the LNG plants are being proposed. I have convened in the first month of our government a meeting of all LNG proponents and have explored with the industry ways to fast-track the industry's development. Again, we are working on their proposals.

In our job-creating efforts, we are driving to make Queensland the nation's solar leader. Expressions of interest are now being sought from industry to supply, deliver and install my government's Solar Hot Water Program. Over the next three years we aim to deliver 200,000 solar hot-water units to Queenslanders at a fixed reduced price of \$500 for eligible households and \$100 for pensioners. I am pleased to advise the House that, since expressions of interest opened in late March, 20,060 Queenslanders have already registered an interest in this program.

During the recent election I also promised to mobilise a Green Army across Queensland to shore up our future on two fronts—protecting jobs and protecting the environment. Later today I will announce the first step in the plan to bring this to fruition.

In the area of events, I have announced Dunlop as the sponsor for the inaugural Dunlop Townsville 400 V8 Supercars event. As members for the Townsville and Far North region can tell others, there have already been 73,000 tickets sold for the 10 July and 12 July event. It will be a great boon for the economy in that part of Queensland.

On 31 March there was great news for the Gold Coast when we signed the new AFL stadium agreement with the Australian Football League. The Gold Coast's dream of a redeveloped stadium at Carrara is another giant step closer because of the agreement with the AFL over its 17th licence. The GC17 venture will deliver a massive boost for the local economy. It will generate more than 350 jobs in construction and, importantly, it will contribute some \$340 million into the Gold Coast economy over the next 10 years. This is an opportunity too good to be missed and one that we were determined to bring over the line for the people of the Gold Coast.

I have also appointed former Qantas boss Geoff Dixon to redirect and lead Queensland Events. A review of Queensland Events by consultant David Williams shows that our \$1 billion a year events industry is in need of reinvigoration. Other states have copied Queensland's blueprint for events and advanced their own efforts. We need to make sure that we are at the front of the pack. As members know, Mr Dixon owns property in Queensland and has a proven record in difficult times. He has a great understanding of national and international events. But, most importantly, he has a well-deserved reputation as a very aggressive businessman. I have every confidence that he will relish the opportunity to beat the likes of John O'Neill and Ron Walker in bringing events to Queensland.

On 3 April I announced the gazetting of three new wild rivers, delivering on our election promise to continue the rollout of this groundbreaking program. Work has already begun to implement in full the election commitment in relation to the Channel Country rivers. As well, my government will deliver on its election commitment to implement a moratorium on clearing endangered vegetation. This bill will be the government's first priority in the new parliament.

The big agenda that I have outlined has to be driven and has to be driven hard. If we are going to deliver we need to have government architecture in place to match these changed times. My first decision as Premier was to put in place a new-look cabinet—eight new faces on a reinvigorated frontbench. The opposition, despite having 11 new members, has just two new faces on its frontbench. It is not just the frontbench; the whole Public Service has been reshaped.

Government members interjected.

Ms BLIGH: One of them is a re-tread; you have to acknowledge that. It is not just the frontbench; the whole Public Service has been reshaped. We immediately announced reforms meaning 23 stand-alone government departments have been streamlined into 13. The departments, led by the government's 18 ministers, have been grouped under six clusters: Policy and Fiscal Coordination; Employment and Economic Development; Environment and Sustainable Resource Management; Social Development; Law, Justice and Safety; and Government Services. Importantly, there will be no job cuts under the restructure but there will be much better coordinated services.

Backing that, we need structural accountability reforms. We have put in place a key commitment to open and accountable cabinet with the public release of Queensland's first register of lobbyists. Cabinet has also approved the preparation of tough new legislation to respond to the growing threat from outlaw motorcycle gangs.

In the first week of the new government I released a wide-ranging independent review of state government boards, committees and statutory authorities. It is time for a significant overhaul of the plethora of government boards and committees that have grown up over time. This report by Griffith University Professor Patrick Weller contains 210 recommendations, 208 of them in relation to 334 separate government bodies. More of this will be detailed in a moment.

I give a commitment that my government will be a listening government, and this weekend we will conduct our first community cabinet in Toowoomba. I will be very pleased to be visiting that wonderful regional city.

Independent Review of Government Boards, Committees and Statutory Authorities

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.49 am): My government is committed to delivering the most efficient, the most streamlined and the most capable services to Queenslanders in every corner of this state. That is why, as part of our major public sector reform program last year, I announced an independent review of Queensland government boards, committees and statutory authorities, and that is why today I can announce my government's response to that review and its recommendations which will see significant and widespread changes—in many instances, sweeping change—to these boards, committees and statutory authorities. I seek leave to table the government's response to these recommendations.

Leave granted.

Tabled paper: Queensland government response to the report 'Brokering balance: a public interest map for Queensland government bodies—an independent review of Queensland government boards, committees and statutory authorities' [72].

Ms BLIGH: The government's response to these recommendations, outlining which will be adopted and which will not, is in concert with my recent significant Public Service structure reforms which are aimed at modernising government to enable better service delivery to Queenslanders. This review and its recommendations were considered at the first cabinet meeting of my government at the end of March, and since then much hard work has gone in to considering the recommendations.

The recommendations number 210 and include the abolition or at least very radical change to a range of boards. Today I can announce that we have accepted and will adopt 175 of these recommendations. These 175 recommendations affect 263 government bodies—103 will be abolished, 81 will be subject to some form of change and 79 will retain their status quo. The review also made recommendations in relation to remuneration which the government has not yet adopted because they require significant further consideration, and that will be in the second stage of our response to this review. Importantly, we have rejected some key and, I think, quite radical recommendations of the review for the simple reason that many of the boards that were proposed for abolition such as our vital Tourism Queensland, water boards and community health councils were too important to lose. But let me elaborate on this process.

The aim of the review was not only fundamental but also critical to efficient government in this state. It was designed to reduce bureaucracy and to cut back significantly on unnecessary red tape. It aimed to improve the overall efficiency of government and was designed to maintain the integrity and security of necessary regulatory functions. This report proposed, as I said, significant reforms and the recommendations are wide ranging. But radical or not, I gave an undertaking three weeks ago at the time of receiving the report that each would be considered by my government. Each minister has gone through each of these areas, spoken with stakeholders and assisted in the government's response. These recommendations included the abolition of 188 bodies, meaning in the majority of cases their functions would be transferred to either a state government department or another area, particularly to local government. My government has accepted 175 of the 210 recommendations, including the abolition of 103 bodies, governance changes to 81 and 79 remaining as they are.

Among the plethora of bodies which will be abolished and their responsibilities transferred to an appropriate government department are such alternately diverse groups as the Creative Industries Leadership Group, the Fibre Composites Forum, the State Procurement Advisory Council, the Chicken Meat Industry Committee and the Darling Downs-Moreton Rabbit Board. The government has also opted to support the review's recommendations that many groups maintain their status quo. These include such important groups as Greyhounds Queensland, the Queensland Small Business Advisory Council, the Smart State Council, the Motor Accident Insurance Commission, the Queensland Gaming Commission, the Licensing Review Committee, the Queensland Competition Authority, the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission, Tourism Queensland and the WorkCover Queensland board. We also support the merger of a number of other bodies including the Manufacturing Leaders Group which will be merged with other groups such as the Environment Industry Reference Group and the Queensland Biotechnology Advisory Council to form a single portfolio industry advisory forum to government.

I stress once again that the government has rejected some recommendations. We will not dismantle a number of boards and authorities because we believe their functions are too important to dispense with. Despite recommendations, we will not abolish our four bulk water infrastructure bodies including the SEQ Water Grid Manager and the Queensland Bulk Water Supply Authority. I make particular mention of the review's recommendations that government abolish 37 community health councils. This recommendation is rejected because of the very nature of the critical community input these groups offer our health system at a local level. I urge all members to study the tabled document which outlines the government's response and make themselves familiar with decisions that affect either their electorates or areas of responsibility or interest.

Green Army

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.54 am): During the recent election campaign I promised to mobilise a Green Army across Queensland to shore up our future on two fronts—the front of protecting jobs and protecting the environment—and today we will see the first step in this plan come to fruition. From today a hotline and a website will be established for job seekers to register with this army, and I encourage anyone who is seeking work in these very tough economic times and anyone who cares about our precious environment to get on board. If any job seeker is interested, I urge them to log on and head to www.employment.qld.gov.au and follow the Green Army links to discover everything they need to know about our new Green Army. They can also pick up the phone and dial 1800249215. There they can speak to an employment officer as the first step in joining up. The Green Army will provide 3,000 jobs over the next three years. It is critical to my government's plan to create 100,000 jobs during that period, but it is also critical to the future of our national parks, our internationally renowned walking trails, our waterways and our Wet Tropic regions.

Kangaroo Point, Park

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.56 am): Providing more green space for Queenslanders to enjoy is part of this government's Q2 vision, and we are getting on with that job as well. As I stand here today, 16 workers are on a demolition site making way for a new park on the edge of the Kangaroo Point cliffs. I announced in January that this priceless site would be gifted back to the people of Queensland as part of our Q150 celebrations. This site—almost 10,000 square metres of spectacular views of our beautiful capital city—will soon be a public park for all Queenslanders and all visitors to enjoy. It will link up with the existing park that runs along the top of the cliffs adjacent to River Terrace and it will become a family favourite, particularly on those special days like Australia Day, New Year's Eve and Riverfire when there are fireworks displays. The former Southbank Institute of TAFE buildings that date back to the late 1960s are being removed from the site. With the redevelopment of the Southbank TAFE on the South Bank site, these buildings at Kangaroo Point are no longer required and many are way past their use-by date in any case. Under the project's recycling management plan, demolition materials from the site including concrete, steel, bricks, aluminium, glass and plaster will all be recycled. With the design currently being finalised, I am pleased to advise that we expect Queenslanders to be enjoying the park by November this year.

Pacific Adventurer, Moreton Bay Oil Spill

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.57 am): I want to say a couple of words about the terrible oil spill that has affected the shores of the south-east corner of our state. The *Pacific Adventurer* oil spill on Moreton Island and the Sunshine Coast is one of the most serious environmental disasters to affect Queensland, with significant consequences for our environment, for our wildlife, economy, industry, community and for many of our visitors. In heavy seas whipped up by Tropical Cyclone Hamish, the *Pacific Adventurer* lost 31 containers of ammonium nitrate and spilled an estimated 270 tonnes of heavy fuel oil on Wednesday, 11 March 2009.

As members know, oil washed on to Moreton Island, Bribie Island and Sunshine Coast beaches, resulting in a mammoth clean-up and recovery exercise. The clean-up has been an enormous challenge requiring sensitive and often very labour-intensive work. I am pleased to advise the House that the vast majority of the clean-up is now complete, and I applaud the magnificent efforts of all those who worked to clean up this pollution. Moreton Island, Bribie Island and the Sunshine Coast are well and truly open for business. Last week saw the Easter holidays and camping levels were at normal levels in Bribie and Moreton Island national parks. On Moreton Island 1,470 visitors were camping over the holiday period and 620 enjoyed Bribie Island. I want to acknowledge the professionalism, the dedication and the efficiency of all who worked in the clean-up, both paid and voluntary. I particularly want to acknowledge the leadership of Mayor Alan Sutherland from the Moreton Bay Regional Council and Mayor Bob Abbot from the Sunshine Coast Regional Council. Their swift response to this disaster ensured a great outcome for the areas they have responsibility for.

I also offer grateful thanks to those people from interstate and those with international expertise who have come to Queensland to lend their hand to the task. Maritime Safety Queensland estimates that some 2,500 people have tirelessly worked to monitor, limit and remove the spillage and to aid the recovery process.

I will be hosting a thankyou reception in June for all the workers involved in the recovery process. In my regular briefings on this matter it has been impressive to witness the coordination and cooperation of so many diverse public and private sector organisations. Each of them will be invited to submit the names of workers who will attend a reception here at Parliament House. Mr Speaker, I look forward to joining you and other members in a thankyou reception and to hearing the many stories of this remarkable clean-up effort.

Queensland Health

Hon. PT LUCAS (Lytton—ALP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for Health) (9.59 am): Anyone who thinks you can do a good job as health minister sitting at a desk in Brisbane reading briefs is just plain wrong. That is why one of my first decisions as health minister was to get out of the office, get out of the city and visit Queensland hospitals.

Mr Johnson: How's your left ear?

Mr Robertson: How's your election result?

Mr Johnson interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Honourable member for Gregory, that is the third time.

Mr LUCAS: So far I have visited nine hospitals from the Torres Strait and the tip of Cape York to South-East Queensland. I have already visited hospitals at Thursday Island, Bamaga, Cairns, Townsville, Rockhampton, Mackay and in the Redlands. I have also visited the Royal Children's Hospital and the Mater Children's Hospital. I have made a brief visit to the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital emergency department and will be returning there shortly for a longer visit and discussion with health staff.

At those hospitals I have spoken to doctors, nurses, allied health professionals, administrators, patients, local councillors and many others. I have heard about the issues facing them: pressures from rapid population growth, an increase in chronic disease, facilities that were not designed to be easily upgraded and many other issues. I have seen operations on young children, I have seen some of the impressive work our staff are doing in telehealth and I have seen their unswerving dedication. In the next month or so I will visit even more hospitals in the west, in South-East Queensland and up and down the coast. I will be spending time at busy emergency departments like the one at Logan Hospital to see firsthand the challenges they face.

There is more listening to be done. Nothing beats being on the ground talking to the professionals where they work about the problems they face. My message to them—and to the people of Queensland—is simple: action is underway but we know there is more to do.

Queensland offers the most comprehensive free health system over the largest decentralised area in world. We have more than 150 hospitals and health facilities across the state. Our \$8.35 billion health budget is the fastest growing budget in the country, increasing by 64 per cent since 2005. We have the biggest health infrastructure program in Australia, with a \$6 billion building program to build and rebuild hospitals across the state including the Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast hospitals and the Queensland Children's Hospital.

We are halfway through our \$10 billion five-year Health Action Plan—the largest single injection of funding ever put into Queensland Health. That work has delivered an extra 2,500 doctors and nurses since 2007 and it has delivered the shortest elective surgery waiting times in the country. But we heard the message from Queenslanders at the election that we must do better, and we will.

I am honoured to serve as health minister in the new Bligh government. Health has a direct and major impact on the lives of many Queenslanders. Its importance cannot be overstated. I am committed to working hard as health minister. I know that health staff work hard and they do a good job. But that does not mean we cannot do better, and I am enjoying hearing the ideas that Queenslanders, especially our dedicated health professionals, have for delivering a healthier state.

Briefly on another matter, I would like to thank the expert surgeons and burns specialists who treated patients following the incident at Ashmore Reef last week. Four of the patients remain in a critical condition in the intensive care unit at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital. They are expected to undergo further surgery this week. Three patients remain in a stable condition in the burns unit. It is a testament to the commitment and skill of our top health professionals that they were called on to assist in such a tragedy.

Queensland Economy

Hon. AP FRASER (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Employment and Economic Development) (10.03 am): Queensland has taken a battering from the global recession. Our revenues have taken a \$12 billion hit to date and growth has been clubbed. We stand on the cusp of recession. Economists may debate the utility of the definition of a recession as two quarters of negative growth. When I issued the Economic and Fiscal Update on 20 February—an unprecedented third update of the state's finances in nine months—I questioned that definition and I note the comments in the last 24 hours from the Governor of the Reserve Bank. The fact is that the economists' debate is irrelevant to the 23,600 Queenslanders who have joined the unemployment queue since September 2008, when the unemployment rate began rising sharply following a general downward trend over most of the past decade.

On an alternative definition—arguably a much more relevant yardstick—unemployment has risen by a full percentage point in the past six months, with the trend unemployment rate in Queensland of 4.7 per cent in March this year, compared with its near generational low of 3.7 per cent in September 2008. For the thousands of Queenslanders who have lost their jobs, this looks and feels like a recession.

I table for the benefit of the House the Queensland state accounts for the December quarter 2008. The accounts record our economy as having grown by just 0.3 per cent in trend terms in the December quarter. This contrasts with the contraction recorded by the Australian economy as a whole in that quarter but in its proper perspective reveals the pace of the slowdown being experienced in our state. Annual growth in the first half of 2008–09 was 0.8 per cent. It is apparent that this places further pressure on our revised forecast growth rate for this financial year of 2.5 per cent. The outlook is also

being challenged by further synchronised deterioration among our trading partners. This week's Consensus Economics forecast shows that our major trading partners are now expected to contract by 2.5 per cent this year.

The weaker global outlook will put further pressure on the economy and on the unemployment rate as we move into 2009-10. Last month's unemployment data also places pressure on our forecast of a 4.25 per cent average for unemployment for the year. The spike, beyond market expectations, confirmed that the risk remains that unemployment will climb higher.

The possible beginnings of a recovery later this year remains just that: a possibility. As we craft a path for our state through these times we must focus directly on the assistance we can provide in the near term and on the decisions necessary for the longer term prosperity of the state. The scourge of rising unemployment is our central focus as a government. Fighting rising unemployment, generating jobs and protecting jobs are at the forefront of our policymaking. These are tough times and tough decisions lie ahead. We accept our responsibility, not just for today but for the many tomorrows.

The Governor of the Reserve Bank pointed yesterday to an enduring optimism in our position as a nation. I share that fundamental optimism, and the Bligh government's resolve to lead remains unchanged.

Tabled paper: Queensland state accounts, December quarter 2008 [73].

Electricity Prices

Hon. S ROBERTSON (Stretton—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy and Minister for Trade) (10.06 am): The Bligh government understands the impact of rising electricity prices on Queenslanders' budgets. The regulated electricity price is set by independent experts to cover the costs of generating, distributing and retailing electricity. If the price is set below that cost, the network will not be able to keep up with demand for electricity and reliability will be compromised.

Over \$5 billion has been invested since 2005-06 building and maintaining the networks, and it is intended that another \$4.5 billion will be spent over the next two years. The Queensland government also subsidises electricity prices for regional Queenslanders. Last financial year we paid over \$600 million to make electricity cheaper, particularly in rural and regional Queensland, for Ergon customers. On top of that, we pay rebates for pensioners and lower income Queenslanders.

Discussion today of Ergon Energy seeking a distribution price rise of up to 48.67 per cent comes from a six-month-old internal draft document which was talking about the worst case forecast based on a range of inputs, some of which have changed dramatically since this draft paper was produced. A key example of what has changed is the weighted average cost of capital. The weighted average cost used in these early calculations was based on the high cost of capital in evidence at September last year. The cost of capital components, such as interest rates, have come down significantly since then and this will have a positive impact on the final figure Ergon Energy will submit to the regulator. It is also important to note that it is the Australian Energy Regulator, not Ergon Energy, that will determine what the new weighted average cost of capital should be. Overall, however, the result is that Ergon Energy no longer expects the number to be anywhere near as high as 48.67 per cent.

As I said earlier, the Bligh government understands the impact that rising electricity prices have on the budgets of Queensland families. That is why we have moved to help households save energy and money through initiatives such as the Solar Hot Water Program. Through utilising federal government rebates and guaranteeing supply, the Bligh government will deliver up to 200,000 solar hot-water systems to Queenslanders over the next three years at a cost of no more than \$500. By replacing electric hot-water systems with solar systems people can reduce their electricity bills by up to \$300 a year. We also have the ClimateSmart Home Service, which shows people how to cut electricity usage in their homes. The Bligh government will continue to implement programs such as those programs to help householders reduce their electricity consumption, help our environment and, most importantly, save money.

Jobs; Infrastructure Projects

Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for Infrastructure and Planning) (10.09 am): Firstly, Mr Speaker, may I congratulate you on your election to that high and honourable office.

This morning I am honoured to rise to inform the House of my priorities as the Minister for Infrastructure and Planning. The people of Queensland have set us a clear task to protect and create jobs. We will do this not just by getting straight on with our record infrastructure program of projects like Airport Link—as the Premier and Treasurer have said, construction is well underway with 1,300 workers out there right now, and that number will swell to 10,000 direct and indirect jobs—but also by encouraging emerging new industries like liquid natural gas. This is a key strategy to deliver on our Toward Q2 target of Queensland being Australia's strongest economy in 2020. The potential of LNG is enormous. A mid sized industry would create an estimated 13,000 jobs and inject close to \$1 billion into

Queensland's economy each year. That is why during the election campaign the Premier committed to creating a gas superhighway by acquiring the land corridor between Callide and the Gladstone State Development Area for underground gas pipelines to the proposed LNG plants on Curtis Island and Fisherman's Landing. I look forward to reporting to the House on the progress of this project.

I will get straight on with the job of delivering on our cleaner, greener buildings policy, which is a key strategy to achieve another Toward Q2 target of cutting our carbon footprint by one-third. This policy will not only boost our green construction industry but will also pave the way to more sustainable development across Queensland by requiring new houses and major renovations to meet six star or equivalent energy efficient standards by the end of 2010. New units will be required to meet five star or equivalent energy efficient standards in the same time frame. These initiatives will reduce greenhouse gas emissions by approximately 7,710 tones each year, resulting in annual savings of around 84,810 tones by 2020. This policy builds on our existing sustainable housing initiatives, which with the Deputy Premier I helped to develop in my previous role. I look forward to driving this next step, to creating jobs and to seeing Queensland lead Australia in dealing with climate change.

Transport Infrastructure Projects

Hon. RG NOLAN (Ipswich—ALP) (Minister for Transport) (10.12 am): Since the election, the Bligh government has been getting on with the job of building public transport infrastructure that not only will provide better services but also has a focus on creating jobs. The day after I was sworn in as transport minister, I accompanied the Premier on a visit to Central Queensland to inspect the \$500 million rail yard upgrade at Jilalan. In the following week, again with the Premier, I attended the start of work on the Robina to Varsity Lakes rail extension on the Gold Coast—a \$324 million project that is creating more than 2,000 jobs as well as supporting local industries and injecting money into the local economy. I have visited Cairns to announce the next stage of planning for the Cairns Transit Network, which is a rapid transit project that in time will deliver modern transport services for the city. Again, it is a project that will create jobs.

Here in South-East Queensland key projects are expected to generate more than 13,000 jobs in total. Three new busways will open this year, including the Boggo Road Busway, the Eastern Busway and the Northern Busway. The \$226 million Boggo Road Busway and stage 1 of the \$140 million Eastern Busway, which the Premier toured last week, are expected to cut up to 10 minutes on some trips from the southern and eastern suburbs. Stage 1 of the Eastern Busway, which is ahead of schedule, links the nearby Boggo Road Busway to the South East Busway at Buranda and includes a new busway station at the Princess Alexandra Hospital. We have committed \$777 million to deliver two stages of the Northern Busway. The first stage will link the Royal Children's Hospital to Windsor, while stage 2 extends the busway to Kedron.

This government is also keeping Queenslanders moving via rail upgrades. We are laying more tracks, building more stations and refitting old ones, as well as improving other essential rail infrastructure. Right now we are rolling out new trains at the rate of one a month. The government is also committed to the \$1.67 billion Gold Coast rapid transit system that will provide a rail link between Helensvale and Coolangatta. On the Sunshine Coast, the Coast Connect project will provide the necessary infrastructure to ensure residents and visitors have access to efficient and reliable public transport services. Our investments in infrastructure will improve public transport services, help relieve traffic congestion and, importantly, create jobs.

Tourism Industry

Hon. PJ LAWLOR (Southport—ALP) (Minister for Tourism and Fair Trading) (10.14 am): The Bligh government is dedicated to the Queensland tourism industry during these tough economic times. Over the next three years we plan to invest an extra \$38 million into tourism to help sustain tourist numbers and jobs. In January this year Tourism Queensland launched its Best Job in the World campaign. This campaign is a testament to a new social media era in tourism promotion. The process has cost taxpayers just \$1 million, but has generated more than \$100 million in international publicity. Just last week it was voted in the top 50 PR campaigns ever released in the world, ahead of events such as The Beatles final show on top of the Abbey Road studios in England.

At the moment Queensland tourism is the toast of the world. International tourists are no longer thinking 'Australia'; they are thinking 'Queensland'. I have a son in London and a daughter in Dubai and they are continually telling me about the wide coverage that this campaign receives. In just under two weeks 16 finalists will arrive in Brisbane before heading to Hamilton Island for the final interview process. With them will be 70 media outlets from around the world, including the BBC and CNN which have requested satellite feeds from Hamilton Island. Usually that is only seen in the coverage of events such as the Olympic Games. We can all truly be proud of this campaign and what it has done for our international and domestic reputation in tourism.

Tourism Queensland has started working on its next big idea and if the best job campaign is anything to go by, the world could again be looking at Queensland with envy. These low-cost, smart marketing campaigns will be complemented by a range of tactical campaigns designed to drive businesses directly to tourism operators from the cape to Coolangatta, from Mackay to Mount Isa. As the new Queensland tourism minister, I may have snagged the best job in the world.

An opposition member: How many applicants were there?

Mr LAWLOR: Quite a few applicants, although none from the other side. Operators and industry have told me that things are tough and may get tougher. I look forward to working with Tourism Queensland, regional tourism organisations and operators themselves to handle these challenges and deliver a stronger, better prepared tourism industry for when the good times finally come around again.

Child Safety

Hon. PG REEVES (Mansfield—ALP) (Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Sport) (10.17 am): It is a great honour to be appointed the Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Sport. I look forward to demonstrating my passion for both of these areas over the coming years. Since becoming the minister I have hit the ground running. I have been getting out there and talking to staff and non-government organisations, which all do a great job in protecting our children from harm. The Bligh government is dedicated to protecting Queensland's children and young people, ensuring they are safe from abuse.

One of the initiatives that has impressed me is the Child Safety Services highly successful family intervention services program. Today I am pleased to confirm that we are increasing our investment by \$2 million this year and next year. Family intervention services provide practical, common-sense assistance to families in the child protection system. This includes teaching parents skills that relieve stress, family conflict and anxiety, how to manage anger, budget, prepare healthy meals, and establish routines and set guidelines in the home. The bottom line is that families can keep their children safely at home or have their children return home safely after being in care. The 2008-09 budget of the Department of Child Safety provides more than \$14 million for family intervention services. That is up \$2 million from last year and in the 2009-10 budget we will increase it a further \$2 million to \$16 million.

Within the next few months, Child Safety will be calling for more organisations capable of delivering these family intervention services to send in tender applications. Today, there are 35 family intervention services providing support to families across Queensland. Increasing these services will maximise the number of children and young people who can remain safely at home with family support. As we all know, the ideal place for children to be is with their families. It is better for everyone if we as a government can do more work with families so that their children can return and live safely with them, or stay at home safely in the first place.

The Bligh government's \$4 million boost to family intervention services is a much needed boost to the child protection sector. But it is also good for the broader community and economy. It will create in the vicinity of 53 full-time equivalent new jobs each year across Queensland's non-government sector. It is all helping meet the Bligh government's Toward Q2 goal of making Queensland a fairer place to live, within a safe and caring community.

Social Housing, Job Creation

Hon. KL STRUTHERS (Algester—ALP) (Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women) (10.20 am): The newly elected Bligh government is all about generating jobs for Queenslanders. That is why I am proud to announce the biggest ever investment in housing infrastructure since the Chifley era.

Under the Nation Building—Economic Stimulus Plan, the Rudd and Bligh governments have committed to build more than 4,000 new homes right across Queensland. It is a billion dollar package from the federal government that will lead to thousands of jobs for local workers in the construction industry. All this comes at a time when jobs and job security are more important than ever before. That is why our billion dollar stimulus package is so crucial. It will kick-start local economies and generate local jobs.

Even in the face of the worst global crisis since the Great Depression, Labor will never give up the fight for Queensland workers. We are getting on with the job of building 4,000 new homes right across the state in places such as Bundaberg, Beserker, Beerwah and everywhere in between. It is a win for workers in the construction industry and it is a win for people who need a roof over their head.

With these funds we are able to fast-track projects. We will be entering into contracts with builders in the coming weeks and work will start on site over the next couple of months. Our challenge, our commitment to Queenslanders, is to have most of the new homes built in the next three years. It is an ambitious target and it is an important target, because we believe nothing should stand in the way of jobs for Queenslanders and homes for people who need them most. That is why Anna Bligh and Labor are best placed to lead Queenslanders through the tough economic times ahead.

Disability Services

Hon. A PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Minister for Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs) (10.21 am): Earlier this month more than 450 participants from across Queensland attended Queensland's Disability Services two-day Shared Visions disability conference. At the conference Australia's longstanding leadership in upholding and safeguarding the rights of people with a disability was reinforced when we were one of the first to officially sign the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

A key priority of the Bligh government is our contribution to Australia's National Disability Agreement. That is why within the first week of being appointed as Minister for Disability Services I met with my federal counterpart, the Hon. Bill Shorten, to discuss the importance of developing a national agenda for the disability sector. We have a great opportunity for the Bligh government to work with the federal government to shape significant reforms across the country—one which particularly promotes early intervention strategies.

We identified our three key priorities as being: first, to lead national and state policy reforms which develop early intervention strategies, particularly for children aged between zero and six; secondly, to develop a system that is flexible enough to address pressures particularly on our ageing carers caring for children with a disability; and, thirdly, to assist younger people with a disability moving out of nursing homes.

The Bligh government as part of its Toward Q2 commitment has invested a record \$1.2 billion into the Disability Services portfolio in the past year—a 14 per cent increase from the previous year. Despite our achievements so far, I do recognise that more work needs to be done.

The significant reforms already being implemented by DSQ as part of the Growing Stronger initiative will help us meet some of the outstanding challenges, but more needs to be done. That is why I have made one of my first priorities to meet with the national disability services sector, advocacy groups and key stakeholders to identify the key challenges for Queensland. Early next month I plan to hold a ministerial round table forum with these groups to explore innovative approaches to focus on children with a disability.

However, behind my drive for reform is the commitment to take into account most fundamentally and importantly the rights of the individual to make choices, whether it be for accommodation, respite or disability services and, most importantly, to involve families and carers in that planning.

Nation Building—Economic Stimulus Plan

Hon. RE SCHWARTEN (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Public Works and Information and Communication Technology) (10.24 am): Work is underway on the Queensland implementation of the Australian government's \$42 billion Nation Building—Economic Stimulus Plan. It is anticipated the plan will inject over \$4 billion into Queensland's economy over three financial years and support up to 30,000 jobs. This includes \$2.7 billion for Building the Education Revolution projects, \$1.2 billion for social housing and over \$100 million for roads and safety projects. My department is coordinating the delivery of the education and social housing projects on behalf of the departments of education and training, communities and main roads. To ensure the maximum economic impact, the projects will be rapidly delivered to support employment and economic growth.

During February and March 2009, nearly 3,000 people attended information sessions hosted by the Department of Public Works in Brisbane and major regional centres. These sessions explained the need for contractors and consultants to prequalify or register to be eligible to tender on nation-building projects.

To assist schools with the Building the Education Revolution school infrastructure program, 119 conditional contracts have been awarded so far to 35 design-and-construct contractors and 23 project managers. The project managers and contractors are working with schools and P&Cs to identify design options that meet the Commonwealth's funding guidelines. This early stage will see work commence on up to 220 Queensland schools before the end of June.

The social housing program is also progressing quickly, with over 500 submissions received so far for stage 1 projects. Due to overwhelming interest from the Queensland development industry, the closing date for requests for offers for the delivery of social housing projects has been extended to 31 May. Offers will be called for stage 2 of the social housing program today.

The Nation Building—Economic Stimulus Plan is good news for Queensland. It will mean jobs for builders, subcontractors and consultants—both big and small—and it is a true sign of a true Labor government. The Department of Public Works has a proven track record when it comes to delivering projects on time and on budget and is currently delivering more than \$8.5 billion worth of infrastructure projects for the government. The stimulus package will provide \$4 billion on top of that.

Climate Change and Sustainability

Hon. KJ JONES (Ashgrove—ALP) (Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability) (10.26 am): With the honour and privilege of becoming the Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability comes an enormous obligation to protect Queensland's unique natural environment. I want to make it very clear from the outset that I am absolutely determined to tackle the big environmental issues that are confronting Queensland but not at the expense of jobs—our government's No. 1 priority. These are issues such as the enormous challenges of climate change, preserving the Great Barrier Reef and our 300 national parks, sustainable development and helping to reduce Queensland's carbon footprint.

We made a number of commitments at this year's election to foster a greener, cleaner and more environmentally sustainable Queensland, many of which come under my portfolio. \$1.5 million will be spent to restore Kirra Beach on the Gold Coast and \$1 million will be spent to build a further three artificial reef sites in Moreton Bay, increasing recreational fishing opportunities in the region. Cape York will also be further entrenched as one of Queensland's special iconic areas, with the progression of a World Heritage nomination and the construction of one of the longest and most spectacular natural walks in the world—a 2,000 kilometre Great Walk from the Daintree River to the tip of Cape York. I look forward to delivering on these commitments.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I ask members to welcome Ms Mary Porter AM, MLA, the Deputy Speaker of the ACT Legislative Assembly, and her husband, who are in the gallery today. Would you please make them welcome to the Queensland parliament.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Job Creation

Mr LANGBROEK (10.29 am): My question without notice is to the honourable Premier. Given that we all agree that there is nothing more important in the current economic climate than ensuring Queensland jobs are protected and new full-time jobs are created, what practical measures and detailed plans will the Premier's government implement to ensure that 100,000 new full-time jobs are created?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the honourable member for the question. It seems that unfortunately he was not listening yesterday when the Governor outlined for the people of Queensland the four-point plan that my government has put in place, so I am very happy to have an opportunity this morning to repeat it in summary.

My government will be approaching the creation and protection of jobs on four key planks. Firstly, we will be continuing as a matter of priority our capital infrastructure program. This is the largest infrastructure program in the country. It is delivering 119,000 jobs to Queenslanders. It is stimulating the economy and we will prioritise it in all of our budget deliberations. Secondly, we will look to skill Queenslanders through the economic crisis so that those, particularly young Queenslanders who might have otherwise gone into the workforce at the end of this year of school but who find they are not able to do so, can go straight into a training place with the creation of 150,000 new apprenticeships and traineeships. We will give rebates to employers who take on and maintain apprentices and trainees. We will give them a 125 per cent rebate.

Thirdly, we will look to create, encourage and build new industries, such as the liquid natural gas industry. As I outlined in my ministerial statement this morning, we are getting on with the job. I met with the LNG industry about 10 days ago. They outlined a number of areas where we could fast-track proposals and we are on the job with those ideas. The Coordinator-General recently made a declaration of a project of state significance of one of the largest of the LNG proponents. Fourthly, as governments should do in these times, we will get on with job creation programs—such as our Green Army. As I outlined in my ministerial statements this morning, today we will open the hotline and the website for those unemployed Queenslanders who want to be part of building the environmental legacy of Queensland.

I note that in the introduction to his question the Leader of the Opposition stated that we all agree that job creation should be a priority. Well, they did not agree with that four weeks ago. Four weeks ago, they thought the best way to deal with an economic crisis was to sack 12,000 Queenslanders. That was their economic policy four weeks ago. They did not agree then. They wanted 12,000 people on the unemployment scrap heap. Every one of them would have lost their job under your plan to take a billion dollars out of the budget every single year. He agreed with that strategy so much that he put the architect of that strategy in the job as his deputy.

Job Creation

Mr LANGBROEK: My second question is to the Treasurer. Treasurer, in the last four weeks, thousands of Queenslanders have lost their jobs. Will you commit additional funds to help create new jobs for these Queenslanders and their families? What practical measures are you taking to fulfil your government's commitment to create 100,000 new full-time jobs in the next three years?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Before I call the Treasurer, I ask the Leader of the Opposition to rephrase the question and take out the word 'you'.

Mr LANGBROEK: My apologies, Mr Speaker. Will he commit additional funds to help create new jobs for these Queenslanders and their families? What practical measures is he taking to fulfil his government's commitment to create 100,000 new full-time jobs in the next three years?

Mr SPEAKER: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his courtesy.

Mr FRASER: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question and congratulate him on the election to that office. The government made it clear in the election campaign that our central focus for this year and indeed for the next term was on fighting rising unemployment. There is nothing more tragic for the individual, nothing more tragic for the family, than the threat of job loss or the eventuality of facing unemployment. We set ourselves an ambitious target in the election campaign—100,000 new jobs created over the next three years. Will that target be difficult? Yes, absolutely. But only by setting ourselves that challenge will we put that at the forefront of all decision making that we take as a government.

We announced during the election campaign a \$57 million program for the Green Army with 3,000 places. There will be 700 traineeships and 2,300 jobs in that program and the Premier spoke about that this morning. It is direct intervention to help those who have found themselves faced with the desperate circumstances of unemployment in recent times.

The fact of the matter is that the government here has many roles to play. We have a role to play in delivering a massive infrastructure program for the people that it employs, for the jobs it supports in the economy, for the demand it generates in the economy, and for the jobs that it generates and supports in the economy. We have a role in the direct provision of employment programs, continuing with the \$81 million Skilling Queenslanders for Work program that has been at the forefront of labour market programs over the last decade—programs that you, Mr Speaker, know only too well have been there to assist Queenslanders who have faced the prospect not only of short-term unemployment but also of long-term unemployment.

There is no debate about this target. On the second Thursday of each and every month when the Australian Bureau of Statistics releases its profile for the labour force, there will be a yardstick, a line in the sand by which we will be judged and which we expect the people of Queensland—and in fact the opposition—to hold us to account on. We know that. What is clear is that last month just over 2,000 jobs were created in Queensland. No other state came close. The threat at this time is that that may well be the last month where we see that. As I said earlier, the risk to our unemployment forecast remains absolutely on the downside—that is, that unemployment could go higher.

We only have to note what the Reserve Bank governor said yesterday, what the IMF has said overnight and what Consensus Economics said on Tuesday about the contraction that has occurred in the global economy. The answer to what this government will do in relation to fighting unemployment is that we have to put job creation and job protection at the forefront of each and every decision we make as a government.

Gold Coast, AFL Stadium

Mrs KEECH: My question is to the Premier. In an earlier ministerial statement, the Premier made reference to the government's efforts on progressing an AFL stadium at the Gold Coast. Can the Premier update the House on the progress of this very important subject?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the whip for the question. She has been an enthusiastic supporter of this project from its inception, unlike members on the other side. Ten days after the election, the Gold Coast's dream of a redeveloped stadium at Carrara and securing a licence for a new 17th AFL national team took a massive step forward. The Queensland government, along with the AFL, signed a memorandum of agreement about the development and redevelopment of the stadium. Our decision to put \$60 million into the construction of this stadium without doubt was the catalyst for the decision by the AFL to grant a conditional licence for a 17th team at the Gold Coast.

Not surprisingly, as I said on the day, one thing about the Gold Coast people is that when they get behind something, you can count on them to really get behind it. One of the hurdles that the AFL set the Gold Coast team was that they had to be able to demonstrate a support base. They needed to get 20,000 signatures supporting a team at the Gold Coast. How many signatures did they get?

Mr Stevens: 42,000.

Ms BLIGH: They got 42,000. I bet one of them belonged to the member for Robina.

Mr Stevens interjected.

Ms BLIGH: I would be happy to hear him speak on this. That number of course has to convert from supporters to actual paid members. I am pleased to advise the House that today the Gold Coast team will be conducting a mail-out to convert those supporters into full financial members. I have every reason to believe that they will be successful in that effort. Why? This team has had one game. It was a game of under-18s and it was held in pouring rain, and they still got 2,000 people out to see that game. So when they have a world-class stadium that will match the other stadium that was also built by a Labor government on the Gold Coast, we will see not only football fans coming from around the country; we will see people coming and spending money at Gold Coast motels, Gold Coast restaurants and Gold Coast theme parks. Every dollar means jobs for the Gold Coast.

So when the Leader of the Opposition asks me and the Treasurer about job creation, let me tell him that one of our specific detailed plans is to build an AFL stadium at Carrara on the Gold Coast to make sure the Gold Coast does not miss out on tourism jobs not just this month, not just this year, not just in the economic crisis, but for decades to come.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Before I call the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, I would ask the House to note that the seat of Robina no longer exists; it is now the seat of Mermaid Beach.

Queensland Public Service, Superannuation

Mr SPRINGBORG: My question without notice is to the Treasurer. Treasurer, during the state election campaign you failed to tell Queensland public servants of your plan to either strip or reduce their Public Service entitlements including leave loading and superannuation. Today will you give an absolute guarantee that you will not be reducing or affecting these Public Service entitlements?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Before I call the Treasurer, I ask the honourable gentleman to rephrase his question. I want the word 'you' deleted from our lexicon altogether.

Mr SPRINGBORG: My question without notice is to the Treasurer. During the state election campaign no commitment was made to reduce Public Service entitlements including leave loading and superannuation. Will the Treasurer give an absolute commitment today that these Public Service entitlements will not be reduced or affected in any way?

Mr SPEAKER: I thank the deputy for his courtesy.

Mr FRASER: I thank the Deputy Leader of the Opposition for his question. I can give a whole series of guarantees. I can guarantee that we will not be cutting three per cent from the budget. I can guarantee that we will not be sacking 12,000 public servants. I can guarantee that we will not be hacking into the Capital Works Program, as proposed by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition—the putative Leader of the Opposition. The interest here is particularly in the role that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition will play in this parliament, there as a mentor—

Mr Gibson: No guarantee.

Mr FRASER: I agree with the member for Gympie: there are no guarantees when it comes to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. What I can say is this: this government is intent on keeping its election commitments. Our election commitments were for preserving a massive capital program. Our commitments were not to cut jobs from the public sector, as proposed by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. Our commitment was not to raise taxes at this time, and our commitment was to observe all of the commitments that we provided to the people of Queensland.

That represents a tough set of circumstances for us to contemplate. There is no doubt that we, like every state in the nation, like the federal government, like all governments around the world, are faced with a difficult set of circumstances. It is only the former Leader of the Opposition who continues to hold the view that this set of circumstances is not a problem. There are 109,000 Queenslanders today who are unemployed—109,000 tragic stories.

Mr Springborg: Will there be only 109,000 when you're finished with them?

Mr FRASER: What we see from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is no comprehension and no understanding of the set of circumstances that we face.

Mr Springborg: Will you give a guarantee?

Mr FRASER: What we can guarantee to all of the people who work in the Queensland public sector is that we can guarantee their jobs. We can guarantee job security. We can guarantee that this government will work to deliver on our election commitments. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition should focus on the decisions that government makes, not on what advice we might have been provided.

North Queensland Floods

Mrs KIERNAN: My question is to the Premier. Premier, the floods in the north and north-west might have moved away, but people are still rebuilding their lives and communities. Can you advise the House on the status of your disaster relief appeals?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Before I call the Premier, I will ask you to rephrase the question.

Mrs KIERNAN: Premier, the floods in the north and north-west might have moved away, but people are still rebuilding their lives and communities. Can the Premier advise the House on the status of the disaster relief appeal?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the honourable member for the question. I thank the honourable member for the work that she did working on behalf of her community in some extraordinary flood events in the first quarter of this year. Before mentioning the appeals, I think it is important for me to take the opportunity to recognise the great work done by the Queensland Electoral Commission to ensure that people on some stranded properties in some of the most remote parts of Australia were guaranteed their right as citizens to vote in the recent state election. I think there are probably some interesting stories out of that effort, but I thank the local member, the member for Mount Isa, for working with our government to make that sure we did everything we could to look after people in those tough weeks.

On 6 February I launched the Premier's Disaster Relief Appeal to help those people who had been affected in the north and in the north-west monsoonal flooding. I started the appeal with a Queensland government contribution of \$500,000. The Australian government matched that, so we then had \$1 million. I am pleased to advise the House that our neighbours, the government and people of Papua New Guinea, donated a further \$1 million. I think that says something about the strength of the relationship. Members will remember when the Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea addressed our parliament and spoke of those close cultural ties.

The general public and the business community not only here in Queensland but also from other parts of Australia have responded magnificently to this appeal, with donations now numbering \$7.8 million. Last week I received a cheque for \$874,000, which represents 50 per cent of the proceeds from the recent Sydney Sound Relief concert, where Australian musicians and members of the international music community united to help victims of the bushfires and the floods in Queensland. That is an extraordinary effort and I thank them as well. All together more than 20,000 people and organisations have made some donation to the appeal, from as little as \$2 up to the million dollar mark. Red Cross has again agreed to manage the disbursement of the funds on the government's behalf. Red Cross is now currently accepting applications for assistance from those affected by the north and north-west monsoonal flooding and tropical cyclones Charlotte and Ellie.

I encourage the relevant local members, particularly the member for Hinchinbrook and the member for Mount Isa, if they have not already done so to work with the local Red Cross to ensure that anyone who needs assistance can get it. Applications close on 30 April. People from around the country have donated to this appeal. Let us all make sure that the people who really need it get the funds that they need to rebuild their lives. Queenslanders are resilient but they are often in circumstances where Mother Nature means they need a little helping hand. I thank everyone who has responded to the need in this case.

Employment

Mr NICHOLLS: My question is to the Treasurer. Last year Labor promised that it would deliver 119,000 new full-time jobs from infrastructure projects this financial year, a promise reiterated this morning by the Premier. Given that ABS figures show only 1,700 full-time jobs have been created over the last nine months, why should Queenslanders trust the latest promise to create 100,000 new jobs?

Mr FRASER: I thank the shadow Treasurer for his question. The reality is that what is explicitly stated way back in Budget Paper No. 3—from my recollection on the first page of the actual substance of the paper—is that the \$17 billion Capital Works Program does support 119,000 jobs in the community. That has always been what the government has said about the program. What we know, what we understand and what governments around the world understand is that, when governments engage in important capital works programs, it not only provides a benefit to the people walking onto the work site but also provides a much wider benefit through the 'spin-offability' that it creates in other businesses. It provides support to aggregate demand in the economy. 119,000 jobs are being supported by the \$17 billion Capital Works Program. What it is worth doing, and I undertake to do this, is revisiting the LNP's election costings from the last campaign, where buried near the end was a list of jobs-generating capital works programs that it wanted to cut.

Fair dinkum! We get these people back here five minutes after the election and all of a sudden they are the friend of the worker. Give me a break! We have the same old band of merry men and all of a sudden they want us to believe that the tune has changed. Really all we have is John-Paul and yesterday's hero. That is about where we have got to in all of this.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Treasurer will refer to the honourable Leader of the Opposition by his correct title.

Mr FRASER: Thank you, Mr Speaker. The reality of course is that the person who was not allowed to play in the band was the shadow Treasurer. So he is out there to whistle a different tune for the rest of the term.

The reality is that the only jobs that those in the LNP, those on the other side of the chamber, are interested in at the moment are their own jobs—who is going to have what job through the next parliament. Those are the only jobs they are concerned about. On this side of the House it is our focus on the jobs of each and every Queenslanders that drives our commitment to work each and every day for the betterment of the Queensland community to fight off the worst of the global recession and to fight off the ravages of rising unemployment. There is no greater calling for a government at a time like this than to provide for the dignity of employment and to fight off the tragedy of rising unemployment.

Queensland Children's Hospital

Ms GRACE: My question without notice is to the Minister for Health. Can the minister please inform the House as to the status of the Queensland Children's Hospital?

Mr LUCAS: I thank the honourable member for her question. She has a strong interest in the welfare of children in our health system—in particular children in the Royal Children's Hospital and the Mater Children's Hospital. My first meeting as health minister was with senior clinicians from both the Mater and the Royal Children's Hospital to discuss our Queensland Children's Hospital. That was a very productive and cordial meeting that I conducted with the Premier and senior people from my department.

I have since been to visit both the Mater and the Royal Children's Hospital and spent time with doctors, seeing the great work that they do. I had the chance to witness a heart operation on a one-year-old child performed by an expert surgeon at the Mater Children's Hospital. I understand the importance of children's health. As a parent, I understand why it matters so much to Queensland's mum and dads. We want to make sure that Queensland kids get the best health care available.

All the evidence is that building a single facility that locates specialist paediatric services in one place delivers the best clinical outcomes for sick kids. That is what we are doing. Most recently, the Garling inquiry in New South Wales indicated that in that state a single specialist children's hospital is the best way to go.

It is more than that. Anyone who thinks that Queensland Health begins and ends south of Noosa is wrong. We will have a Queensland Children's Hospital, not a Brisbane Children's Hospital. It shows us why the LNP did so badly in regional Queensland when it thought it was appropriate, against clinical advice and three years of its own policy, to have two children's hospitals about four kilometres from each other and not then consider how they interacted with children in the rest of the state.

Sydney has a Sydney Symphony Orchestra. Adelaide has an Adelaide Symphony Orchestra. We have a Queensland Symphony Orchestra. We will have a Queensland Children's Hospital, not a Brisbane Children's Hospital, because this state does not begin and end in South-East Queensland alone.

The opposition made it a very clear issue in the election. I suppose one of the most disappointing parts of it is that the then Leader of the Opposition—and now of course the putative Leader of the Opposition that he is—made a virtue of actually wasting more money in terms of having two hospitals rather than understanding that we have competing priorities throughout Queensland.

We are already on with the job of delivering this \$1.1 billion project. We can see the bricks and mortar and the dirt being moved around there. Work is being done on the St Laurence's school campuses, which I know that you, Mr Speaker, would be particularly interested in. We look after them, notwithstanding their former students!

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is no need to be provocative.

Mr LUCAS: We will deliver 71 extra beds and 37 emergency department bays—double the current number. This is a very important project. It will be a chief priority for us to deliver.

Electricity Prices

Mr SEENEY: My question without notice is to the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy. Under the terms of clause 90 of the Electricity Act it says—

The minister must—

and I emphasise 'must'—

for each tariff year decide the prices.

Given that the act quite clearly provides power to the minister to decide electricity prices, can the minister advise the people of Queensland what level of increase they should budget for in the first year of this government and how that increase might affect the 100,000 jobs target?

Mr ROBERTSON: Can I begin by welcoming my erstwhile friend back to the fray. We have missed each other over the last four years.

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

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The minister will resume his seat. The clock will be stopped. I call the member for Callide.

Mr SEENEY: Mr Speaker, I absolutely have to exercise my rights under the protocols of this House and find that deeply offensive and ask that it be withdrawn. I have not missed the minister at all.

Mr SPEAKER: I will listen with interest to the minister to see whether he is being further provocative. The clock can restart. I call the minister.

Mr ROBERTSON: Mr Speaker, I am prepared to say that at least I missed you. The issue of how electricity prices get determined is indeed a complex one. It is worth while that we spend a bit of time understanding exactly this point. The report in today's *Courier-Mail* does not refer to how electricity prices will be determined from the beginning of the 2009-10 financial year. The article is about price paths for the next five years, starting in 2010-11.

In terms of electricity prices to commence from the beginning of the next financial year, I am hoping that at least some members of the opposition have kept up with the draft determination by the Queensland Competition Authority that was released in December last year that suggested that prices should increase by around 13 per cent to take effect from the middle of this year. That was based on a very open and transparent process. That is something that has been missing in terms of how electricity prices are set.

I think it is also important, now that we have an Australia-wide system of how prices for electricity are regulated, to look at the impact of that price-setting framework on other states. For example, Western Australia recently announced a retail price rise of 25 per cent for domestic customers from 2009-10. New South Wales announced average rises of 20 per cent. The Northern Territory announced an 18 per cent increase for 2009-10.

Mr Seeney interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Member for Callide!

Mr ROBERTSON: You have not improved, have you?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Minister, I have ruled this morning that the word 'you' will be expunged. Would you withdraw that remark before you continue.

Mr ROBERTSON: I withdraw. The member has not improved over the last four years. The draft determination that came from the QCA looked at price increases in the order of 13 per cent. That has not been set yet. It is a draft determination. Submissions on that draft determination close at the end of May. We will then be in a position to know, following consideration of those submissions by the QCA, what the price for electricity will increase by come the beginning of the financial year. There is nothing being hidden here. This is an open and transparent and independent process. We await the outcome of that process.

(Time expired)

Private Investment

Mr MOORHEAD: My question is to the Treasurer. Economies around the world are seeing private investment dry up. Can the Treasurer advise the House of any significant private investment recently secured for Queensland?

Mr FRASER: I thank the member for Waterford for his question, for his concern for the development of this state, for supporting working people across Queensland and for fighting the scourge of rising unemployment. What we have seen earlier this week with the signing of a transaction on Sunday evening by a schools consortium is a vote of confidence in the long-term benefits of investing in Queensland by that consortia.

What we have seen through that consortia is that seven new schools will be delivered by those investors for the 30-year period to meet the demands of the growing population in the south-east corner. What is important about that transaction is that it is worth \$1.1 billion and it not only provides the jobs during the construction of those seven schools but also provides the classrooms of the future for the up to 4,000 students who will be learning in those schools when they reach their full expansion. Each of those schools is designed to cater for 370 students in the first instance, with future expansion possible.

Already with the signing of the contract on Sunday evening, we see work underway at Peregian Springs, where a new primary school will open for the start of the next school year. Work is underway to commence construction at Thornlands South, where another primary school will be delivered next year. After that, two will be delivered in the growing western corridor and another at East Coomera in the growth area in the north of the Gold Coast. In the year after that two more schools will be constructed—a primary school at Bundilla and then a high school at Murrumba Downs.

These schools represent a vote of confidence in the ability to invest in Queensland. What they represent is providing the infrastructure for the future to cater for the growth and to educate the Queenslanders who will be at the forefront of our economic destiny and our destiny as a state into the future. What it means, through this mechanism, is that the teachers and principals at these schools can concentrate on what happens in the classroom, not worry about changing the light bulbs or repainting the port rack or the other tasks that go with caring for and maintaining a school. That will be taken care of by the investors in this circumstance who will deliver, construct and then maintain these schools for the benefit of those school communities. When I visited schools such as this in other states I saw that the communities have welcomed them.

On the PPP issue, it is worth noting that we have seen from Macquarie Bank overnight a statement to the Australian Stock Exchange about a proposal to purchase units from the BrisConnections share register. The government has always had a clear view that this was a matter that needed to be resolved commercially between the parties, and their actions overnight are in accord with that view and we welcome their moves. We reiterate that for all unit holders it is obviously up to them to take their own individual expert professional advice on this front, but what we have seen here are commercial entities accepting the obligations that they undertook. That has been our view from the start, and that remains our view.

Queensland Rail, Northern Missing Link Project

Ms SIMPSON: My question is to the Minister for Transport. More than 1,000 Queensland jobs have been lost due to Queensland Rail's Northern Missing Link project being delayed after construction had started. Since the government is on record as late as 16 March taking credit for green lighting this project, will the minister and her government now take credit for the job losses?

Ms NOLAN: I thank the honourable member for the question and congratulate her on continuing in her role as shadow minister for transport and, I understand, main roads. It is important to understand that the government is committed to the Northern Missing Link project, and indeed work on this project has commenced. The land for the corridor has been acquired and cleared, so work on this project has already commenced. Right now the Queensland government through Queensland Rail is negotiating with the customers—the coal companies—on what will be the commercial basis for the construction of this project. But it is important to understand two things. One is that we understand the importance of this project and that we are fundamentally committed to it. The other thing, however, is that this project will proceed on a commercial basis. Queensland Rail is a commercial entity. It is not a charitable organisation. As such, it is appropriate that this project is appropriately and commercially underwritten. Right now Queensland Rail is engaged in a high degree of cooperation with the coal companies to get the figures, quite frankly, right on it, and to look at what is the best price at which this project can be constructed.

It should also be understood that, if the coal companies as customers believe they can do it more cheaply—there has been an offer placed on the table—we would look at ideas from that. If they want to build it themselves, frankly they would be quite welcome to. We are absolutely open to that. So it cannot be argued therefore that there is an entirely bureaucratic hold-up to this. What essentially has happened is that this project has been considered for—

Ms Simpson interjected.

Ms NOLAN: This project has been considered for a period of time. As that consideration continued, the coal price—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The minister will resume her seat.

Ms Simpson interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: I have asked for order from the member for Maroochydore. The House will come to order.

Ms NOLAN: As that consideration of the project continued, the coal price dropped quite dramatically which changed the commercial underpinnings. But there are two things to understand: one, we are committed; and, two, we will do this commercially. On the other side of the House that is simply not the case. We are not making unfunded and silly commitments like a railway line to nowhere, as the shadow minister did during the election campaign.

(Time expired)

Construction Industry, Jobs

Mrs ATTWOOD: My question is to the Minister for Public Works and Information and Communication Technology. Can the minister advise the House how the BSA's Building Better Businesses Shows will support the construction industry through these difficult times?

Mr SCHWARTEN: I thank the honourable member for her interest in the construction industry and of course her interest in jobs. Speaking of jobs in these difficult times, I have some stats from the BSA which are very alarming in that 92,000 contracts were signed in the 2007-08 year. To date, 10 months into this financial year, the number is 62,000. If that does not strike a fit of fear into everybody in this parliament, it certainly strikes it into me and I am sure members on this side understand just how vital it is to create employment in the construction industry. That is why we have \$8 billion from a Labor government in public works delivery to create jobs and to protect jobs for building workers in this state. It is great to have a federal Labor government adding another \$4 billion on top of that. What defines Labor governments is creating jobs in these tough times, and I and members on this side know that when unemployment knocks on the door it goes through the building and construction industry like smallpox through an orphanage.

The reality is that it is our job to underpin the building industry in every single way that we can. One of the ways we are doing it of course is through our Building Services Authority, which was saved from privatisation by the now Leader of the House. That was the policy of those opposite back then, and I guess it is still the same because they are silent on it. The reality is that we have the Building Services Authority out there with Construction Skills Queensland and the Department of Public Works holding seminars which get builders together to ensure that those builders have the very latest information at their fingertips on things like national building stimulus projects—that is, how do they get hold of them, what do they need to do as licensees to get them and what do trade contractors need to do in order to get prequalified? Those are the sorts of questions that building workers out there are wanting to know the answers to, and our government is paving the way very clearly for those people to do it.

It is not surprising to see in Cairns, for example, that the *Cairns Post* is reporting that a seminar is going to happen there next week. It is not surprising that the *Townsville Bulletin* is carrying similar information, because what we are doing is making sure that we get out to the regions and we are talking about things that interest builders. We are making sure that they, through a free service, get the right strategies in place to ensure that they do not go under in these most difficult times. I am delighted that this is a government that understands what unemployment is about and understands the curse of unemployment. I am glad the people of Queensland have recognised that we are the side of politics that cares about jobs, and the construction industry is one of those areas.

Tourism Industry, Job Creation

Mr STEVENS: My question is to the Minister for Tourism and Fair Trading. After the minister's meeting with the Jobs Squad, what advice was given and what practical steps has the minister put in place to this point in time to ensure an increase in jobs in the tourism industry?

Mr LAWLOR: I thank the member for the question. The member may be aware that the Tourism Queensland budget is \$47 million and that, in fact, 119,000 people are employed in the tourism industry. When I was appointed minister, I took it upon myself to tour the regions. I went to Cairns, where they mentioned the member's name fondly. The situation in Cairns is quite serious. Unfortunately, that area is exposed more than any other area to the Japanese economy. The reduction in the number of flights from Japan to Cairns has impacted quite severely on the industry in Cairns.

Townsville is in a better situation than Cairns. At the moment, Airlie Beach is quite buoyant and the situation in Mackay is excellent. As the member is aware, on the Gold Coast over Easter the industry was quite buoyant owing to the Too Easy and Bonus Breaks campaigns. There was \$1 million spent on the domestic campaign, which generated more than 16,000 room nights across Queensland and approximately \$9.5 million in visitor expenditure. In terms of the Bonus Breaks campaign, \$1.3 million was spent and that campaign focused on Sydney and Melbourne. So far, that campaign has generated \$10 million and 22,500 bed nights.

The Bligh government has committed an additional \$38 million to help drive the tourism industry through these tough economic times. I have told Tourism Queensland and my department to leave no stone unturned in finding ways of keeping tourists coming to Queensland. Businesses are open in Queensland.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr LAWLOR: That is one way to concentrate on creating jobs.

Mr SPEAKER: I offer you this warning: if I get on my feet again and I have an interruption like that again I will warn the member and then you will be out for the day.

Building the Education Revolution

Ms van LITSENBURG: My question is to the Minister for Education and Training. Could the minister outline to the House the progress of the federal government's Building the Education Revolution in Queensland state schools?

Mr WILSON: I thank the honourable member for the question. The Bligh government is getting on with the job of protecting and creating jobs in Queensland. Construction work will soon commence on schools throughout Queensland as a result of Building the Education Revolution. More than \$195 million will be spent on refurbishment projects across 1,039 state schools and 320 non-state schools as part of round 1 of the National School Pride program. This is the first element of the \$14.7 billion Building the Education Revolution. That \$14.7 billion is part of the \$42 billion economic stimulus that was introduced into the federal parliament in February by the Rudd government.

As part of this program, about \$2.5 billion will be invested in our schools in Queensland. That is an unprecedented investment in infrastructure that is so vital to delivering improved educational outcomes in our Queensland schools. It is also vital for generating jobs in the local community. We have hit the ground running with this program and there are several more rounds to come in relation to the other two elements of Building the Education Revolution. We want to make sure that we are getting on with the job of delivering jobs here in Queensland.

This is a program that we have supported fully from the day it was announced by the federal government. We supported it fully in here but it was opposed by those opposite. Their colleagues in the Senate voted twice to reject the \$43 billion economic stimulus, \$14.7 billion of which is allocated to Building the Education Revolution, of which \$2.5 billion comes to Queensland. But the other side's colleagues in the federal parliament are opposed to it.

It makes you wonder what shame they may have when the member for Hinchinbrook comes out and supports in his local newspaper the work that this National School Pride program has initiated in his electorate. He said that, whilst they had some doubts about it federally, they really did support it and they were very pleased that this investment is taking place. We supported these programs. We are about building jobs for Queenslanders.

(Time expired)

Solar Panels

Mr ELMES: My question is to the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy and Minister for Trade. I refer to the Premier's promise during the campaign to install solar hot-water heaters on roofs at a cost of \$500. Will the minister commit that these solar panels will be manufactured in Queensland, creating new Queensland jobs rather than using overseas or interstate imports?

Mr ROBERTSON: I thank the member for the question, because it gives me an opportunity to highlight just how popular our solar hot-water scheme has been since it was announced during the election campaign. The sole purpose of this scheme is to significantly increase the uptake of solar hot water and installed units in Queensland.

At present about 20,000 units are installed each year. We want to get the lion's share of the 300,000 units that the federal government has committed to funding through its rebate schemes. We have targeted to increase the number of solar hot-water units sold in Queensland over the next three years by 200,000—a significant increase. By targeting that, we are working with the industry to achieve an increase in the capacity of the local industry to deliver those units at set price points. We indicate that what we want to do is bring down the price of the installation of solar hot-water units as a result of putting out an expression of interest for 200,000 units to be installed over the next three years and industry is, in fact, responding to that.

That expression of interest process is underway. It would be inappropriate during that EOI process to make comments about what submissions have been received. But we have indicated that we expect that, as a result of injecting that kind of expansion of the local solar hot-water system market into Queensland, there will be producers who will relocate or open new operations in Queensland, creating jobs as well as significantly increasing the penetration of solar hot-water systems into the Queensland market.

Already we have received very positive submissions from the industry in response to our EOI process. Once that EOI process is completed, we will be in a position to announce exactly how we will achieve the targets that we have set ourselves but also how industry will respond to it. Simply put, you are just going to have to watch this space.

Child Safety

Ms NELSON-CARR: I understand the Minister for Child Safety was recently in my electorate, visiting the hardworking child safety staff in Aitkenvale. The hardworking dedication of Queensland child safety officers is a part of the undeniably vital work that they do. Could the minister inform the House what he has done since becoming minister to acquaint himself with the work that they do?

Mr REEVES: I thank the member for the question. The people of Mundingburra know of the work that she does to protect young people and to look after her community. The Bligh government is dedicated to protecting Queensland's children and young people. I have made it my mission to meet the people who help us protect our children and ensure that they are safe from abuse. Since I have become minister I have met with representatives of 17 non-government organisations that help deliver child protection services, six child safety service centres and two zonal offices.

Earlier this month I visited child safety service centres at Townsville, Aitkenvale and Thuringowa which deal with approximately 800 children who are in need of some level of intervention by Child Safety. They are the kids who do not have parents who are able or willing to give them the quality of care and protection that they need. Of those, approximately 480 are no longer able to live with their parents and about 440 are being cared for by nearly 240 remarkable foster carers.

I had the pleasure of meeting many of the 98 child safety service centre employees based in Townsville and Palm Island. I was impressed by the outstanding job they do protecting local children in often challenging and confronting circumstances. It is because of the dedication of staff and foster carers that many local children and teenagers have been able to reach amazing goals they may not otherwise have had a chance to try for. I heard some fantastic stories, including that of a teenager in care who has been selected to represent Australia in junior hockey. Another teenage boy has been selected to play on the Broncos junior rugby league team. It was a bit hard for the people of Townsville to accept that, but they did. Another young person is completing her nursing degree with honours.

Child Safety provide almost \$11 million in funding to support the vital work of the non-government agency in Townsville. It provides options for children who cannot live safely at home, support services for abused and neglected children and their families, and advice to department officers making case management decisions about Indigenous children. It is all about helping meet the Bligh government's Toward Q2 goal of making Queensland a fairer place to live within a safe and caring community.

Regional Councils

Mrs PRATT: My question is to the honourable Treasurer. Many rural and regional councils are severely financially stressed. Post amalgamation many regional councils, once free of payroll tax, are now required to pay that tax. Post amalgamation regional councils are now being told that state audit fees will rise by 100 per cent. Did the Treasurer factor in the impact of those fees and many other added financial burdens on newly formed regional councils? What measures has the Treasurer put in place to stop the increasing financial burden? How much revenue has the state government collected through those additional amalgamation costs and taxes, and where is that money going?

Mr FRASER: I thank the member for Nanango for her question. In answering the question it is relevant to point out that one of the most important structural reforms ever undertaken by Labor in government was the reform to the century-old local government boundaries in the last term of the parliament. I think it was instructive that despite all the light and fury of the revisionists—those who want to live in the old Kingswood with the front bench seat, the 'three on the tree' and the rear-vision mirror for looking at the future of Queensland—they absented that issue in substance from the conduct of the election campaign.

We believed then as we believe now that the reform was an important and timely reform for the people of Queensland. As I recall, at the time the Local Government Association, on behalf of councils, came to the government with a proposal for funds in the order of \$27 million. That funding package was acceded to by the government and those funds were provided for the benefit of local councils, recognising that there would be interim costs before long-term savings were secured. Many councils, such as the Moreton Bay Regional Council, have identified what everyone understands: that there are long-term benefits to the ratepayers, that savings are being achieved, that there is much to be gained from the amalgamation of councils and that councils are achieving real savings. From around the state we see success stories where councils have come together to provide better services, a better level of representation and a higher capacity to service their communities. However, the reality is that other councils seek to pursue an agenda that suggests that there are costs beyond that.

I go back to a point made often, said often, but heard less often in the debate, which is that taxpayer money is ratepayer money. There is no division. There is no compensation arrangement that goes to a different source. We do not figure ourselves as ratepayers one morning, state taxpayers the next and federal taxpayers the morning after that. This is public money. There is no separate magic pudding of public money for councils to pursue in these circumstances. What I believed then, what I

know to be the case now and what I believe will be the case in the future is that it is to the overall benefit of the residents of Queensland, whether they be identified as ratepayers, state taxpayers or federal taxpayers, that we pursued that agenda. I believe ultimately, as we have seen with many councils, that savings are there to be made. I believe in the importance of the reform. I believe overwhelmingly that on 21 March the people of Queensland endorsed the reform that we undertook, which was difficult structural reform that was important for the future of Queensland. That is what you can expect to see from this government well into the future.

Private Rental Market

Mr HOOLIHAN: My question without notice is to the Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women. I commend the minister on the Bligh government's \$1.3 billion Nation Building and Jobs Plan. Four thousand new homes across the state will kick-start local economies. It is a win for the building industry and public housing tenants. With that in mind, I ask the minister: what steps are being taken to cater for people trying to enter the private housing market?

Ms STRUTHERS: I am delighted to talk about housing and I thank the member for the question. Last week I was in Rocky and I saw firsthand a number of social and community housing projects, some already completed and some about to get underway. It is absolutely fantastic that we have such support from the federal government. Last week in Brisbane I stood shoulder to shoulder with federal housing minister Jenny Macklin. She came to Queensland with a cheque for \$138 million. That money will build 444 additional social housing units. That is the sort of cooperation we are getting from the federal government. In Queensland it means jobs, jobs, jobs; it means lots of roofs over people's heads. I am delighted to be the minister who is able to deliver that. I thank the former minister, Robert Schwarten. Members of former parliaments know of the hard work he did to try to get money out of the Howard government. Sadly, not much money ever ended up in his department's pocket.

In Central Queensland everyone is a winner. Last year we commenced a trial of the RentConnect project. In Central Queensland and the other trial area of Caboolture, 200 people have been able to find private rental accommodation. This is about helping people negotiate the private rental market. It is about helping young people who often have trouble as they may not have a recent tenancy history or single parents who, as many of us know, often have difficulty negotiating the private rental market. Officers in Rocky work one-on-one with people to help them overcome the challenges of the private rental market. They are given simple and effective tips and advice on how to find a property, how to apply for it and how to start a tenancy, and a tenancy guarantee of up to \$1,000 is on offer for some people. There is a big demand for private rental housing and, as we know, a lot of competition.

We will evaluate the trial to see whether we can roll it out state-wide, because while we have our massive Nation Building and Jobs Plan, we are not about to turn our back on people who need help entering the private rental market. Everyone needs a roof over their head and that is why the Bligh government is getting on with the job of building 4,000 new homes across the state and generating thousands of jobs. I will say that again: we are building 4,000 new social housing units across the state. That is what this government is committed to and we look forward to your support.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The time for question time has expired. Honourable members, I would like you to welcome in the public gallery the school leaders and teachers of the Faith Lutheran College at Plainland in the electorate of Lockyer, represented in this House by Mr Ian Rickuss.

APPOINTMENTS

Liberal National Party

Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (11.30 am): I have a list of LNP appointments. I seek leave to have the list incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

I rise to inform the House of opposition appointments. I have been appointed Leader of the Opposition, Leader of the LNP and shadow minister for Arts.

Lawrence Springborg has been appointed Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Deputy Leader of the LNP, shadow Attorney-General and Shadow minister for Trade.

Mark McArdle has been appointed shadow minister for health while Tim Nicholls has been appointed Shadow Treasurer and shadow minister for Employment and Economic Development.

Jann Stuckey has been appointed Shadow minister for Public Works and Information and Communication Technology.

Jeff Seeney has been appointed shadow minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy and additionally holds the post of Leader of Opposition Business.

Bruce Flegg has been appointed shadow minister for Education and Training, while Vaughan Johnson has been appointed shadow minister for Police and Corrective Services.

Ted Malone has been appointed Shadow minister for Emergency Services and Northern Development.

Ray Hopper has been appointed Shadow minister for Primary Industries, Fisheries and Rural and Regional Queensland.

Fiona Simpson has been appointed shadow minister for Transport and Main Roads.

Howard Hobbs has been appointed shadow minister for Local Government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships.

David Gibson has been appointed shadow minister for Infrastructure and Planning while Rosemary Menkens has been appointed shadow minister for Community Services and Housing and is shadow minister for women.

Glen Elmes has been appointed shadow minister for Climate Change and Sustainability.

Andrew Cripps has been appointed shadow minister for Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs.

Ray Stevens has been appointed shadow minister for Tourism and Fair Trading while Jack Dempsey has been appointed shadow minister for Child Safety and shadow minister for Sport.

Mike Horan has been appointed Opposition Whip and Rob Messenger has been appointed Deputy Opposition Whip.

Mr Speaker, I am very proud to announce these changes. My shadow ministry will hold this government to account.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Job Creation

Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (11.30 am): This morning we have come into this place and listened to the government talk about its target of 100,000 jobs which the Premier has provided to the House. She of course provides the colour and then we look to the Treasurer to provide the detail and more specifics. The Premier is big on targets—and has been in her previous portfolios, as we all know, of education and families—but when it comes to the detail sometimes the targets are not always lived up to, and I think the expectation is that the people of Queensland will just forget what the targets were.

Let us have a look at what has happened this morning in the House. The honourable the Treasurer spoke about the 119,000 infrastructure jobs that were mentioned in the budget papers last year that would be provided by the infrastructure plan. To the end of March, nine months into this financial year, only 1,700 jobs have been provided of those 119,000. What did the honourable the Treasurer say? 'Oh, no. Those 119,000 jobs will be jobs that will be supported throughout the economy.' He is not going to be held to the ABS statistics on those jobs figures because of something that was written in the budget papers back in June, even though we have had the commitment from the Treasurer that the ABS statistics will be the ones that he is happy to be governed by when it comes to the target of 100,000 jobs. I think he uses the ABS statistics when he wants to and disregards them when he wants to.

That is the pattern we have seen from this Premier in the past. She told Queenslanders only a month ago that they could count on her. When it comes to energy prices, let us have a look at that history. In 2005 the honourable the Premier, who was Deputy Premier at the time, said, 'It does not matter where you live. Nobody—not one Queensland—will be worse off under the government's proposal.' That was the proposal for deregulation of electricity prices. What has happened since? We have 30 per cent increases in electricity prices. Now we have a mooted increase. It could be 15 per cent. And all the Minister for Natural Resources could say this morning was, 'Well, at least it is not going to be anywhere near 48 per cent.' Do not look at what they say; look at what they have done.

(Time expired)

Oxley Electorate, Railway Stations

Mrs ATTWOOD (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (11.33 am): I rise to bring to the attention of the House the great work being done in the electorate of Mount Ommaney to improve public transport for its commuters. When I first became elected I wanted to ensure that my railway stations were upgraded to Commonwealth disability standards. The minister was quick to act and in 2004 the Corinda Railway Station received a \$6 million upgrade complete with three lifts. The old ramps were taken down because they did not meet the Australian standards and were too steep for people with disabilities to use safely and easily. Not long after that, Oxley Railway Station was upgraded with a lift and ramp to also meet the required standard. Vicki Humphries, a local Oxley resident and advocate for people with disabilities, advised me that she was then able to use the train to travel throughout Brisbane and to take in all the sights of our great city. There was, however, still one small hurdle—there was too much of a gap between the platform and the floor of the train. In other words, people in wheelchairs having to use a ramp to board the train said the ramp was too steep and difficult for them to board. After lobbying the minister, QR soon responded to raise the platform floor—quite a difficult goal to achieve considering that the station was heritage listed—and work was completed to make this adjustment.

Recently the Oxley Railway Station has received another upgrade and a new platform, a new pedestrian bridge and 70 new car parks have been installed. There are many people from outside the electorate who use this station and Corinda station and when Richlands station is built, with its 600 new car parking facilities, this will alleviate some of the pressure on the parking in my area. However, I call on the Brisbane City Council and the local councillor Matthew Bourke to get their act together to sort out the parking regulations in the local streets to make them safer for our local residents. Residents were also concerned about increased noise around the station, but they are satisfied that a noise barrier will be installed on the Ardoyne Road side of the station. Members of the Oxley QCWA and president Jean Harrop are pleased that their hall has been moved successfully to Cawonga Park at Oxley.

(Time expired)

Bligh Labor Government

Mr SPRINGBORG (Southern Downs—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (11.34 am): This morning we saw in this place why the Treasurer and the new Minister for Employment is the most unpopular member of the Queensland parliament. This is a person who has not one single degree of empathy or understanding when it comes to the needs of the Public Service in Queensland. Indeed, this person has been re-elected to the state parliament with the lowest primary vote of any sitting member of this parliament. Indeed, there were 32 losing candidates who actually got a higher primary vote than the Treasurer of Queensland. This morning what we saw was the duplicity and the dishonesty of this person—this person who failed to stand up for the public servants of Queensland.

Also, it is very unfortunate that the Queensland Public Sector Union let down their own members during the election campaign. It spent so much time grovelling to and brownnosing the Labor Party government that it forgot to stand up for its members. So what did we see the day after the election? Headlines in the *Courier-Mail* about efficiency dividends, about fat cutting in Queensland. A couple of weeks down the track we have now seen the government promising to reduce the leave entitlements and the superannuation entitlements of Queensland public sector workers.

If Alex Scott and the Public Sector Union had spent less time looking after the Labor Party and brownnosing it and more time standing up for their members, then we would not be in this quandary today. The least that this government should do is stand up for the entitlements of hardworking public sector employees who have had their entitlements preserved over years and years of governments in Queensland. It is the best public service superannuation scheme in all of Australia and some of the best entitlements in all of Australia over and above their day-to-day wages. We now see the true duplicity of this government—it will do and say anything to cling to power in Queensland and the epitome of that of course is the Treasurer.

(Time expired)

Mundingburra Electorate

Ms NELSON-CARR (Mundingburra—ALP) (11.36 am): It is a great pleasure to rise here today in my fifth term as the elected member for Mundingburra. I remember what it was like five terms ago when I de-seated Frank Tanti, the then Liberal member. I am very proud to be here. I think often we forget just what an honour it is after all of these years to have the experiences that are bestowed upon elected members. It is a very great honour. There are a number of roles that we do indeed perform.

One of the first things that I was able to do in this fifth term was to open the JCU sport and recreation facility, which was a joint venture done by JCU Sport and Recreation and the student association. Between the two of them they were able to erect a world-class facility, which will be used not only by the university students at JCU but by the entire community. The other thing that I do regularly—and it is coming up for all of us this weekend—is attend Anzac Day services. That is another thing that we cannot take for granted. It is extremely memorable and one worth preserving.

But none of this can occur without the support that we get from those who get us elected in the first place. That goes to the constituency of course but also to those dedicated workers who spend hours and hours of their time supporting us because they believe in us and, in my case, they believe in the Labor Party.

Firstly, I would like to especially thank my staff. I also wish to particularly thank the Murphy family—Rhonda and Ray Murphy and their children—who gave of themselves in more ways than I can believe. I also thank Michael and Krista Kaysley and the many people who were very much involved in my campaign—Kiel Shuttleworth, Alan Polley, Primus Parker. To the unions who supported me, I could not have done without them—Marg Mills, Ken Gray, Peter Hindle—and to my parents and to all those who got me elected, I say thank you.

(Time expired)

Bligh Labor Government

Mr NICHOLLS (Clayfield—LNP) (11.38 am): This morning we heard another instalment from the Treasurer about the difficult economic and employment prospects we will be facing over the next little while. We have heard how tough the budget will be. We have heard how our trading partners are doing it tough—seven out of 10 are in economic recession. We have also had the kite flying. We have had the proposals to cut down on public servants' wages and conditions, to not honour the MOU, the 4½ per cent that has been promised for the next year, and how the government is going to cut back on leave loading and superannuation entitlements.

Most astonishingly, as the member for Southern Downs has pointed out, this has been done in complete concert with the QPSU and their craven leadership, who were more interested in securing the jobs of Labor Party members in this place than they were in protecting the jobs of the hardworking public servants here in Queensland. They are a disgrace as a representative body.

What is the real state of affairs that we do not hear from the Treasurer? What is the real state of affairs that just does not get mentioned anymore? It is the fact that we have gone backwards by \$2.4 billion in less than nine months; the fact that we have got a \$1.6 billion deficit; the fact that we will have over \$16,000 in debt for every man, woman and child in Queensland at the end of the forward estimates; the loss of Queensland's AAA credit rating for the first time in its history—down to a AA+ and on credit watch with Standard & Poor's; the inability to raise funds overseas without big brother, the federal government, coming in to stand guarantor; the extra interest payments—\$340 million every year—as a result of the loss of the AAA credit rating.

We are not immune from the effects of the global financial crisis. No-one has ever predicted that we would be. Our problem has been compounded by the Labor government's inability during 11 years in office to put money away in the good times to protect us from the bad times we are now experiencing. The Treasurer talked about plans this morning but he mentioned no detail of them. There are jobs being lost—20,000 since the end of December and another 1,700 not created, not being built, as the Leader of the Opposition has indicated. This is a government without a plan and without a future.

Central Queensland Rugby League

Mr HOOLIHAN (Keppel—ALP) (11.41 am): Over the years, Queensland has provided many world-class rugby league players. It is no secret to anyone that two of the three Queensland NRL teams lead the ladder, but there is a glaring deficiency. From Mackay to Bundaberg and out to the border, there are 450,000 Queenslanders who have no NRL team, and if players from there want to stay in Queensland they have to move either north or south to try to get into a current team. It is also no secret that the current Queensland Cup leaders are the CQ Comets. Go, Comets.

The increase in the number of NRL teams that is projected to occur from 2013 has brought a bid from the Central Queensland area. That bid is led by some very high-profile and leading community members who are working towards getting a fourth franchise from Queensland in the NRL. They are trying to get a team accepted by the NRL in 2013 by either forming a new club to operate the franchise or relocating a Sydney club to Central Queensland. It is time that we kept our players at home, particularly our Central Queensland players. I have one message to everyone in this House and for those people in Queensland who support those other teams—go, CQ.

Electricity Prices

Mr SEENEY (Callide—LNP) (11.42 am): Queensland electricity consumers should be very concerned about what we saw in the parliament this morning. The new Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy had no idea about what is going to happen to Queensland electricity prices. In fact, I do not think the minister had any idea that the decision about what was going to happen to electricity prices is his responsibility to make. We have a minister who not only will not make the decisions but does not even know he has to make the decisions. The minister can stand in this parliament and tell us what happened to the electricity prices in every other state in Australia. We heard about the prices in New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia but we heard nothing about the prices in Queensland.

Queensland electricity consumers do not need to be told that the price of their electricity has risen by 30 per cent in the last three years, and there are suggestions in this morning's media that that is just the beginning. This is coming from a government which promised that no Queensland electricity consumer would pay more under its system of deregulation.

What has happened with electricity prices in Queensland is symptomatic of what has happened with this government in so many other areas. Government members make promises that mean nothing. They set targets that are absurdly ridiculous. They set out with all sorts of theories and propositions that never become reality—that produce the opposite of what was promised when it was introduced into this parliament.

Electricity pricing in Queensland is the responsibility of the government, and that responsibility is exercised by the minister. It is in the legislation. It is in section 90 of the Queensland Electricity Act 1994 and the minister should read it. When every Queenslanders opens their electricity bills from this day forward, they should sheet blame home to the minister and the government. It is the government that is responsible for the 30 per cent rise over three years, and it is the Bligh Labor government that will be responsible for the rises that we will see in coming months.

(Time expired)

Crows Nest, Q150 Legacy Infrastructure Program

Mr SHINE (Toowoomba North—ALP) (11.44 am): Queensland is celebrating its 150th anniversary this year. As part of that, the Queensland government has set up the Q150 Legacy Infrastructure Program. This comprises \$100 million of capital works to create legacies for Queensland's 150th anniversary. These legacies in various parts of Queensland will be remembered by a permanent plaque that is put in place.

Last Sunday I had the pleasure of representing the Premier at such an occasion at Crows Nest. Crows Nest is in the old shire of Crows Nest and currently in the electorate of Nanango, but many people associated with Crows Nest live nearby or work in my electorate. On this occasion, the government contributed \$160,000 from the Q150 Legacy Infrastructure Program to upgrade and beautify Centenary Park at Crows Nest. The Queensland government has also granted the Toowoomba Regional Council \$60,000 for an upgrade to the Centenary Park lighting and \$375,000 from the Rural Living Infrastructure Program to the Crows Nest RSL Community Hub. That building was also supported by the federal government and was officially opened by Senator Mark Furner on behalf of the federal government also on Sunday.

The park upgrade includes a children's playground and picnic facilities as well as interpretive signage and shade sails. This park upgrade was a real partnership, a real community supported event. There was \$520,000 provided from Progressive Community Crows Nest, which is an entity associated with the Heritage Building Society; \$160,000 provided, as I said, from the Q150 Legacy Infrastructure Program; \$60,000 from the Security Improvement Program, which is a state government program; \$30,000 from Ergon Energy's Community Powerline Project; and \$90,000 from the Toowoomba Regional Council, a fifty-fifty joint funding—

(Time expired)

Currumbin Electorate, Infrastructure

Mrs STUCKEY (Currumbin—LNP) (11.46 am): The Currumbin electorate has been the recipient of close to \$2 billion worth of infrastructure these past three years, with both the Tugun bypass and the desalination plant in one suburb. I want to congratulate the good people of Tugun for their patience and tolerance through this incredibly disruptive time. They have suffered noise, dirt and disruption on a 24-hour basis. They waited 20 years for the Tugun bypass and suddenly they were told they were getting a huge desal plant as well. But we are still waiting for the desal plant—which has caused enormous amounts of angst—to be fully operational.

My office receives frequent calls from people who complain about the effects of the vibrations that were caused during this preconstruction phase. They have roads that have not been properly restored, they have doors and windows dropping, and there are cracks appearing in walls, ceilings and driveways. These are serious, serious matters for these people. They deserve better than to be told that they have no case to answer to. This government has in fact hung these people out to dry.

The government must now step in and make sure that their properties are restored to preconstruction status. The Tugun footy club is sinking and the government has a responsibility to provide assistance there. My Labor opponent before the election told ABC Radio that Minister Lucas had publicly guaranteed to withhold \$100 million to restore people's homes. Will this be honoured?

Now we find that the plant has been turned off for repairs. We have got news that the pipe couplings are showing early signs of corrosion. This is offering very little confidence. There are still so many unanswered questions. The Tugun bypass, which opened less than a year ago, now has corrosion in the iron framework, yet it was meant to be built to last 100 years. Can the minister rule out elevated acid sulphate levels as a causal connection of corrosion of the pipes and parts of the Tugun desalination project as well as the Tugun bypass?

Queensland Mother of the Year

Ms GRACE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (11.49 am): I was delighted on Thursday, 16 April last week to represent the Premier at the announcement of the Barnardos 2009 Queensland Mother of the Year held at the Holiday Inn, Brisbane. Launched in 1996 by Barnardos, the awards aim to acknowledge the enormous contribution that mothers make in shaping Australia's future through their role in nurturing children. In a special ceremony which was emceed by Kelly Higgins-Divine from 612 ABC Radio and

presented by the Governor of Queensland, Her Excellency Penelope Wensley AO, Barbara Pope from Blenheim was announced Queensland Mother of the Year in the 2009 Barnardos Australia's Mother of the Year awards.

It was Thomas Edison who said, 'My mother was the making of me. She was so true and so sure of me I felt that I had someone to live for, someone I must not disappoint.' Therefore, it comes as no surprise that Barbara Pope was nominated for this award by her son Dan Pope, who was by her side when she was announced the winner. He was extremely proud and deeply moved by her win. I know that all present at the ceremony drew strength from hearing the amazing stories and felt privileged to be surrounded by so many inspirational mums.

Despite having three children of her own, Barbara Pope has fostered and adopted children from desperate situations since 1977. Short-term, long-term, emergency care and pre-adoption infants were rarely turned away. One of Barbara's strongest beliefs is that equality and respect for others is paramount, especially for those less fortunate than themselves. Barbara's special motto is, 'You only get out of life what you put in.' Barbara was shocked, humbled and honoured when she was announced Queensland Mother of the Year. There were three short-listed Queensland finalists who are worthy and who deserve congratulations. The other short-listed finalists are Rosemary Dailly of Gympie and Kathy Smith of Jimboomba.

Barbara will now attend the national function in Sydney on Thursday just before Mother's Day along with seven other state finalists. I know that she will do Queensland proud. I wish her every success. I hope she brings the national title home to Queensland. It is a great way to honour all the great mothers in Queensland. It is a fantastic event and it was very worthy to be there.

Royal Children's Hospital

Mr McARDLE (Caloundra—LNP) (11.51 am): Nobody, not even an 11-year-old Labor government, has the so-called mandate to reduce the quality and quantity of health services available to our very sick Queensland children. The Labor Party is dead wrong if it thinks a whole-of-government strategy of deceit, mistruths, confusion and political cover-up about its decision to destroy the Royal Children's Hospital will go unchallenged. There have only been two credible assessments of the best potential site for a single children's hospital in the past 16 years and both independent reports rated the Royal Children's Hospital site as the best place for it. I repeat that: the Royal Children's Hospital site is the best place for it.

Last year the Queensland Children's Hospital consultation forum found that, of the 14 components of quality, the Royal Children's Hospital site rated 71 per cent favourability compared with 29 per cent for the South Brisbane site. In 1993 the South-East Queensland hospitals services planning project argued—

The most obvious choice for creating the major tertiary paediatric hospital would be the Royal Children's Hospital because of the higher quality of its capital stock and the close proximity to level 5 and level 6 tertiary services at the Royal Brisbane Hospital and the Royal Women's Hospital.

Putting aside the government's political spin and rhetoric, independent site assessments of the best location for a single children's hospital show that expanding the existing Royal Children's Hospital is the best policy for sick Queensland children and taxpayers. Last year we exposed an internal memo from Queensland Children's Hospital project chief which showed that Labor's 2006 plan for a children's hospital in South Brisbane has blown out from \$733 million to \$1.6 billion. The current budget of \$1.1 billion means the current project will fall well short of a promised world-class facility. I can assure the government that this battle is not over.

(Time expired)

North Queensland

Ms JARRATT (Whitsunday—ALP) (11.53 am): The Bligh government is committed to creating a future for Queensland that is underpinned by a strong economy built on smart ideas and innovative approaches to industry development. North Queensland has a natural advantage when it comes to meeting these challenges, and that is because of its position as one of the tropical world's most developed economies. Combine this with our growing strengths in research and business capabilities and the fact that more than 3.3 billion people live in the emerging economies of the world's tropical zone that currently produces around one-fifth of the gross world product and you will begin to understand the true potential of North Queensland's tropical expertise opportunities.

Last year at the Cairns regional sitting of parliament, the government launched its Q-Tropics Strategy, which aimed to create jobs in North Queensland by growing, commercialising and exporting Queensland's tropical expertise. Last week I was pleased to be in Townsville representing the Treasurer and Minister for Employment and Economic Development to see a major component of this strategy

formally take shape. A new association formed with the express purpose of promoting Queensland's tropical expertise, to be known as TropLinks, was launched by its inaugural chair and Queensland chief scientist, Professor Peter Andrews.

TropLinks, which has been supported through a \$1.1 million funding grant, will bring stakeholders together in a network that aims to capture a bigger slice of the burgeoning global tropical market in areas such as health, environmental management, tropical primary industries, and tropical infrastructure and urban design. I congratulate the board of TropLinks for bringing this exciting concept into existence. I wish it and the business communities of North Queensland well in their quest to create employment by doing the very things that they do best.

Tilt Train

Ms SIMPSON (Maroochydore—LNP) (11.55 am): Last year the Labor government tried to cover up the gravy train fiasco. This term it has the ghost train fiasco—the tilt train which mysteriously does not go anywhere, the reasons for which it is desperate to hide. The shroud of secrecy surrounding the real reasons for the tilt train's cancellation has more to do with the government protecting itself than the public. Labor cover-ups usually are about Labor self-protection.

In her first test as minister, Rachel Nolan has resorted to Labor's traditional game of smoke and mirrors. The transport minister's ongoing refusal to release the full information on the cancellation, claiming legal reasons, is looking more and more flimsy. The fatal tilt train accident, which was a tragedy, occurred in November last year but the minister is yet to reveal when she became aware of the ongoing safety concerns and the full reasons for the cancellation which happened at Easter. I am calling on her to urgently reveal this information, otherwise the truth will be conveniently hidden under a cone of silence of the government's creation.

Labor's refusal to release information has the question arising in the community about what the government is trying to cover up. People have a right to know the real reasons surrounding the ongoing cancellation. Minister Rachel Nolan has a responsibility to be open and accountable to the people. This is a sad indication of what is in store for the department of transport, at a time when Queenslanders are demanding more from transport services across the state; namely, high levels of safety and efficiency.

Parliamentary Internship Program

Mr O'BRIEN (Cook—ALP) (11.57 am): Last year I participated in the Queensland Parliamentary Internship Program and supported Jessica Owens, a student from the Cairns campus of James Cook University. Ms Owens undertook a research project looking at issues of Indigenous homeownership. Jessica has worked very hard on the report, and I table it for the consideration and benefit of the House.

Tabled paper: Report by Jessica Owens, Queensland Parliamentary Internship Program 2008, titled 'Place and possession: Indigenous home ownership in Far North Queensland' [\[74\]](#).

The report places the impediments to homeownership in their historical, sociocultural and economic situation. It also explores the complicated land tenure arrangements that exist in remote Indigenous communities that further prevent individual ownership. In her report Ms Owens acknowledges that there are people who are in a position to undertake the responsibility of homeownership and that affordability can be further increased through specially tailored loans and subsidies.

I would also like to take this opportunity to highlight some of the initiatives this government is undertaking to ensure Indigenous Queenslanders and other Queenslanders have access to appropriate housing. I note the comments made by the Minister for Housing to a question asked by the member for Keppel this morning. Last term the government brought legislation into the House which allows for the introduction of 99-year leases on Aboriginal and Torres Strait land. The process for delivering these leases is still embryonic and no doubt we still have much to learn on how we can improve and streamline what will be the final process. When something has never been done before, there are likely to be mistakes initially, but we will learn as we go and pilot the initiative and take it from one community to another. Of course we have to continue to provide social housing, which we are doing. We are finally being assisted by the Commonwealth, which after 11 years of neglect and cuts is committing funds to social housing. These are important initiatives that will allocate money to maintain and provide additional housing across communities. I commend Ms Owens' report to the House.

High-Voltage Powerline

Mr WELLINGTON (Nicklin—Ind) (11.58 am): It gives me a great deal of pleasure to thank the Minister for Infrastructure and Planning for agreeing to my request for a further one-month extension so people could make their submissions to the South East Queensland Regional Plan. So the new deadline is 1 May. I thank the minister for listening to our calls for an extension.

I use this as an example to call on the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy to reconsider his decision as is reported in the *Sunshine Coast Daily* this morning to not grant a further one-month extension to people who want to make a submission to the environmental impact study on the proposed new high-voltage powerline from Woolooga to Eerwah Vale. I table for the benefit of the minister a copy of the article that appeared in the *Sunshine Coast Daily* this morning.

Tabled paper: Newspaper article, dated 22 April 2009, titled 'Minister firm on power rollout' [76].

I support the community's request for a further one month's extension on this very important issue. The environmental impact study affects everyone from Woolooga in the north to Eerwah Vale and west Eumundi in the south. At the moment, there are only two proposed community sessions—one at Gympie on 27 April and one at Federal on 28 April. I believe it is important that a further meeting be held in the south. It could be held at Belli Park community hall or in the town of Eumundi or in the town of Cooroy.

Unfortunately, when I recently met with the consultants for Powerlink they said there was no other venue in the south and no appropriate site in Eumundi or Cooroy to hold this further community information session. I put on the public record today for the benefit of the minister and the government that the Belli Park community hall is available tomorrow. The consultants could come south and hold a public information session for the benefit of the community. I also use this opportunity to seek leave to table a non-conforming petition.

Leave granted.

Tabled paper: Non-conforming petition relating to Powerlink's proposal from Woolooga to Eerwah Vale [75].

I note that earlier this morning a conforming petition from people concerned about this proposed powerline was tabled. I look forward to the minister's response in the near future. I again ask the minister to please consider our community's request for a further one month's extension to make a submission on the environmental impact study in relation to this powerline and please consider the suggestion that the Belli Park community hall is an appropriate venue for the holding of a community information session.

(Time expired)

Tourism Industry

Mr WETTENHALL (Barron River—ALP) (12.00 pm): The effects of the global economic recession are already being felt in Queensland's tourism industry. There is little doubt that operators are facing one of their toughest years in two decades. It is therefore critical that government work closely with industry to ensure that the policy and regulatory settings are right for the times and that appropriate public infrastructure is available to support the industry.

It is also important that all levels of government support tourism and that the wider community fully understands the economic benefits that flow from a dynamic and thriving tourism sector. This is particularly the case in those cities, towns and regions that are dependent on the sector and therefore vulnerable to troughs in the economic cycle or changes in market conditions.

The Bligh government recognises the importance of tourism to the Queensland economy and acknowledges the challenges the industry faces ahead. That is why our government pledged an additional \$38 million over three years to support the marketing of Queensland as a superb destination for leisure and business travellers and other niche markets.

In a recent report on the industry in tropical North Queensland, commissioned by the federal Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism, it was recommended that all levels of government and industry work together to ensure the alignment of policy and regulation and determine priority infrastructure for the region. As the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Tourism I have offered to convene a task force to implement this recommendation. I look forward to working with Val Schier, the mayor of the Cairns Regional Council, Mr Jim Turnour, the federal member for Liechhardt, Tourism Queensland, Tourism Tropical North Queensland, Advance Cairns, the Cairns Chamber of Commerce and others to position tropical North Queensland to remain one of Queensland's premier tourism destinations.

I think the Queensland tourism industry is dynamic, adaptable and resilient. I look forward to working with the Hon. Peter Lawlor, the Minister for Tourism, to meet the challenges ahead.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wendt): Order! The time for private members' statements has concluded.

FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY BILL

Message from Governor

Hon. AP FRASER (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Employment and Economic Development) (12.02 pm): I present a message from Her Excellency the Governor.

The Deputy Speaker read the following message—

MESSAGE

FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY BILL 2009

Constitution of Queensland 2001, section 68

I, PENELOPE ANNE WENSLEY, Governor, recommend to the Legislative Assembly a Bill intituled—

A Bill for an Act to provide for accountability in the administration of the State's finances, to provide for financial administration of departments and statutory bodies, to repeal the Financial Administration and Audit Act 1977, to amend the Government Owned Corporations Act 1993 for particular purposes and to make consequential or minor amendments to other Acts as stated in schedule 1

(Sgd)

GOVERNOR

21 Apr 2009

Tabled paper: Message from Her Excellency the Governor, dated 21 April 2009, recommending the Financial Accountability Bill [\[77\]](#).

First Reading

Hon. AP FRASER (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Employment and Economic Development) (12.03 pm): I present a bill for an act to provide for accountability in the administration of the state's finances, to provide for financial administration of departments and statutory bodies, to repeal the Financial Administration and Audit Act 1977, to amend the Government Owned Corporations Act 1993 for particular purposes and to make consequential or minor amendments to other acts as stated in schedule 1. 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: Financial Accountability Bill [\[78\]](#).

Tabled paper: Financial Accountability Bill, explanatory notes [\[79\]](#).

Second Reading

Hon. AP FRASER (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Employment and Economic Development) (12.03 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

Our government is committed to ensuring that Queenslanders are provided with a high-performing Public Service that is efficient, effective and accountable to the public. This bill is another step in our determined push to modernise the financial management of departments and statutory bodies in Queensland. The bill will repeal the Financial Administration and Audit Act 1977 and replace it with the Financial Accountability Act and consequentially amend the Government Owned Corporations Act 1993.

The independence of the Auditor-General will be enhanced and emphasised through separating the external audit provisions from the general financial management provisions. The provisions relating to the Auditor-General, the mandate of the Auditor-General and the Queensland Audit Office will now be encapsulated in the proposed separate Auditor-General Act, to be administered by the Premier and Minister for the Arts.

This Financial Accountability Bill will be the cornerstone of financial management in the Queensland public sector as it introduces many innovations to bring Queensland into the forefront of public sector governance and performance in Australia. The bill is principles based, written in clear language and focuses on outcomes and accountabilities. It provides discretion to executives to optimise resource allocation and tailor systems for administration of their agencies whilst continuing to meet their legal obligations and further emphasises accountability. I seek leave to have the remainder of my speech incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

This approach was taken in response to the findings of Queensland Treasury's review of the Financial Administration and Audit Act and its subordinate legislation. The review identified the need to update Queensland's financial legislation to respond to technological, governmental and global changes since the Act's inception in 1977. The current Act is an overly prescriptive rules based legislation originally designed for the old cash based system of accounting and a less sophisticated environment than now exists.

As a result of moving to principles-based legislation, high-level financial management obligations that agencies must comply with remain in the Bill. The subordinate legislation will establish parameters within which agencies must operate to meet their legal obligations under the Act and, by necessity, will be prescriptive.

Policy documents and guidance papers will complement the legislation and will provide support to departments and statutory bodies in the implementation of the new legislation.

This Bill gives the Treasurer the capacity to exercise discretion to formally delegate powers to Treasury officers: for example, to allow an agency to invest or lend an amount; or enter into a derivative transaction; or to exempt an agency from complying with part or all of a standard. Further, the Bill allows the Treasurer discretion to delegate to any accountable officer the power to write off revenues relating to the consolidated fund. This will result in a reduction in bureaucratic processes when small value losses need to be written off.

The Bill provides clarity around the roles of accountable officers and statutory bodies by separating out responsibilities they have in common and those that are specific to departments or statutory bodies.

The Bill is written to focus on outcomes to enable accountable officers and statutory bodies to implement the systems and processes that are the most appropriate for their agency to allow it to operate efficiently and effectively. This gives the Queensland public sector the flexibility to react in a timely manner to new financial challenges as they occur.

This Bill improves the effectiveness of the public sector by facilitating cross agency collaborations through broadening the delegation powers of accountable officers to include delegating to public sector employees or officers of the State, including statutory bodies.

The Bill will require the accountable officer of a department to delegate specific responsibilities to a chief finance officer and a head of internal audit. This will not diminish the overarching responsibilities of the accountable officer but will provide the accountable officer with the appropriate support to operate the department efficiently and effectively. The Bill recognises that some smaller departments may have outsourced these functions, so allows the accountable officer to nominate officers in other departments to undertake the chief finance officer or head of internal audit roles.

The chief finance officer of a department will be responsible for managing the financial resources of the department. This will include responsibility for the budget and the financial internal controls. The chief finance officer will also be responsible for their department's financial reporting including the preparation of annual financial statements.

The chief finance officer will support the accountable officer by having formally delegated responsibilities such as—

- providing advice on the financial implications and risks to current and projected services
- providing advice on the effectiveness of accounting and financial management information systems and controls
- developing strategic options for the future financial management and capability of the department
- providing the accountable officer with a formal statement of whether financial internal controls are operating efficiently, effectively and economically.

The head of internal audit will support the accountable officer through giving independent advice on issues such as—

- identification and management
- the efficiency and effectiveness of financial and operating systems, reporting processes and activities.

In response to recent reports of the Public Accounts Committee and the Auditor-General, the Bill further strengthens accountability by requiring departments to provide the Treasurer with a business case before the formation of a company can be approved.

This Government recognises the importance of transparency to the public. Budgets represent an important process in any business cycle, including that of individual departments. By being published, budgets allow the community to compare actual results with planned performance. While there is no legislative requirement, departmental budgets are currently tabled annually in Parliament. This Government wants to ensure this process continues in the future. Therefore, the Bill proposes a legislative requirement for departmental annual budgets to be tabled in Parliament with the State budget each year.

In keeping with the principles-based concept, the requirement to prepare an annual report remains in the Bill but the associated timeframes have been moved to the subordinate legislation. In the interest of improved accountability, the timeframes for departments and statutory bodies to prepare and table their annual reports in Parliament have been reduced by six weeks. Ministers will be required to table their agencies' annual reports within three months after the end of the applicable financial year. This will improve timeliness of reporting by Government agencies to the Parliament and members of the public.

The Bill proposes the closure of the Treasurer's Unclaimed Moneys Fund from 30 June 2010. From this date, instead of two separate unclaimed moneys funds operating in Queensland, all unclaimed moneys will be held and managed from one central location—the Public Trustee of Queensland. The Public Trustee has developed an on-line function which allows members of the public better access to search whether the Government holds moneys on their behalf. Having one point of contact for unclaimed moneys will provide a more efficient claims process.

Part 8 of the Bill amends the Government Owned Corporations Act 1993 (GOC Act). This is a necessary consequence of the replacement of the Financial Administration and Audit Act and the relocation of certain provisions from the Act to the proposed Financial and Performance Management Standard 2008.

The GOC Act is being amended to provide for the financial and annual reporting requirements for Government owned corporations (GOC) and prescribed GOC subsidiaries to be applied through the Government Owned Corporations Regulation 2004. These provisions will mirror those proposed to apply to departments and statutory bodies under the Financial and Performance Management Standard. Consequently, under normal circumstances, the Parliament will receive all prescribed annual reports of public sector entities within three months of year end.

Minor amendments are also being made to Schedule 4 of the GOC Act to amend references to a GOC subsidiary prescribed under a regulation.

The Bill proposes the incorporation of the audit provisions of Schedule 3 of the GOC Act into the proposed Auditor-General Act. This will consolidate all of the audit provisions into the one Act.

These will have minimal impact on GOCs and largely maintain existing practices.

The Financial Accountability Bill, when passed, will modernise the financial management of the Queensland public sector, while ensuring that it maintains its accountability to the public for the resources under its control.

Mr Speaker, I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Nicholls, adjourned.

CHARTER OF BUDGET HONESTY BILL

First Reading

Hon. AP FRASER (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Employment and Economic Development) (12.05 pm): I present a bill for an act to provide for a Charter of Budget Honesty. 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: Charter of Budget Honesty Bill [\[80\]](#).

Tabled paper: Charter of Budget Honesty Bill, explanatory notes [\[81\]](#).

Second Reading

Hon. AP FRASER (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Employment and Economic Development) (12.05 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

Our government is committed to providing transparency to the public. The bill I introduce today commits our government—and indeed any future governments—to releasing an update of the state's financial position during an election campaign. This important reform requires Treasury to release an update of the state's finances during the formal election period, prepared independently of the government of the day. Further, it provides for the ability of the government of the day and the recognised opposition of the day to submit their election policies for independent costing by the Treasury.

Through these twin planks this bill proposes that the state of the books be independently disclosed, and the proposals of the government and opposition be independently costed. This bill builds on the government's commitment to transparency in reporting on the state's finances. It builds on—

- the requirement in legislation for the tabling in parliament of a charter of fiscal responsibility—this requires the government of the day to state publicly its fiscal strategy;
- our commitment to adhering to the uniform presentation framework, which requires among other things the publication of detailed information on the state's financial position three times a year—with the annual budget, in a midyear review of that budget and the outcome of the previous financial year.

This bill will require Treasury to publish an updated fiscal and economic outlook within 15 days of the issuance of the writ for a general election. Given the breadth of the public sector in Queensland the time frame of 15 days is necessary so as to provide for a robust consolidation and reporting of the state's finances. I point out to the House that this is a maximum time frame.

This report will involve a full fiscal update of the current financial year and the following three years for the general government sector, including, to the fullest extent possible, all government decisions since the last update of the forward estimates that would—

- have a material fiscal effect; and
- that were made or were in existence before the issue of the writ for the election.

The report will also include a short commentary on the fiscal position including changes since the last update and the sensitivity of the fiscal estimates to changes in the economic and other assumptions. It is critical that the independence of Treasury is protected in this process. To achieve this, the bill requires—

- a signed statement from the Treasurer, that the Treasurer has provided details of any government decision or any other circumstance that may have material implications for the fiscal or economic outlook and that the Under Treasurer could not reasonably be expected to be aware; and
- a signed statement from the Under Treasurer that, to the fullest extent possible, the information in the report reflects the best professional judgement of officers of the Treasury, takes into account all economic and financial information available, including government decisions or other information disclosed by the Treasurer.

The update report will be published by Treasury, on the responsibility of the Under Treasurer and without reference to the government. I seek leave to have the remainder of my second reading speech incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Accurate costing of policy proposals is important, to allow the public to understand the affordability of these policies. This Bill provides that during the caretaker period:

- the Premier can ask Treasury to cost the Government's policy proposals; and
- the Leader of the Opposition can ask Treasury to cost the Opposition's policy proposals.

The Premier or the Leader of the Opposition can withdraw a request for costing at any time.

Costings for policies will be released as early as possible and no less than two days before the polling day for the election. If Treasury requires more information to cost a policy, the Under Treasurer will ask for that information—from the Premier for a Government policy and from the Leader of the Opposition for an Opposition policy. If that information is not provided in time to prepare a costing, the Under Treasurer will release a statement to that effect.

Again, it is vital that Treasury's independence is maintained—and is seen to be maintained—while carrying out its responsibilities under this Bill.

- Neither the Government nor the Opposition can ask Treasury to cost the other side's policies. Treasury can also not provide costing advice.
- Treasury will provide its costings strictly according to the information and assumptions provided by either the Government or the Opposition.
- In releasing its costings, Treasury will also release all information provided with regard to the policy.
- Treasury will not make any comment on the rationale or efficacy of policies provided for costing.

Mr Speaker, this important Bill is introduced in furtherance of our enduring commitment to improving the transparency and accountability of the reporting of the state's finances.

It is a timely reform. This Bill provides the basis for assessing the capacity of the government of the day and the Opposition of the day to manage the state's finances into the future.

It deserves the support of both sides of the House.

Mr Speaker, I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Nicholls, adjourned.

VEGETATION MANAGEMENT (REGROWTH CLEARING MORATORIUM) BILL

First Reading

Hon. S ROBERTSON (Stretton—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy and Minister for Trade) (12.09 pm): I present a bill for an act to impose a moratorium on the clearing of particular regrowth vegetation. 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: Vegetation Management (Regrowth Clearing Moratorium) Bill [\[82\]](#).

Tabled paper: Vegetation Management (Regrowth Clearing Moratorium) Bill, explanatory notes [\[83\]](#).

Second Reading

Hon. S ROBERTSON (Stretton—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy and Minister for Trade) (12.09 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

On 18 March 2004 I stood in this chamber and introduced the Vegetation Management and Other Legislation Bill. It was the first bill introduced to the 51st Queensland parliament delivering one of Labor's core commitments to the people of Queensland announced during the 2004 election campaign. I said at the time that the bill delivered on a commitment that had been described as 'the most significant environmental decision in Queensland's history'. It put an end to the broadscale clearing of remnant vegetation in Queensland and has delivered the single largest reduction in greenhouse gas emissions ever in Australia. It set the framework for the delivery to the then Howard government a 20- to 25-megaton reduction in carbon emissions and the ability to claim that Australia had met its international commitments outlined in the Kyoto Protocol.

Today, five years on, I again stand in this chamber to introduce the Vegetation Management (Regrowth Clearing Moratorium) Bill 2009 on the first sitting day of the 53rd Queensland parliament. This bill facilitates the implementation of Labor's commitment announced during the 2009 election campaign to further protect existing vegetation to provide a number of important environmental

outcomes. It does so firstly by introducing a moratorium on clearing more than a million hectares of regrowth vegetation in Queensland. During the moratorium, this bill extends the existing ban on broadscale clearing of remnant vegetation to now include important high-value regrowth vegetation. Specifically, the moratorium protects all native regrowth vegetation within 50 metres of a watercourse in the priority Mackay-Whitsunday, Wet Tropics and Burdekin reef catchments and endangered regrowth vegetation in rural areas across the state for a period of at least three months.

During the recent election campaign, Labor committed to reducing the level of damaging pesticides and sediments flowing to the Great Barrier Reef. It is proposed to achieve this initially by restricting a combination of damaging farm practices such as overgrazing, tree clearing along creeks and excessive use of fertilisers. The provisions in this bill are the first step in meeting this election commitment and allow the government time to determine how best to achieve overall improvements to the health of the Great Barrier Reef.

Effective from the start of 8 April 2009, the bill restricts the clearing of endangered regrowth vegetation on freehold and leasehold land in rural areas across the state. From 8 April the bill will also restrict the clearing of riparian regrowth vegetation that stands within 50 metres of a watercourse in the priority Mackay-Whitsunday, Wet Tropics and Burdekin reef catchments. These restrictions will apply for the period of the moratorium while the government consults on new longer term arrangements to protect high-value regrowth.

It is important to note that the moratorium will not restrict clearing where there is an existing certified property map of assessable vegetation—a PMAV—showing an area of vegetation as a category X area. It will also not affect existing development approvals over the land where clearing is a natural and ordinary effect of the approved development.

My department has already released a state-wide map, which is also produced at individual property level, showing the vegetation affected by the moratorium, including the watercourses identified within priority catchment areas. For the endangered regrowth protected under the moratorium, the maps have been made using the SLATS based science measure of foliage protective cover to show the regrowth that has a coverage that equates with the national standards used for both the Australian National Forest Inventory and the National Carbon Accounting System.

To further assist landholders comply with the new provisions, a map of the Mackay-Whitsunday, Wet Tropics and Burdekin priority reef catchments will also be available on the department's website once this bill is passed. These catchments have been identified as high risk due to their pollutant loads and proximity to the Great Barrier Reef.

I will outline the current vegetation laws and the factors that have led to this moratorium to put the changes in this bill into context. The legislation I introduced in 2004 now protects all remnant vegetation from broadscale clearing. Remnant vegetation refers to vegetation that is mapped as remnant on regional ecosystem and remnant maps produced by the department. These are areas that are relatively undisturbed or that have been cleared previously and have regrown and recovered and are now similar to when the vegetation was in its original state. Regrowth vegetation is, under the Vegetation Management Act, defined as non-remnant vegetation. It is shown as white on the department's regional ecosystem and remnant maps.

Since this government ended the broadscale clearing of remnant vegetation in December 2006, the clearing of regrowth vegetation has continued on both freehold and leasehold lands. Only the clearing of some regrowth vegetation—that which has not been cleared for almost 20 years since 31 December 1989 on state leasehold—is currently regulated. Data from the state-wide land and tree study report for 2006-07 released in February this year showed a substantial decrease in clearing rates and greenhouse gas emissions compared to previous reports, but the continuing rate of regrowth clearing is a concern.

Clearing rates had dropped 37 per cent from 375,000 hectares in 2005-06 to 235,000 hectares in 2006-07—the lowest rate of clearing since the first state-wide land and tree study, or SLATS study, reporting period nearly 20 years ago. Of the 235,000 hectares of woody vegetation cleared, 129,000 hectares was remnant and 106,000 hectares was non-remnant regrowth vegetation.

Clearing of remnant vegetation is mostly accounted for as clearing under the last of the broadscale permits in 2006 and clearing under established exemptions like roads, minor infrastructure and mining. However, the continuing high rate of clearing of endangered regrowth is a threat to biodiversity and allows for the continued release of significant levels of greenhouse gas emissions. Regrowth vegetation, particularly mature regrowth which has not been cleared for many years, contains many of the biodiversity and ecological values of remnant vegetation. Protecting endangered regrowth vegetation also helps to maintain and conserve regional ecosystem types with low coverage or high conservation values by assisting more areas to mature into remnant regional ecosystems.

With respect to the protection in riparian regrowth in priority reef catchments, the Reef Water Quality Protection Plan, commonly known as the reef plan, is a joint initiative with the Commonwealth government for the protection of catchments adjacent to the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage area. The plan aims to reduce the level of pollutants entering the Great Barrier Reef from diffuse sources, such as the discharge of sediments and chemicals.

Protecting riparian vegetation in priority reef catchments from clearing is designed to be one of a number of measures to improve water quality and thus is fundamental to achieving the government's commitment to protect the reef. The concerning levels of regrowth clearing and the importance of improving water quality in reef catchments means that it is time for the government to consider ways to reduce clearing of regrowth vegetation.

This government wants to take a considered approach and consult with stakeholders to respond to this challenge. However, this moratorium must be put in place to allow that process to occur without the threat of pre-emptive clearing. The government has committed to consulting with stakeholder groups on the longer term arrangements that should apply to protecting high-value regrowth vegetation. This commitment is reflected in the purpose of the proposed act.

Up until 15 May 2009—the first half of the moratorium—the government will seek submissions from peak stakeholder groups about longer term arrangements to protect regrowth vegetation. The public can have their say through these groups or via an email address accessed from the department's website. Over 20 people have already used the email address to seek information and make inquiries about the moratorium. The government proposes to meet again with key stakeholders after submissions have been considered and before the end of the moratorium period. The bill also allows the minister to extend the moratorium period for a further three months if more time is required to ensure that proper consideration has been given to permanent protection measures.

I would now like to briefly outline some details of the bill and how the moratorium will operate. There are a number of exemptions to the restrictions imposed by the moratorium. Landholders can continue to clear regrowth vegetation in the moratorium area for most property management activities that are already exempt under the Integrated Planning Act. These exemptions include burning off vegetation to reduce fire hazard; clearing for firebreaks and fire management lines; clearing to protect life and property in a bushfire situation; clearing for mining and transport infrastructure; clearing for a native forest practice; clearing for urban purposes in an urban area; and clearing necessary under an existing development approval.

Another important aspect of the bill is how it affects property maps of assessable vegetation, or PMAVs. As I said earlier, those landholders with certified PMAVs will be able to rely on those PMAVs and continue to clear vegetation mapped as category X areas. This gives landholders with PMAVs continued certainty about managing regrowth on their properties. This was a commitment I gave in 2004, and I restate it here today. PMAV applications lodged on or after 26 March 2009 and not decided at the commencement of the legislation will be dealt with under the provisions of the moratorium. 26 March is the day the Bligh government was sworn in by the Governor of Queensland.

Applications lodged after 26 March will be assessed as to whether approval could lead to clearing of vegetation that is intended to be protected under the moratorium. If areas protected by the moratorium are not part of the application, they will be processed as usual during the moratorium period. This also serves to provide certainty for landholders. And it ensures that high-value regrowth on those properties will still be protected by the moratorium and by future vegetation management laws.

The bill ensures that broadscale clearing of regrowth protected by the moratorium cannot occur. However, landholders will be able to continue to make applications to clear regrowth in moratorium areas for most of the same purposes that currently apply in remnant vegetation. During the moratorium period, however, these applications will be assessed outside the Integrated Planning Act processes that would ordinarily apply to vegetation clearing applications. Instead, these activities will be assessed and made exempted using a specific authority under the proposed act. This will provide for timely decisions to allow for routine development while protecting the important values of the vegetation.

Further, the bill contains provisions that will allow the department to halt processing of any applications that may not further the purpose of the moratorium or the Vegetation Management Act. As I have already discussed, this bill provides for the moratorium to be effective from 8 April 2009, allows the assessment of certain PMAVs lodged on or after 26 March and changes the way that development applications in the moratorium area will be assessed during the moratorium.

These aspects of the bill are retrospective in effect. There are two reasons why retrospectivity is justified in this bill. The first reason is that it is accepted that retrospectivity is justified where the interests of the public as a whole outweigh the interests of an individual. In this instance, the retrospectivity is justified by the need to implement the moratorium swiftly to avoid pre-emptive clearing by landholders who seek to take advantage of the time taken to pass new laws. Such pre-emptive clearing would seriously undermine the intent of this bill.

There are also a number of strong factors which mitigate the impacts of retrospectivity in this case. The announcements concerning the moratorium were clear and well reported. The period of the retrospectivity is relatively short. Importantly, the bill contains deliberate provisions that avoid any imposition of criminal liability for clearing vegetation protected by the moratorium during the retrospective period.

The Premier made an election commitment on 15 March 2009 for a three-month moratorium on endangered regrowth vegetation. I made a further announcement on 7 April 2009 of my intention to introduce legislation about this moratorium at the earliest possible opportunity. I made it clear that this moratorium would take effect the next day, on 8 April 2009.

At this time the department made maps available showing the vegetation to be affected by the moratorium and over 15,000 of these maps have been made available to landholders. Information was also made available on the website and at customer service centres across the state detailing the reasons for the moratorium, providing answers to common questions and contact details for further information. These two announcements mean that there was significant public awareness that a moratorium would be put in place and that its effect would commence on 8 April 2009. I have brought the bill to the parliament at the earliest opportunity to minimise the length of retrospective effect.

Further, to minimise the retrospective effects, this bill does not impose retrospective criminal liability for the period from 8 April 2009 to the assent of this bill into law. This is both appropriate and fair. The applicable offence provision lies in the Integrated Planning Act and the bill specifically provides that this provision does not apply to clearing of vegetation protected by the moratorium during the retrospective period. The bill does, however, provide that landholders who clear protected vegetation in the moratorium area during the retrospective period may be required by the department to allow the vegetation to regrow.

In summary, this bill implements a pause in clearing—a breathing space—to give the government time to determine how regrowth with high conservation value can be effectively protected in the longer term, and how riparian vegetation can support the government's commitment to improve water quality of the Great Barrier Reef and the objectives of the Reef Protection Plan. A moratorium on the clearing of endangered regrowth and riparian vegetation in priority reef catchments will allow the government to consult with landholders and key stakeholders about longer term arrangements for high conservation value regrowth and identify how regrowth protection can best complement actions within the updated reef plan.

The introduction of this bill keeps faith with the electors of Queensland to deliver on commitments made by Premier Anna Bligh during the course of the recent state election campaign. It is an election commitment that will deliver important environmental outcomes that will further ensure the long-term health and sustainability of our diverse landscape and our iconic Great Barrier Reef. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Seeney, adjourned.

CORRECTIVE SERVICES AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

First Reading

Hon. NS ROBERTS (Nudgee—ALP) (Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services) (12.24 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Corrective Services Act 2006, the Penalties and Sentences Act 1992 and the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000 for particular purposes, and to repeal the Sporting Bodies' Property Holding Act 1975. 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: Corrective Services and Other Legislation Amendment Bill [\[84\]](#).

Tabled paper: Corrective Services and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, explanatory notes [\[85\]](#).

Second Reading

Hon. NS ROBERTS (Nudgee—ALP) (Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services) (12.24 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to introduce this legislation, which reflects the diversity of the business managed by the Department of Community Safety. The new department reflects the twin goals of keeping the community safe by, firstly, protecting lives and property through emergency services and, secondly, the protection of the community by corrective services through the humane containment, supervision and rehabilitation of offenders.

One of the key aims, on which this legislation delivers, is to improve community safety. This bill achieves this aim by taking into account that there are some rights that will be necessarily diminished by imprisonment but nevertheless recognising and safeguarding an offender's basic human entitlements. As the minister accountable for Police and the Department of Community Safety, I am committed to the Q2 goal of fair communities and supporting safe and caring communities. This bill will help the Bligh government deliver on its goal of building safer communities.

Good, responsive government must continually investigate new opportunities to protect victims, punish offenders appropriately and offer offenders chances to reform and contribute positively to the community. It is these things that will achieve a safer community. This bill is one more step in that direction and to achieving this government's aim for Queensland to have the most effective correctional system in Australia.

I am pleased to say the 2009 *Report on government services* shows Queensland is already one of the most cost-effective correctional providers in Australia, with the lowest cost per prisoner per day. Additionally, of the four national recidivism measures, Queensland had either the lowest or second lowest rates of return to prison or community corrections in each measure. However, in order to become the No. 1 correctional services system in Australia, the Bligh government needs to remain vigilant and responsive to the challenging environment facing corrective services officers.

Our correctional administrators and staff have a very taxing job working with the most vulnerable, highly demanding and problematic individuals of our society. In order to keep the community safe and ensure offenders are appropriately punished and given an opportunity to reform, these officers need the right guidance and tools. Modern and responsive legislation is one of those tools. The Corrective Services and Other Legislation Amendment Bill will make a number of important amendments to the Corrective Services Act 2006 that will support rehabilitation and correctional staff, improve safety and security in correctional centres and recognise victims.

The Bligh government will relieve any worries held by the community about the criminal justice system by having the most effective system in the nation. The government understands it is more important than ever for community members to feel safe to go about their daily business. That is why the Bligh government is working hard to protect the public. We will do this by not only having tough penalties but also having an effective correctional system that both punishes and reforms offenders which, in turn, will reduce reoffending.

I firmly believe the public's expectations are higher than ever in seeing value for money from its correctional system. The onus is firmly on the public sector to achieve more with less through innovation and reformation. There is no use building more and more prisons unless we stop the revolving door.

The changes brought about by this bill will not cost government, and ultimately taxpayers, any more to implement. Yet they are important changes that will help keep the community safe. The amendments are just one way the government is ensuring criminal justice and punishment is relevant and real and delivers value for money. By 'real', I mean that justice is visible; that the community can see there are not only real consequences of criminal conduct, whether it is in the form of imprisonment or some other punishment, but also real opportunities for rehabilitation.

This bill supports the increased use of prisoners participating in community service work through work camps by abolishing reintegration leave of absence in favour of more relevant programs that enable offenders to continue with the transition process back into the community. This process encourages prisoners to begin their reintegration into the community by being involved in meaningful work in a community, then following this up with involvement in the transitions program that uses real organisations to help the offender with reintegration into society.

The prisoner work camps and community service programs run by Queensland Corrective Services are good examples of how punishment, reparation and rehabilitation work. Low-risk prisoners and community services offenders were visible recently in the clean-up of the oil spill along Sunshine Coast beaches. The public can see there is a clear consequence for offending at the same time as offenders use this opportunity to give back to the community.

Between September 2008 and February this year these work camp and community services programs contributed 235,000 hours of unpaid work to the community, which equates to \$3.5 million in value. Low-risk prisoners have worked at many natural disasters in this state since early 1990 to help communities in the recovery phase. They will continue to do this important work throughout these tough economic times, where more than ever unpaid work will be critical to keep communities going.

The bill abolishes a redundant form of leave of absence, resettlement leave of absence, in favour of prisoners using transitions programs and receiving support after they leave prison from services such as offender reintegration support services.

The bill is also relevant and real for victims of crime. Victims will not be left to feel they are being punished while offenders get off scot-free. It is essential that victims continue to remain a central focus in any law and order policy agenda, and that is why protecting victims is a priority for the Bligh government.

The bill allows prisoners to give custody of their artwork, but not property or interest in it, to another person. It will be an offence for prisoners to sell their artwork. There is a good reason why this is being done; it starts with the government listening to victims. Victims have said it is insensitive to them to see prisoners being paid for their time in prison, instead of paying for their crimes. This can be terribly upsetting for victims suffering the after-effects of violence or predatory sexual behaviour and those who are unable to make a decent living themselves. Therefore, the bill prevents serving prisoners selling artwork they have created in prison.

Other key amendments include giving the chief executive the ability to ban visitors to correctional centres who bring drugs into prisons and ruin the chances of prisoners reforming. Other amendments will help visitors who play a role in a prisoner's reintegration and rehabilitation, by allowing them interim access approval pending the receipt of information needed to fully assess their application.

The bill also allows child safety officers access to corrective services facilities without having to submit an application. Child safety officers play an important role in maintaining bonds between parents and children during periods of incarceration. Their involvement with prisoners and their children is vital in assisting a prisoner to maintain links with their children and as a consequence improve the chances of the prisoner's rehabilitation. The bill provides that law enforcement officers and emergency services officers who need to access corrective services facilities have the same access privileges as child safety officers.

The bill makes amendments to ensure that visitors provide information for the biometric scanning systems. Modern correctional facilities use biometrics to quickly process in and out of the centres all visitors including judicial, ministerial, religious, government, professional and personal visitors. Using modern technology will leave staff with time to get on with the real job of protecting the community by ensuring prisoners engage in meaningful activity and rehabilitation.

One of the bill's most significant amendments in terms of achieving community safety relates to giving parole boards sufficient time to make the extremely difficult decision of letting prisoners leave prison on parole. In basic terms, the parole board's job is to accurately predict the future. While this is an oversimplification, these are not decisions boards take lightly. Parole orders must balance reintegration needs with treatment and appropriate supervision.

The boards, as gatekeepers and guardians of the community, need this extra time for dealing with prisoners who may have committed a serious crime and have complex problems. These problems include prisoners' issues in relation to accommodation, family and social support, medical, mental health, cognitive and physical disabilities, to name a few. I seek leave to have the remainder of my speech incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Parole boards also must consider the needs of victims who may advise them that prisoners be restricted from returning to their chosen place of residence. As a consequence this means before issuing parole the board must be confident that a prisoner's potential home address is suitable—several addresses may need to be assessed by Corrective Services before finding the most suitable accommodation.

Alternatively, parole boards may require further information and need to commission reports for assistance from experts and Corrective Services officers to help the parole board to assess risk and craft parole conditions which address these issues and reduce the prisoner's risk of re-offending.

These reports may advise the parole board that the prisoner's risk of re-offending is too high and that he or she needs to remain in prison to continue with their rehabilitation. The board then needs to give a comprehensive statement of written reasons about that result to the prisoner.

The bill will increase the time frame for making a decision from 120 days to 180 days. Where the parole board defers making a decision to obtain further information they must determine the application within 210 days. To ensure applications for parole can be considered prior to a prisoner's parole eligibility date, an application for parole may now be submitted 180 days prior to the eligibility date.

This amendment is crucial to enhancing the ability of the parole board to make decisions that ultimately affect the safety of the community. It is vital that they have the time to consider every piece of information so that their decision to release or not to release a prisoner into the community is underpinned by sound evidence.

The bill also makes related changes to repeal the provision in section 193(5) of the Corrective Services Act 2006 which provides that if the board fails to decide an application within 120 days after its receipt, the board is taken to have refused to grant the application.

A prisoner will also continue to have access to the Judicial Review Act 1991 in respect of decisions made by the parole board.

The bill also makes a number of simple amendments which will clarify the ability of prisoners to travel overseas to assist with trials abroad.

Finally the bill repeals an obsolete piece of sporting legislation.

The Bligh government will not be resting on its laurels or taking for granted the trust the community has put in it. I know there is always room to improve.

The development of new legislation for the management of offenders in Queensland is a key element of keeping the community safe.

It is a Bligh government priority to ensure Queenslanders are confident we will continuously strive for improvement in the laws that govern the criminal justice system.

This government understands that listening to the community and meeting their needs is vital to earning and keeping the community's trust in corrective services and the criminal justice system as a whole.

Debate, on motion of Mr Johnson, adjourned.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BILL

First Reading

Hon. D BOYLE (Cairns—ALP) (Minister for Local Government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (12.34 pm): I present a bill for an act to provide a system of local government in Queensland, and for related 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: Local Government Bill [86].

Tabled paper: Local Government Bill, explanatory notes [87].

Second Reading

Hon. D BOYLE (Cairns—ALP) (Minister for Local Government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (12.34 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

In 2006 as Minister for Local Government I initiated the review of the Local Government Act 1993 which was an important step forward in developing a contemporary, new governance model for councils in this state. I am pleased to return to this portfolio and to stand before the House today to present the results of much hard work by many people in the department and in local government. Developed in partnership with councils and communities, the bill signals a new and exciting era for local government in Queensland and it delivers on the Bligh government's commitment to create and support stronger communities right across our state.

The world has changed since the Local Government Act was developed and enacted some 16 years ago. Today's local government system delivers a more diverse range of services and infrastructure than ever before, and it operates in a complex business environment encompassing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, urban, rural and remote lands.

The environment of public administration has also changed, and today ratepayers rightly expect high standards of accountability. They want transparency in decision making and they expect their councils to look over the horizon and plan for future generations. Residents not only want to understand how local government processes work but also want to know who is accountable for the delivery of services.

In accordance with those expectations, this bill is the product of 2½ years of hard work and collaboration between the Labor state government and local government stakeholders. I would like to pay special tribute to the Local Government Association of Queensland and Local Government Managers Australia for their participation as the peak bodies, along with unions representing local government employees. All have made an invaluable contribution to this bill's development and to the robust system of local government in Queensland that it heralds. Because of their work and advocacy, local government in Queensland is among the best supported and serviced in Australia.

In this spirit, the community engagement process has been exhaustive. There have been some 42 information sessions with over 700 mayors, councillors, senior staff and other stakeholders since the bill was first introduced last October. Another 30 meetings have also been held with councils to listen to their views about their local issues.

As a result, the bill before the House today clarifies provisions relating to the responsibilities of mayors and chief executives. This includes removing grey areas in what constitutes local government beneficial enterprises; improving flexibility in engaging with Indigenous communities in relation to deed of grant in trust councils and community business; and introducing council auditing, in addition to the requirements of the Auditor-General.

Importantly, the Local Government Bill 2009 articulates Queenslanders' expectations that their elected representatives will look after the interests of all residents. While the bill includes a number of provisions regarding mandatory compliance for a minimum standard such as in planning and finance management matters, in general it is principles based. This gives local governments the flexibility to develop their own operational procedures and processes or, better still, to set their standards higher. With the new bill being principles based, most of the prescription of a process in the current act has been removed. This will make the new legislation easier to understand and navigate and sufficiently comprehensive to apply to all local governments but flexible enough to recognise that one size does not fit all.

While matters relating to Indigenous regional councils have largely been carried over from the 1993 act and amendments that were made in 2007, this bill removes the mandatory requirement for community forums. Discussions with Indigenous regional councils identified that the arrangement was burdensome and unnecessary in some cases.

The principle of 'democratic representation, social inclusion and meaningful community engagement' encompasses the original intent of the forums, so the community's input into land trust decisions remains protected under the new legislation. In lieu of rates, the bill provides Indigenous local governments with the power to make and levy a fee on residents living on deed of grant in trust land. And, to ensure openness, the councils must make the fee by resolution.

I am pleased to inform the House that there is a provision enabling local governments to consider Aboriginal tradition and Torres Strait Island custom. This is significant recognition of all Indigenous peoples living in Queensland.

The Bligh government will continue to be an active partner and champion of local government. We will assist and support councils to provide the best possible services and infrastructure to Queenslanders. During the development of the bill, many councils indicated that they would continue using state developed model local laws. These laws, covering areas such as cemeteries, parks and reserves, and control of pests are of high quality and remove the need for councils to re-invent the wheel. For larger councils, they have the flexibility to manage their own community consultation, development and approval process. The intent here is to remove bureaucratic red tape while getting the balance right and ensuring there is accountability, transparency and public value.

In the same context, state government, through the Constitution of Queensland, acknowledges the vital role local government plays in serving the needs of Queenslanders, and councils will not be left to fend for themselves. There will be a range of supports available to assist them fulfil their statutory roles and obligations. At the end of the day, however, the performance of the local government system remains the state's constitutional responsibility. That is why the Minister for Local Government must have the ability to address serious performance or accountability issues quickly.

Through the Local Government Bill 2009, the minister can require a council to provide information that will allow me, on behalf of Queenslanders, to monitor and evaluate whether a council is complying with its obligations and performing its legal responsibilities. The bill will provide real consequences if a local government struggles to meet its obligations, with a continuum of intervention available to minimise risk of failure.

The minister will be able to require councils to take early action to rectify whatever is the problem, such as revocation of a non-compliant resolution or local law. In addition to being able to appoint a financial controller, I will now be able to appoint advisers to correct problems in councils.

The bill provides clear principles, roles and responsibilities and more effective penalties. The code of conduct has been replaced with a new system for dealing with complaints about councillor misconduct and poor performance. Inappropriate meeting conduct by councillors, for example, will be dealt with locally by new powers for mayors to warn and suspend the councillor, similar to the parliamentary Speaker's role. But that is not all. A formal investigation process will be in place, enabling serious allegations against councillors to be investigated by independent regional conduct review panels and more serious or repetitive poor performance will be dealt with by the new state Local Government Remuneration and Discipline Tribunal.

The panels and the tribunal will be able to use a range of penalties, from mediation and fines, to issuing warnings or suspending allowances. In serious cases of misconduct, the Minister for Local Government will be able to recommend to the Governor in Council the suspension or dismissal of an individual councillor. This new power is widely supported by stakeholders and is fairer than the status quo of dismissing an entire council because of the performance or misconduct of a few. The minister will retain the power to recommend to the Governor in Council a dissolution of a council when the situation presents no other alternative.

To ensure high performance and integrity, I inform the House that we will apply to local government the standards of the Bligh government's Register of Lobbyists and the Lobbying Code of Conduct. To ensure its appropriate application to local government, there will be consultation over coming months, with the aim of having amendments incorporated before the end of the year.

Consistent with the Constitution of Queensland 2001, the bill provides a legal framework for an effective, efficient, sustainable and accountable system of local government. The bill provides the structure under which local governments can make decisions in the public interest. Councils will be responsible for their community's involvement in democratic representation, social inclusion and meaningful community engagement. They must practise good governance and ensure the ethical and legal behaviour of councillors and officers.

Under the bill, the Local Government (Community Government Areas) Act 2004 is repealed, and the governance framework for the 12 Aboriginal shire councils will be subject to the same legislative provisions as other councils. The intention is to supplement the new act with a concise set of new regulations, and there will again be extensive consultation. This consultative approach will also be used in developing subordinate legislation and completing remaining legislation, such as the City of Brisbane Act 1924 and the new Local Government Electoral Act, and these will get underway this year, following the passage of this bill.

The bill has been drafted to provide transitional arrangements so legal, employment and other aspects will continue uninterrupted. The bill also provides consistency across the statute book by consequentially amending other legislation. Included among these are amendments to the Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008. Honourable members will recall this act was passed with bipartisan support late last year. The amendments do not change the original policy intent underpinning the act. Several of them—although technical in nature—are nevertheless critical to ensuring the smooth implementation of the Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008 from 1 July this year.

The rationale for each amendment is dealt with comprehensively within the explanatory notes accompanying the bill. The level of interest and engagement demonstrated by local government and communities in developing this important piece of legislation proves to me they are committed to the most modern, forward and progressive local government bill possible.

This year marks the 150th anniversary of Queensland and our local government system which began with the proclamation of Brisbane as a municipality on 6 September 1859. This bill today is an historic opportunity to deliver a new statutory framework for local governments. One of the differences between this bill and the old act was the latter's recognition of the Local Government Association of Queensland. Such is the corporate strength, range and effectiveness of the LGAQ that this prescription is no longer needed today.

I look forward to working with each council and local government peak body, including the Local Government Association of Queensland, to complete our reform program and deliver a strong and sustainable system of local government in Queensland. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Johnson, adjourned.

ADOPTION BILL

First Reading

Hon. PG REEVES (Mansfield—ALP) (Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Sport) (12.47 pm): Mr Deputy Speaker O'Brien, can I start by congratulating you on your high position of Deputy Speaker in this esteemed place. I present a bill for an act to make provision about the adoption of children and to make related amendments of the Adoption of Children Act 1964, the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act 2003 and the Child Protection Act 1999 and to make consequential amendments of other acts as stated in schedule 2. 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: Adoption Bill [88].

Tabled paper: Adoption Bill, explanatory notes [89].

Second Reading

Hon. PG REEVES (Mansfield—ALP) (Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Sport) (12.47 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

It is with great pleasure that I rise today to introduce into the House a bill which comprehensively reforms and modernises Queensland's 40-year-old adoption laws. In reintroducing this bill, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to the former minister for child safety and minister for women, Margaret Keech, for the substantial work she has undertaken in the development of contemporary adoption laws for Queensland. When the former minister and I have left this place, these laws will be well remembered and her contribution to that will be very highly thought of. So I congratulate her for all her hard work.

In July last year, Premier Anna Bligh and my colleague Margaret Keech, then the minister for child safety and minister for women, publicly announced that our government would overhaul Queensland's adoption laws by bringing to a conclusion the reform process which has been ongoing since 2001. The new Adoption Bill, which reflects contemporary community standards, is now ready for parliament's consideration. The Bligh government has taken this issue out of the too-hard basket and is delivering fair laws to those people affected by adoption.

In recognising that adoption is a very complex and sensitive matter, the government engaged extensively with the community in developing reforms. Queenslanders clearly told the government that the current adoption laws are not fair. We have listened, and the government is responding with significant reform. No longer will Queensland have the most restrictive adoption laws in the country.

There are several major areas of reform which I wish to bring to the attention of honourable members. For the first time, adoption laws in Queensland will provide for open adoption practice which will allow a child's birth and adoptive families to know each other from the time of the adoption, or to choose to have a closed adoption arrangement. Currently, Queensland is the only Australian jurisdiction where adoption orders are made administratively. The bill proposes that the adoption order be made by the court.

Eligibility to lodge expressions of interest to adopt will be extended from married couples to de facto couples who have been in a relationship for at least two years. The bill's objective is to ensure that all children who require adoption, whether locally or through intercountry adoption programs administered by the Australian government, receive the best possible care. It will also enshrine that the child's wellbeing and best interests, both through childhood and into adulthood, are paramount in all the department's deliberations. These reforms are in line with the Bligh government's vision for a fairer Queensland.

In July last year the government expanded the scope for reform to include the law which governs the right for people to access information about others associated with their adoption if it occurred before June 1991. Current laws restrict adopted people and birth parents who were involved in an adoption prior to 1991 accessing information if one of them objected to the release of the information. Currently more than 1,100 people adopted before June 1991 cannot know their own family history because of objections lodged by their birth parents. There are also more than 1,600 birth parents who currently cannot know the name their child has grown up with or the names of the adoptive parents who have raised them because of objections lodged by the children who were adopted.

Many people have shared their stories with the government. They shared that not knowing these facts can lead to a great deal of pain and suffering. The consultation was also clear that some people do not want their information released and are worried about unwelcome intrusion into their lives. As a result of this feedback, the Bligh government is reforming the law to ensure equal access to identifying information by all birth parents and adopted persons, regardless of when the adoption took place. Importantly, we will be maintaining the right for people to state their preference for no contact which, for these pre 1991 adoptions, will be legally enforceable. The adoption reforms balance people's rights to information about their own personal history yet maintain the rights of others to privacy.

People familiar with adoption practices will know this information as identifying information and it can include: the adopted person's name before they were adopted; the adopted person's birth parent's name at the date he or she consented to the adoption; the date of birth of the birth mother; and the adopted person's name after their adoption and the names of the adoptive parents.

Since 1991, Queensland's adoption law has provided adopted people and birth parents with a right to access such identifying information about their birth parents or child who was adopted, once the adopted person turns 18 years of age. However, in the case of adoptions which occurred prior to adoption records being opened up in June 1991, a birth parent or adopted person can prevent information which identifies them being provided to other people associated with the same adoption. The objection remains in force until it is revoked—even after the death of the person who lodged it. This makes Queensland the most restrictive regime of all Australian jurisdictions, because it is the only state which allows one person to indefinitely block another person's access to identifying adoption information for adoptions which occurred before 1 June 1991.

Having access to this information is very important to many adopted people and birth parents. More than 16,000 people have obtained identifying adoption information since this right was introduced in 1991.

The government has examined the best way to give adopted people and birth parents equal access to information about their birth history and their children who were adopted. The government released the *Balancing privacy and access: adoption consultation paper* which asked people to consider whether the current adoption laws about identifying information appropriately balance and protect the rights and interests of all parties to adoptions in Queensland. The consultation paper sought feedback from people with experience of adoption generally, and from those affected by adoption laws in Queensland in particular.

As was expected, submissions were received from people who strongly support identifying adoption information being made available to all adopted people and birth parents and from other people whose opposition to this was equally intense. In most instances, people understood the sensitivity associated with balancing access to information and respecting people's privacy, and they expressed a genuine desire for future laws to be responsive to the interests of all parties.

The majority of people who responded supported adopted people's and birth parents' right to access identifying information and also supported people's right not to be contacted by another party to an adoption, if this is not their wish. The feedback received indicated there is more support for the law to be changed to enable parties to all adoptions to receive identifying information than there is for the law to remain as it is.

A majority of people told us they considered the current laws to be unfair. In fact, 65 per cent of 321 respondents believed the current Adoption of Children Act 1964 does not achieve a fair balance between the interests of adopted people and birth parents who would like to obtain identifying information and those who want to maintain their privacy and do not wish to be contacted. The feedback also indicated the new laws must address the significant concerns held by people who wish to maintain their privacy.

When the government set out down the path of reform, we knew it would be difficult to strike a fair balance. In considering reports of the trauma associated with some birth mothers' past experiences, their fear that they will be judged harshly if the facts of an adoption become known and the ongoing negative consequences reported by some people who have been denied access to identifying information, the government became determined to address these matters sensitively and with great care, respect and compassion.

Stakeholders supporting change told the government in emotional meetings that the final pieces of their life puzzle were missing. They pleaded to be given their identity. Meetings with privacy protection groups were equally as compelling.

I would like to acknowledge the hundreds of people who met with former Minister Keech and her staff, with members of parliament or with the department and who contributed significantly to consultation on this bill. I particularly acknowledge the courage of people who shared their most personal experiences and life stories. All made what must have been very difficult decisions to share their own private details of their adoption experiences in a bid to effect change, or to retain the status quo. They have shared their heartfelt sorrow; grief for the absence of adopted relatives; fear of reliving the past; hunger for personal information that has been so long denied and the impact this has had, as well as the great joy of successful reunions.

I know that, for former Minister Keech, it was a most humbling experience to meet with so many people affected by Queensland's adoption laws and to read their moving submissions to the consultation paper. The Bligh government has carefully and sensitively weighed up these matters to develop a way forward that is fair to all parties. I seek leave to have the remainder of my speech incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

The Bill gives adopted people and birth parents equal access to identifying information, whether the adoption occurred before or after 1 June 1991, while continuing to respect the wishes of those people who do not wish to be contacted.

This is achieved by removing the right for people to lodge an objection to prevent another person from receiving identifying information about them.

Existing *information* objections are two-fold, covering a person's objection to the release of identifying information, as well as their objection to being contacted. These will be transitioned so they become only objections to being contacted.

Existing *contact* objections will remain in place. In addition, people will be able to lodge a statement setting out their wishes about being contacted, including their wish not to be contacted, and to specify arrangements which suit their individual circumstances.

This signals a clear end to the restrictive regime contained in the current adoption laws and marks the introduction of new legislation which strikes a fairer balance between the interests of those people who wish to access identifying information and those who do not wish to be contacted.

While the consultation demonstrated a level of concern about whether *contact* objections would be effective in protecting a person's privacy and ensuring they do not experience unwanted contact, there is extensive evidence from Queensland, other Australian states and international experiences that *contact* objections are an effective mechanism to protect against unwanted contact and intrusion into people's lives.

'Contact only' objections have operated successfully in Queensland since June 1991 and, as at 30 June 2008, there were only 247 current objections to contact. No breaches of 'contact only' objections have been reported to the Department in the past 10 years and only one breach has ever been prosecuted. New South Wales and Western Australia report similarly high compliance with *contact* objections.

International research comparing the social impact opening adoption records had in some American states, Great Britain and Australia from 1953 to 2007 has found similar high levels of compliance with *contact* objections.

Research shows that, although people were fearful their privacy would not be respected, the reality of opening access to adoption records is that:

- few, or no, breaches of *contact* objections are committed; and
- the birth parents' and adopted adults' fears that their privacy will be invaded and their family disrupted actually do not eventuate.

To safeguard the privacy of those who have previously lodged objections, and of those who in the future express a wish for no contact, the Bill only permits identifying information about them to be released to another person:

- if the person has participated in an interview (which may be in person or by telephone) with an officer of the Department; and
- if they have signed a document acknowledging the other person does not want to be contacted and it would be an offence to do so.

These mechanisms mean the Department can help people to understand individuals' reasons for not wanting contact.

In addition, the court will be able to make an order preventing the release of someone's identifying information to another person, if doing so would pose an unacceptable risk of harm.

It will also continue to be an offence carrying a maximum penalty of 100 penalty units (currently \$10,000) or imprisonment for two years for a person who knows another person has lodged an objection to contact (or registered their preference for no contact) to contact, or attempt to contact, the person either directly or through another person.

As I acknowledged earlier, releasing identifying information to another party to an adoption, as well as supporting people to ensure they can clearly express the type and level of contact they might seek with another party, must be handled sensitively and with great care.

To this end, I am pleased to announce plans to establish a dedicated post adoption support service for Queensland. This service will be independent from the Department and funded specifically to support people who are affected by adoption orders made in Queensland.

It will provide a range of services including:

- a free telephone helpline;
- face-to-face individual counselling;
- support for people preparing a contact statement;
- support for those prevented from making contact because another party has expressed a preference for no contact;
- mediation services and reunion support;
- community awareness raising to ensure adoption is better understood in the community; and
- developing resources and providing training to assist counsellors, psychologists, psychiatrists and other helping professionals increase their adoption expertise.

Open adoption

As mentioned earlier, the Bill will provide for the practice of open adoption.

This will allow the opportunity for a child's birth and adoptive families to know each other from the time of the child's adoption, if they agree, and to decide on the extent of information exchange and/or contact that will occur.

However, the parties to an adoption can still choose to have a closed adoption arrangement if they want to, until the child turns 18.

Research supports open adoption as a healthier option for children, as it enables them to more readily feel comfortable about their birth and adoption. This can help promote a positive self image as they grow up. It can also remove anxieties people may have about the impact access to identifying information and possible contact may have when the child turns 18.

The Department, through Adoption Services Queensland, will help birth parents and adoptive parents who wish to use open adoption to come to an agreement about the type of open adoption arrangement they would like to have for their child.

Most open adoption arrangements are expected to begin cautiously. For example, a child's adoptive and birth families might start by exchanging correspondence a few times a year through the Department's Mailbox program. The arrangements can evolve as the child grows and the parties become more comfortable with the contact arrangements.

The arrangement will be documented in an adoption plan setting out how the parties propose to communicate and, if they agree to in-person contact, how and when the contact will happen.

Importantly, an adoption plan will not be legally binding or interfere with the right of the adoptive parent to make decisions for their adopted child.

The wide-ranging reform is consistent with the direction of the Government's *One Chance at Childhood* initiative which is aimed at providing stability for children in care in their crucial early years and avoiding the danger of children 'drifting' between parents and numerous foster care placements.

The focus on open adoption will make adoption a more viable option for securing permanent care in a loving family environment for at-risk children and so enhance the effectiveness of the *One Chance at Childhood* initiative.

Our first priority will always be to support birth families keep their children living safely with them and to work with families, where possible, to strengthen and reunite them once it is safe to do so.

However, it is a sad fact that there are times when reunification for a child in care is not safe or possible and never will be. In these cases, children and young people need stability and permanency. Adoption is included in the suite of options to provide this stability and permanency.

Research recognises children need stability in their living arrangements and relationships to reach their physical, emotional, social and intellectual potential. Experiencing secure attachments is central to supporting children's positive mental health and psychological development.

Importantly, when adoption is considered to be in the best interests of a child in care, priority will be given to that child's carer as the prospective adoptive parent, in recognition of the stability and bond that may have already formed.

While the introduction of open adoption will assist in facilitating adoption when it is the best option for a particular child in care, it is likely to be the case for only a small number of children in care. To place this in context, in England adoption has long been the preferred permanent option for children in long-term care, yet just 4 per cent of almost 60,000 children in government care were adopted as at 31 March 2008.

Orders made by the court

Another significant area of reform is the requirement for adoption orders to be made by a court.

Adoption orders in Queensland are currently made by the Associate Director-General in charge of Child Safety in the new Department of Communities. Queensland is the only Australian jurisdiction in which adoption orders are made administratively.

Adoption has important legal consequences because it permanently changes a child's legal identity and legal relationship with his or her birth family. In recognition of this significant and serious change to a child's life, it is therefore appropriate and necessary for the adoption of a child to be decided by a court and the Bill provides for this and brings Queensland into line with every other Australian jurisdiction.

The Department of Communities, through Adoption Services Queensland, manages an Expression of Interest Register, which contains the names of couples interested in becoming adoptive parents—either through a local adoption or an intercountry adoption.

Currently, the Expression of Interest Register is periodically opened for limited periods when it is necessary to increase the number of prospective parents required to meet the anticipated need to find adoptive placements for children.

The current objective is to identify the best possible prospective adoptive families to meet the needs of the small number of children who require adoptive parents.

The Government has listened to many people, particularly in the intercountry adoption community, who have struggled with the uncertainty of when applications can be made and the rush and anxiety that accompanies the opening of the register.

This rush to lodge expressions of interest when the register is open can lead couples to do so even though they may not be fully ready to commit to adoption at that time.

To overcome this, the Bill provides that the register will generally remain open so people interested in adoption are able to lodge an expression of interest at any time. This will create greater certainty for couples interested in adoption, because they will be able to lodge an expression of interest at the time they are ready, willing and able to actively proceed through the adoption process.

Other mechanisms are being introduced to increase the efficiency of the register, including:

- no longer allowing people to postpone an expression of interest if they are not ready to proceed; and
- ensuring they regularly review their decision to continue pursuing adoption by requiring renewal of expressions of interest every two years if they have not moved through to assessment.

Eligibility expanded

Another important and contemporary reform introduced by the Bligh Government is that eligibility to lodge expressions of interest will no longer be limited to married couples. Instead, eligibility will be opened up to de facto couples who have been in a committed relationship for at least two years.

There are also important changes relating to consent before an adoption can be made.

Currently, a father is only required to consent to his child's adoption if he is married to the child's mother, either at the time the child was conceived or at the time of adoption.

The Bill will require a child's mother, father and any legal guardian to give informed and voluntary consent before a child can be placed for adoption, regardless of marital status.

The Bill will also require the Department to give a man thought to be a child's father information about how he can determine paternity, consent to the child's adoption or seek a Family Court order in relation to him parenting the child, if he wishes to do so.

Finally Mr Speaker, Queensland is fortunate to have a number of voluntary adoption stakeholder groups offering care and support to people affected by adoption.

On behalf of the Bligh Government I thank those volunteers, both current and past, who have been committed to helping others and have made personal sacrifices to keep these groups going. I am sure they will welcome the news that a dedicated post adoption support service will be established in Queensland as they have been advocating for this for many years.

I hope these voluntary groups will continue to play a valuable part in the adoption community. I am confident they will continue to work closely with Adoption Services Queensland and will complement the state-wide post adoption service.

Finally, in line with the Bligh Government's vision for a fairer Queensland, I am proud this Bill is a very progressive piece of new legislation which will bring Queensland's adoption practice in line with international best practice.

I commend the Adoption Bill 2009 to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Dempsey, adjourned.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 pm to 2.30 pm.

AUDITOR-GENERAL BILL

Message from Governor

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (2.30 pm): I present a message from Her Excellency the Governor.

The Speaker read the following message—

MESSAGE

AUDITOR-GENERAL BILL 2009

Constitution of Queensland 2001, section 68

I, PENELOPE ANNE WENSLEY, Governor, recommend to the Legislative Assembly a Bill intitled—

A Bill for an Act to provide for the Queensland Auditor-General and the Queensland Audit Office and the audit of the State's public finances and all public sector entities

(Sgd)

GOVERNOR

21 APR 2009

Tabled paper: Message from Her Excellency the Governor, dated 21 April 2009, recommending the Auditor-General Bill [\[90\]](#).

First Reading

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (2.30 pm): I present a bill for an act to provide for the Queensland Auditor-General and the Queensland Audit Office and the audit of the state's public finances and all public sector entities. 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: Auditor-General Bill [\[91\]](#).

Tabled paper: Auditor-General Bill, explanatory notes [\[92\]](#).

Second Reading

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (2.31 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to introduce the Auditor-General Bill 2009. This bill replaces parts 5 and 6 of the Financial Administration and Audit Act 1977 and creates new, updated audit legislation for Queensland. As is currently the case for parts 5 and 6 of the act, the bill covers all aspects of the Auditor-General's work. It establishes the role of the Auditor-General and the Queensland Audit Office, defines the powers of the Queensland Audit Office to audit the Consolidated Fund and public sector entities, and provides for the strategic review and independent audit of the Queensland Audit Office.

The bill aims to emphasise and enhance the independence of the office of the Queensland Auditor-General while also clarifying the administration of audit legislation as distinct from the financial accountability legislation. It also modernises the provisions of the 1977 act to align it with current drafting practice and more appropriately reflect the contemporary environment.

In light of the fact that this is a bill that has been reintroduced following the establishment of the 53rd Parliament, I seek leave to have the remainder of my second reading speech incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

The majority of provisions currently contained in Parts 5 and 6 of the Financial Administration and Audit Act 1977 remain relevant and will therefore be transferred unchanged to the Bill.

In particular, provisions relating to the Queensland Audit Office's performance management audit mandate remain unchanged under the Bill, as do the powers of the Audit Office.

The appointment process for the Auditor-General will continue to involve consultation with the Public Accounts Committee on the process and nominee for appointment, together with approval by the Governor in Council.

A number of amendments to the 1977 Act have been proposed to address operational issues.

For example, the Bill imposes a requirement on the recipient of draft audit reports not to disclose the contents of the report, except in connection with making submissions or comments to the Auditor-General or obtaining legal advice in relation to those matters.

This provision is designed to preserve the integrity of the audit process.

The Bill also provides for the Auditor-General to forward draft reports to a third party who, in the Auditor-General's opinion, has a special interest in the audit report to provide comment.

The process of considering submissions or comments from relevant third parties will enhance the quality of final audit reports to Parliament.

In addition, the Auditor-General currently charges direct costs associated with undertaking audits.

A new provision has therefore been included which formally recognises that the Auditor-General may charge reasonable costs and expenses incurred in conducting the audit.

Changes are also proposed to the terms and conditions of appointment for the Auditor-General which aim to strengthen the independence of the office.

For example, the Bill includes a new provision that the rate of remuneration of the Auditor-General must not be reduced during the term of appointment without the Auditor-General's written consent.

In addition, a new section is included in the Bill which states that the Auditor-General must not engage in any paid employment outside of the duties of the office. Contravention of this provision is considered to be misconduct and could result in the suspension and/or removal of the Auditor-General from office.

The Bill will retain the requirement for the Auditor-General to be appointed for a maximum of seven years, but will provide for the reappointment of the Auditor-General for a consecutive term so long as the sum of the terms does not exceed seven years.

This new provision will bring the Auditor-General into line with other independent statutory office holders in Queensland, such as the Ombudsman, the Information Commissioner and Commissioners of the Crime and Misconduct Commission.

Audit reporting provisions which were not previously contained in Parts 5 or 6 of the Financial Administration and Audit Act 1977 have also been included in the Bill, such as the audit of public sector entities, expenses of ministerial offices and whole of government financial statements.

The Bill will include the audit functions currently contained in the Government Owned Corporations Act 1993 as they relate to Government Owned Corporations and their subsidiaries.

Provisions relating to the timing of a strategic review of the Queensland Audit Office have also been reviewed during drafting of the Bill.

This was in response to concerns raised by both the former Public Accounts Committee and the Auditor-General that the current legislation is unclear in instances where the Committee does not make any formal recommendations in relation to a strategic review report, but the Premier tables a response to the Committee's report.

To clarify this point, the Bill provides for a strategic review to commence from one date, being five years from when the Premier tables a response to the Public Accounts Committee report on the last strategic review.

This approach will ensure that the Auditor-General is able to implement the strategic review recommendations in full knowledge of the views of both the Public Accounts Committee and the Premier.

Mr Speaker, I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Langbroek, adjourned.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS INTERCEPTION BILL

First Reading

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (2.32 pm): I present a bill for an act to enhance law enforcement in Queensland by enabling the Queensland Police Service and the Crime and Misconduct Commission to be declared agencies under the Telecommunications (Interception and Access) Act 1979 (Cwlth). 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: Telecommunications Interception Bill [\[93\]](#).

Tabled paper: Telecommunications Interception Bill, explanatory notes [\[94\]](#).

Second Reading

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (2.32 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to introduce the Telecommunications Interception Bill 2009. This bill delivers on my government's commitment to ensure that our law enforcement agencies have the powers they need to fight crime. At the same time, the bill provides the high standard of checks and balances to the powers that the public expects and deserves.

This bill will enable the Queensland Police Service and the Crime and Misconduct Commission to apply for telecommunications interception warrants for the investigation of serious offences. Telecommunications interception is a highly effective tool for detecting and prosecuting serious criminal activity, particularly drug trafficking, organised crime, predatory paedophilia networks, corruption and premeditated violent crimes. With the recent biker gang related violence we have seen in other states, these powers will be another weapon in our arsenal to ensure that we do not see the same kinds of problems here in Queensland.

These powers will complement the new laws targeting organised crime gangs which I have already announced. Telecommunications interception can be a key source of information for directing the focus of complex operations. It can also free up the time that law enforcement officers might otherwise spend on physical and technical surveillance or undercover work. It can reduce threats to the safety of those officers.

The evidence that it produces can be very compelling, but it is also an investigative tool that is highly intrusive on the privacy rights of individual citizens. Applications for telephone interception warrants are made without the knowledge of the targeted person or the people with whom they are likely to communicate. Given this intrusiveness, the bill provides the further safeguard—unique to any state telecommunications interception legislation in Australia—of the involvement of the Public Interest Monitor, or PIM, in Queensland applications for interception warrants, to test the validity of those applications.

The Queensland government lobbied the former Howard government for five years for the inclusion of this safeguard in the warrant application process for Queensland telecommunications interception powers. I was very pleased that in August 2008 Prime Minister Rudd wrote to me advising that his government had agreed to amend its act to allow Queensland law enforcement agencies to apply for interception warrants and that it would do so in a manner that provided for the comprehensive involvement of the Public Interest Monitor in the warrant application process. I take this opportunity to thank the Prime Minister for acting so swiftly on Queensland's request.

This is really the reintroduction of this bill, as it had been introduced in the last session of the previous parliament but since has been dissolved for the election. The reintroduction of the bill meets a commitment I gave to reintroduce and pass this legislation as a matter of priority. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Langbroek, adjourned.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Mr SPEAKER: Before calling the honourable member for Townsville, I remind the House that this is the member's first speech in this place. Accordingly, I would ask you all to extend the courtesies of the House to her on this, her first speech.

Ms JOHNSTONE (Townsville—ALP) (2.36 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

That the following address be presented to the Governor in reply to the speech delivered by Her Excellency in opening this, the 53rd Parliament of Queensland—

"We the members of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland wish to assure Your Excellency of our continued respect for the Crown and loyalty to the system of government in this state and to tender our thanks for the speech with which you opened the first session.

The various measures to which Your Excellency referred and to all other matters that may be brought before us will receive our careful consideration and we shall strive to deal with them so that our endeavours may contribute to the advancement and the prosperity of the people of this state."

I am honoured and privileged to be here in the chamber delivering my address-in-reply to the 53rd sitting of the Queensland parliament as the first woman elected as the member for Townsville. To be doing so as part of this parliament led by Premier Anna Bligh, the first Australian woman to be elected to her position in her own right, is a truly historic time. I could not be more proud to be a Queenslander than I am today.

I start by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land on which parliament meets. I also acknowledge the traditional owners of the land which makes up the Townsville electorate, the Wulgurukaba and the Bindal peoples of Townsville and Magnetic Island, and the Manbarra people of Palm Island. I also acknowledge the historical owners of Palm Island, the Bwgcolman people.

As the member for Townsville, my first responsibility is to you, the people of Townsville. This responsibility is to represent you here in the parliament and to be held accountable by you for decisions and actions that I take on your behalf. Indeed, it was at the historical 2002 Townsville sitting of parliament that the then Premier, Peter Beattie, reminded parliamentarians of this critical point. I believe one of the most important functions of government is to provide the infrastructure, services and amenities that create safe, inclusive and progressive communities. If provided, this then allows individuals and families to safely go about their everyday lives within the context of a rich and dynamic democracy that they can take ownership of and be a part of.

Family is, of course, at the core of who we are. Indeed, having a strong supportive family is what has allowed me to undertake the journey that has led me to this most respected chamber today. To my husband, Carl, I say: you are my rock. As my staunchest supporter you have never doubted for one minute my decision to take my work in the community to the next level by pursuing a career in politics. Sharing, as I do, your passion for a socially just society and fair employment conditions for working Australians, I hope that I will do you proud.

To Ethan and Paige, our children: your smiles and cuddles always arrive at just the right time. I know that you will grow up in a household where there are no limitations on what great things you can achieve in your lives. Dad and I are so proud to have you as our children. I will remember sharing this day with you forever.

Hard work will be at the core of me achieving my priorities in this term of government. The people of Townsville can be assured that I have a huge capacity for hard work. This comes from my parents, Terry and Val Thompson, who are here in the gallery today. Dad is a carpenter by trade and a self-employed builder by profession. Mum has dedicated her life to working in the home, raising four children and working in partnership with dad in their business. I know how hard some of those early years were for you both, but you managed to shield us from these hardships and ensured that we always had what all children need—a safe and loving home to come home to each night, a point that I will reflect on a little later in my speech. Together Dad and Mum have managed to provide the leadership, trust and love that children need to grow into confident and capable adults. My siblings, Matthew, Shannon and Danielle, are also strong, independent thinkers in their own areas of interest.

Thank you to my parents-in-law, Philip and June Johnstone, for your love and support to Carl and me, Ethan and Paige. June is another example of the strong women role models that have been a key feature of both my personal and professional life. My mother-in-law had a deeply rewarding and successful career which saw her teaching children in England, Kenya, Papua New Guinea and Australia. Much of this work and travel was undertaken as a single woman during the 1950s and 1960s, a time when this was definitely the exception rather than the rule.

This election victory is so sweet because of the exceptional campaign team I had working around the clock to ensure that the seat of Townsville remained a Labor stronghold in the wake of the retirement of Mike Reynolds. The contribution Mike has made to the people of Townsville is significant. I acknowledge both his time as councillor and mayor of the Townsville City Council and his work for the city in the state parliament.

My campaign team, from the executive to the broader committee, was simply sensational. The team worked to our plan and stayed on track even when I did not think we had a track to be on. Campaign director, Nikki Burrell, put her already busy life on hold with little notice and zero fuss. In true Labor style she simply got on with the job at hand. It truly became a family affair. I thank Zac Burrell for all his work behind the scenes.

To Scott McFarlane, you are a very special person—thank you. We were extremely privileged to have someone with your campaigning skills and abilities working with us. You and Nikki provided me with calm and reason several times a day during that hectic 26 days. I also acknowledge again my husband, Carl, Brian Pridmore and Ray Goodmanson who worked tirelessly in the campaign office—answering the phones, managing the postal vote campaign and coordinating volunteers, rosters and anything else that came their way.

Another critical factor in our ultimate success was volunteer contributions. The campaign office was a hive of activity because of the number of supporters who simply turned up unannounced and got on with the jobs of the day. To each of you I say thank you for every text message of support, every envelope stuffed and every letter hand delivered. The success of the campaign was in us getting the little things right. You made it possible for me to be out in the neighbourhoods meeting with and listening to as many people as possible.

I also owe a debt of gratitude to the Queensland Labor Party and the trade union movement. Special thanks to Terry Wood and Chris Forrester from the Queensland branch of the Australian Labor Party, particularly through those early days and not so early days. To Andrew Dettmer and Rick Finch from the AMWU, we could not have done this without your support. Similarly, to Bill Marklew and the team at the CPSU, the great team at the LHMU and Dick Williams and the guys at the ETU, thank you all. I also include in this acknowledgement the many local union members who volunteered their time around their own busy work and family commitments to help on this campaign. Each union and individual member's contribution was highly valued and I thank you.

Taking the decision to enter public life may seem a difficult one for some, but I was very fortunate to have around me some wonderful mentors and friends who have guided, coached and encouraged me to believe that such things are possible. To Lindy Nelson-Carr and Russell Carr, I am deeply honoured to call you my friends. Your guidance and commitment in showing me that you can and must fight the good fight has been invaluable. To Dale Parker, I simply say thank you my friend. Your service to the people of Townsville as councillor for division 5 at the Townsville City Council was second to none. Entering politics as you did following your battle with bone cancer and after a career in the wharfs, you have shown why we must continue to create inclusive and diverse communities. We will miss out on contributions like yours if we do not.

Townsville is the capital of North Queensland. It is my home. I was born there and raised there, I worked there and now I am raising my children there. One of the strengths of this electorate is its diversity—diversity of community, industry and cultures. Founded in 1866 by John Melton Black and first established as a state seat in 1878, the original village was established around the development of the port which today remains a critical feature of the local and state economy.

Today Townsville is a major regional city with a population in excess of 160,000 people. The electorate itself includes the beautiful Palm and Magnetic islands, the CBD, the port and the older suburbs of Garbutt, West End, South Townsville and Railway Estate. Our diverse economy is made up of a number of industries and sectors. The Defence Force has a special presence in the city with Lavarack Barracks based there. We have a large public sector and a range of different construction and trade based private sectors.

We are proud to have great thinkers and researchers at our James Cook University. North Queensland also provides world-class leadership and innovation in the important areas of tropical health and medicine, tropical marine science and research into renewable and alternative energy industries to name but a few. You can see that we have an abundance of assets in the people with specialist skills on which we are building our community.

We are a proud and parochial lot who provide leadership across a range of cultural, community and sporting areas. When I speak of leadership I am speaking of those community minded citizens who go about the business of building community without seeking accolades and often without recognition. These leaders include our volunteer management committee members, our junior sporting coaches and our professional workforce. To give just one example of this, I acknowledge the quality work that is being done by workers and volunteers in the multicultural, homeless and domestic violence sectors. Your work is best practice when measured against both national and international standards.

Martin Luther King once said, 'Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about the things that matter.' So it is for me. My work has always been driven by values and a commitment to social justice and the imperative of fair treatment. I became more politically active during the 1990s when it became clear what the Howard industrial relations reforms meant for ordinary working people, particularly for women and minority groups. The impacts on working families of this time, particularly in the area of the casualisation of workplaces, was devastating.

We must remember that as an elected representative in this parliament what we really are about is people. Our humanity is what joins and bonds us and is what must never be forgotten in the process of government. The impacts on ordinary people must be at the forefront of our minds when policy is formulated and legislation debated.

Decisions of government must be socially just and have consideration for the most marginalised, disadvantaged and vulnerable in our society. My first experience in working for better outcomes from such vulnerable people came 19 years ago when I was first employed by the department of housing, the then Queensland Housing Commission. My commitment to striving for better outcomes in the areas of housing and homelessness has not waned since this time.

Whilst not impossible, anyone who has worked in a SAAP or homeless service knows how difficult and labour intensive it is to break the cycle of homelessness. In 'A road home' the Rudd Labor government has acknowledged the complex nature of homelessness and has committed to developing a holistic public and community sector response.

I am proud to be part of the Bligh Labor government that will be working with our federal colleagues towards better outcomes in this area—most importantly, with the construction of 4,000 new affordable housing dwellings for vulnerable Queenslanders. All Australians, and in particular our children, have a right to safe, secure and affordable housing. Without this stable foundation all else becomes near impossible. Jobs cannot be sustained, homework cannot be completed, families break down and neighbourhoods cannot be nourished. We simply must do better. These people deserve it.

Many of the people seeking refuge in our shelters each night are made homeless through no fault of their own. A significant proportion of women and children have been made homeless because of domestic and family violence. I have worked with many women in this situation and I have heard their stories. The strength and resilience of the many women who have touched me during my working life has been amazing. I feel so privileged and indebted to the women who allowed me to share a small part of their lives when they were at their most vulnerable and desperate, either seeking refuge in a women's shelter or turning up at my office looking for housing or other assistance. It never ceases to amaze me how these women ingeniously and at great personal cost are able to protect and nurture their children in some of the most intolerable situations that you can imagine. The use of violence against women and children must never be tolerated and we must continue to work hard in this area.

As an ordinary woman coming from a working-class family, I also bring to this parliament an appreciation of the types of struggles facing working families. I understand the dilemmas families have in achieving the work/family balance. Education, child care, securing stable employment and often simply hoping there is enough left for groceries at the end of each week are issues that thousands of families are dealing with on a daily basis. All of us want to work hard to provide security and opportunity for our children. The importance of protecting jobs for working families in the current economic climate cannot be underestimated.

As a society, we have let down our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sisters and brothers with tragic consequences. I cannot change what has gone before, though I wish I could. However, I look forward to working alongside and with you in the electorate to work towards achieving your collective

goals. I feel strongly that all Australian citizens should have services and opportunity which will support people and communities to achieve their dreams. This includes working with individuals, Elders and other Indigenous leaders to create these opportunities in a way that respects and values the unique cultures that our first citizens have handed down for generations.

Whilst we have much to be proud of, there is still much to be done, and it is within this context that I place on the record here today how I plan to do this. I intend to get the little things right in my job as your local MP. I will build relationships with you that are based on mutual respect and understanding. I will listen to you and value your position on issues that are important to the community. I will be your advocate and will fight hard for you. Finally, I will never take for granted the privilege and honour that has been given to me by the people of Townsville, and I look forward to the next three years with excitement, optimism and hope.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

Mr SPEAKER: Before I call on the seconder to second the motion, I would remind the House that this is the member's first speech. I ask the House to extend the courtesies of the House to the honourable member. I call the seconder of the motion, the honourable member for Mulgrave.

Mr PITT (Mulgrave—ALP) (2.52 pm): It is with great pleasure that I second the motion for the adoption of the address-in-reply moved by my friend and colleague the member for Townsville. Mandy deserves much praise for her election win and should be congratulated on her first speech which she has just made before us all here in the 53rd Parliament. I would also like to congratulate you, Mr Speaker, on your appointment to the high and honourable office you now hold.

Starting at Innisfail, the seat of Mulgrave stretches along the Bruce Highway and includes the townships of Miriwinni, Babinda, Bellenden Ker, Deeral, Gordonvale, Edmonton, Mount Sheridan and parts of White Rock on the southern edge of Cairns. The electorate has extensive sugarcane fields, banana plantations, tropical fruit orchards and cattle farms. It is home to Queensland's highest mountain, Mount Bartle Frere, and the iconic Walsh's Pyramid. The electorate of Mulgrave also includes the Yarrabah Aboriginal community, which has a special place in my heart.

On 21 March the people of Queensland made a choice. They chose stability over instability. They chose the party that will do everything it can to create job opportunities, not reduce them; the party that put the needs of families ahead of political expediency. They chose the leadership of Anna Bligh. The Premier is to be congratulated for the genuine process of renewal within the Labor caucus and, importantly, in cabinet. I am delighted to be part of this renewal and to have the opportunity to bring new ideas and enthusiasm to the team.

I want to acknowledge the architects of Labor's election win, Mike Kaiser and Anthony Chisholm. In the engine room, ALP organiser Chris Forrester provided amazing support and invaluable advice to me along with many other candidates across the state. I am absolutely humbled by the faith that voters in the Mulgrave electorate have shown in me and am deeply honoured to be elected as their representative in the Queensland parliament.

I was endorsed as the Labor candidate for Mulgrave late in the piece after the previous member dropped a retirement bombshell that left his family, colleagues and loyal supporters stunned. I spent the first week of the campaign defending myself against claims that I had somehow been gifted a place on the ballot and that I no longer had a connection with the local area. I made the decision to refute these assertions the best way I knew how: I campaigned strongly on local issues and offered fresh and enthusiastic representation. It is my belief that people in Mulgrave did not want to hear more negativity during times like this, and this is why a majority cast their vote for a positive future.

In Mulgrave we defied the trend and suffered a swing of less than two per cent. With the state-wide swing and the retirement of a long-serving local member, it is not possible to achieve such a result without a well-run local campaign. I would like to express my gratitude to my entire team of campaign workers and in particular my campaign director Jim Smith and Innisfail office coordinator Diana O'Brien, as well as their partners, Ros and John, for loaning them to me for the duration of the campaign.

What many people do not realise is that campaign workers are unpaid. They volunteer because they believe in the Labor Party and think their candidate is better than all comers. Campaign workers still hold down a day job and, at the end of a long day at work or on their weekends, they generously give of their time and unselfishly donate to the Labor cause. I would like to say a special thanks to Nathan Lambert from the ALP national office who returned to the Far North to work on my campaign. Nathan is a formidable political strategist and I believe he has a very big future in the party. I will be forever grateful for his contribution.

During the election I campaigned the old-fashioned way—by talking with voters at shopping centres every chance I had and doorknocking street by street. During my conversations with workers and their families the global financial crisis and its impact on local jobs came up time and time again. I met people in genuinely distressed circumstances who had lost their jobs and others who were deeply worried about further cuts in their industries. The rollout of the Bligh government's \$17 billion infrastructure program and the federal government's economic stimulus package will be the driver of jobs in this state during this term and beyond.

I am committed to ensuring the direct flow-on effect to key local projects and to local contractors in Mulgrave. I will fight for local projects like the construction of a replacement for the Jubilee Bridge in Innisfail and will work with the Cassowary Coast Regional Council and the federal government to make this happen. This project is important for a number of reasons, but the anticipated 140 jobs that will be created during construction will be a real boost to the area. It is projects like this that will create turnover for local businesses and will also provide jobs for administrative and support staff.

Job losses affect everybody in our community—not just those who lose their jobs directly but also the businesses they frequent, the organisations they support and, most of all, the families they care for. Now, I know that I cannot protect the job of every person in Mulgrave, but for every job retained and every new job created I know that individual workers and their families will benefit.

While the economy is the single biggest issue facing people right around the country, there are other issues in Mulgrave that need to be addressed. The first one is the traffic congestion on the southern access into Cairns which is increasing every day. We must take action now on an integrated transport network to meet this challenge. I welcome the planning study being undertaken by the Department of Main Roads and Queensland Transport in partnership with the federal government. This \$5 million study has sought community input, and it is clear that the current southern access corridor, if properly developed, can provide the necessary transport solutions.

The second issue is the importance of strategic planning for the estimated 50,000 new residents who will move to the southern suburbs of Cairns over the next 15 years or so. Unrestricted developer driven growth is not in the best interests of Far North Queenslanders. This is why I fully support the FNQ 2031 statutory plan. It will ensure urban growth is responsible and will protect the precious natural environment that makes Far North Queensland so unique.

Thirdly, I will be strongly championing the importance of living a healthy and active lifestyle. Preventative health is by far the best way to take pressure off our health system in the long term, and this benefits our whole community. I want to work with local sporting clubs to look at ways to keep the costs of junior sport down to support families, particularly given the increased financial stresses and demands upon household budgets.

Our local athletes and stars of tomorrow also need facilities for training and competition, with current facilities struggling to cope with the growing population in the region. I will push for new sports facilities because they are a great investment in our kids' health and because they are an investment in the future. I will also strongly support efforts to improve Indigenous health, education and economic participation at every opportunity not only because it is important and has reached a critical juncture but also because I have personally invested in closing the gap. My wife, Kerry, is Kuku Yalangi. I am extraordinarily proud of her Aboriginal heritage and we both share close ties with the Yarrabah community. The CDEP program has served the Yarrabah community well over many years. However, the federal government's decision to scale back CDEP from 30 June has the potential to leave much of the current workforce without employment. Unemployment and underemployment has serious social and economic consequences. The changes to CDEP have the potential to add another 400 or 500 people to the approximately 1,000 people who are already receiving welfare payments in the community.

Yarrabah is the only discrete Aboriginal community in Queensland that is losing its CDEP as it will not be designated a remote area for the purposes of the program. On the surface, Yarrabah's proximity to Gordonvale and Cairns makes this a fair assessment. However, other communities such as Cherbourg in the state's south-east are considered remote despite being six kilometres' drive to Murgon and just over an hour's drive from Gympie. The common element here, though, is not the distance to be travelled but that these two communities, like many other discrete Indigenous communities, do not have access to reliable transportation—public or private—to commute to larger centres for work. I am committed to working with the Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council to form commercial partnerships that can create real jobs in the community and employment pathways for young people finishing school.

The need to resolve outstanding land tenure issues is also a high priority, as this is one of the biggest hurdles that must be overcome in order to make progress on economic participation in the community. Another ongoing challenge is the requirement for sufficient and suitable housing in Yarrabah, which has important linkages to employment in the community. More often than not, outside contractors secure the tenders and employ only a limited number of locals. There must be an increased focus on using local skilled workers to construct these homes.

My first official engagement after I was elected took me back to Gordonvale State Primary School. To say that I was pleased would be an understatement. I handed out badges to school captains, sports captains and members of the student cabinet. These are the leaders of tomorrow. Twenty years ago I was one of those students at the very same school. I attended Gordonvale State High School, did my senior years at St Mary's Catholic College and attained my bachelor's degree at James Cook University in Cairns.

Young men and women move away from the place where they grew up for many reasons. For some, it is the spirit of adventure, for study, or perhaps to be with the one they love. For others, it is to further their careers and earn a big salary. In my case, it was to learn the inner workings of government firsthand. I spent nearly six years in Brisbane working in the Queensland Public Service managing policy and program areas within the economic and regional development portfolio. As manager of the government's skilled and business migration program, I helped to shape a workable response to the controversial 457 visa program with colleagues from state multicultural affairs and industrial relations agencies, the Australian government, employers, industry groups and migration agents. Later I worked for the Department of Communities on alcohol management, diversionary activities and economic participation in Aboriginal and mainland Torres Strait Islander communities. During this time I worked with some of the most intelligent people I have ever met and I have a great deal of respect and admiration for the professionalism and dedication of those who work in the Queensland Public Service. In those six years, I would like to think that I went away a boy and I came back a man.

But this time was more than just an opportunity to gain experience and learn more about the world. During this time I also went on an important personal journey. Each year in Australia approximately 58,000 couples experience reproductive loss. About 55,000 experience early pregnancy losses, about 900 babies die in the first 28 days after birth and 1,750 babies are stillborn. Last year, my daughter, Isabel, was one of those babies. She was stillborn at 41 weeks. My wife, Kerry, and I were only hours from holding her in our arms and words cannot describe how difficult it was to look at Isabel and know that she would never open her eyes. To leave the hospital without our baby was the hardest day of my life.

During the pregnancy we were prepared for anything, except this. As parents, we were both devastated, but for mothers the loss is even harder. I saw the extreme sadness my wife experienced. I have always been the person who has had all the answers, but on this occasion I was found wanting. For the first time in my life I felt completely helpless.

It is impossible to go through heartbreak like this without learning something about who you are, without testing your relationships and without your priorities in life being forever changed. But our circumstances were far from unique. Tragedies like ours affect families across Queensland every day. We do not expect it to happen in this day and age, but it is more common than you would think. I am sharing our story with you not to garner sympathy, but to increase awareness in our community.

Stillbirth and Neonatal Death Support—or SANDS—Queensland provides a range of services to parents and their families who experience the death of a baby through miscarriage, stillbirth, neonatal death and other reproductive losses. SANDS Queensland is a parent-managed, not-for-profit organisation which carries out its important work through the assistance of donations, corporate sponsorship and limited government funding. I am committed to using my position and profile to support the work of SANDS Queensland in any way that I can.

Like many in this House, my family is the reason I am able to stand here today and deliver my first speech in parliament. I would like to pay tribute to my sister, Dionne Berry, to my grandmother Doreen Dodd, and to both of my parents who have been tireless in their efforts over their past 20 years in public life. The person who I am and the path that I have chosen in life I owe to these wonderful people. In particular, my parents have instilled in me solid Labor values: the importance of social justice, the value of education and the belief in a fair go for all.

It is with immense pride that I am able to succeed my father, Warren Pitt, as the member for Mulgrave. I know that I have big shoes to fill. He was known as one of the true gentlemen of politics—respected by members on both sides of the chamber because he is a decent and compassionate man. His achievements in Mulgrave are too numerous to mention, but he was particularly proud of the completion of the Ma:Mu Canopy Walk, the St John's Community Care Facility in Gordonvale for young people with a disability, and the establishment of Bentley Park College.

My father had an enviable record as a minister, serving in cabinet under Premiers Goss, Beattie and Bligh. The impact my father made on the disability sector in Queensland was enormous and he made significant contributions to the Blueprint for the Bush and major projects such as the Tugun bypass and the Gateway upgrade. My father was an unrelenting advocate for regional Queensland and his work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities was unsurpassed. No task was too big for him to tackle but no task was too small, either. My father worked hard each and every day to ensure that voices within our community were heard by government and all options were explored on their behalf. Throughout all of this work my father battled non-Hodgkin's lymphoma and showed me the true meaning of courage.

I also want to pay tribute to another extraordinarily courageous person and the most important person in my life—my wife, Kerry. Kerry has made many sacrifices in her personal and professional life for me and I draw on her love and unwavering support each and every day. It is often the partners of politicians who are the unsung heroes. My father, along with my mother, Linda, set a high bar for the standard of local representation and community involvement in Mulgrave. My wife, Kerry, and I are a

great team and we will closely follow their example as we strive to build on their good work. Public life can take its toll on families and it can be tough. We enter this next phase of our lives together with our eyes wide open, prepared to meet the challenges that lie ahead.

The significance of making my first speech and the enormity of this occasion is by no means lost on me, but the most important thing that will happen to me this year is still to come. My wife is due to give birth to our second child in late June. I know that my new role will mean time spent away from my family and that I may miss some important moments in my new son or daughter's life. But I will do everything that I can to ensure that I do not miss too many.

I have been around politics pretty much my whole life. I have been fortunate to receive good advice from many great Labor politicians—like former Cairns mayor Tom Pyne, the late great Tom Burns, Wayne Goss, Kim Beazley and Gough Whitlam. But during my lifetime I have observed the public's opinion of politicians sink lower and lower. By and large, this view is not justified. Many great men and women have sat in this parliament and have served with honour and integrity and have effectively served the communities they represent. But whether it is justified or not, it does not change the fact that people's faith in their political representatives must be restored. Each member in this parliament has a role to play in rebuilding that trust both inside and outside of this chamber. I plan on playing my part.

We are all human. We all make mistakes. But much of what we do is within our power to control. We can do better. We will do better. The people of Queensland expect nothing less. The election has come and gone. The time for talk is over and it is time for me to get to work. My promise to the families of Mulgrave is that I will fight for them and deliver results through hard work and determination for as long as they will have me as their representative. I second the motion moved by the honourable member for Townsville.

Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (3.08 pm): I congratulate the member for Mulgrave on his first speech and also the member for Townsville. Mr Speaker, thank you for your courtesy in allowing me to speak in this debate relatively early. I am honoured to address the 53rd Queensland Parliament as the member for Surfers Paradise and the Leader of the Opposition. I also want to acknowledge in the public gallery the former member for Mulgrave, the honourable Warren Pitt, and his wife, Linda—a man who has the respect of both sides of this House and who was always very pleasant to deal with. I know he is very proud of his son today. I saw him yesterday and he looked considerably younger than he looked when he was here and he said he was feeling much better as well. So I welcome Warren and Linda.

I thank Her Excellency the Governor for her welcome yesterday to Government House when we presented you, Mr Speaker, to her. I take this opportunity to welcome all new members of parliament, particularly the new Liberal National Party members, who also had the privilege of meeting the Governor yesterday. Many remarked to me that it was a great experience, especially for their family members. Hopefully they will get to see Government House again in the future. Those are the sorts of great experiences that members in this place can have. We can meet the Governor and visit places that we have heard about since we were children. Sitting in this chamber for the first time is one of my most treasured memories. I offer all members my congratulations and best wishes as they embark on a truly unique career representing their local communities.

Mr Speaker, once again I offer my congratulations on your new appointment. As I said yesterday, I am confident that you will fulfil your duties with fairness and impartiality. I congratulate you on your first full day. Even though this morning I was caught out using the first person, I am very glad to hear that you will enforce that rule. I also offer my thanks to your gracious wife, Kate, who spoke to me yesterday at Government House.

This parliament will be one of the most challenging we have seen in our times. In this tough economic climate, the decisions we make in this House will determine not only the future of our great state but also the future of 4.3 million people who have chosen to build their lives and raise their families here in Queensland. As elected representatives, we are trustees of Queensland's future and it is a responsibility no-one should take lightly. Yesterday we witnessed one of the longstanding traditions of Westminster parliaments. I congratulate the convenors for a great day. I thank the Clerk of the Parliament and all the staff who made it a great day. I also thank the Clerk for inviting all parliamentary staff to the garden party. However, today the real work has begun.

The people of Queensland have entrusted the members opposite with steering Queensland through what the Premier quite rightly says is the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. Queenslanders are understandably worried about their jobs and their families' futures. With unemployment tipped to reach seven per cent, now more than ever it is vital that the state government takes a responsible approach.

If Australian modern history has taught us anything, it is that Labor governments cannot be trusted to manage the economy. Their irresponsible spending programs significantly impacted on our domestic economy long before the words 'global economic crisis' became buzzwords. Long-term Labor governments are the worst offenders. We all know that endless borrowing is unsustainable and I am sure that the Treasurer is realising that as he tries to write the budget.

In Victoria, it was a Labor government that presided over the collapse of Tricontinental, which threatened to bankrupt the State Bank of Victoria and cause mum and dad investors to lose millions. In South Australia, the state bank went bust at the hands of Labor, plunging the state into billions of dollars worth of debt. In Western Australia under successive Labor governments, bad economic management and rampant corruption have been par for the course. New South Wales is a case in point of what happens to long-term Labor governments: they start to rot. Here in Queensland we have seen more than two decades of Labor reign. Since 1989 non-Labor has held office for only two years. It is fair to say that the current political agenda has been shaped wholly by 20 years of Labor government. The health crisis, the water crisis, the child safety crisis, the energy crisis and now our own economic crisis are all results of the way the Beattie-Bligh government has mismanaged this state.

The Premier says that Queensland's dire financial outlook is not of Queensland's making. Whilst the Premier can conveniently justify the state's finances through the prism of an unstable globalised economy, the fact is the government was grossly unprepared. The Bligh government left the Queensland economy exposed with huge spending and borrowing.

When the first indications of the domestic impact of a global slowdown started surfacing, Labor was still spending as if it had a licence to print money. In 2007, when the honourable Premier was the Treasurer, Queensland's revenue grew by 9.51 per cent, yet spending increased by well over 14 per cent. For the past three years Queensland's spending rate has outstripped our revenue income rate. We would not do it in our households; why do we do it with our state economy?

In 2008 we finally saw the crunch: our income stopped growing, but our expenses continued to grow at around the same rate. In 2008, when revenue growth went backwards, the Bligh government's expenditure was increased by over nine per cent. If Queenslanders ran their household budgets in the same manner, we would see the same crisis in housing as we have seen in the United States.

Irresponsible management in uncertain times has left Queensland's economy vulnerable to the pressure of the world market. Their irresponsible management practices have plunged our budget \$1.573 billion into deficit in 2008-09 which will increase to \$3.2 billion next financial year. Our children will be left to shoulder the cost of this government's appalling management of our economy. A baby born in Queensland this morning has come into the world with \$13,000 worth of debt hanging over his or her head. By 2011-12, when the state is \$74 billion in debt, every man, woman and child will represent a \$16,000 liability for the government.

At the start of this parliament the Premier vowed to work hard to return Queensland to prosperity, but we have heard this before. In fact, on 10 October 2006 at the opening of the 52nd Parliament, the government said that enhancing the welfare and prosperity of the people and the state of Queensland was at the core of its program. They outlined projects in water management, health and medical research, and education and training that would improve service delivery, keep the economy growing and keep unemployment down. But what have they really achieved?

Let us look at water management. The Gold Coast desalination plant, one of the key projects of the South-East Queensland water grid, is rusting. The Bligh government promised that by January this year 125 megalitres would be pumping through the pipeline every day. That project was taken off the Gold Coast City Council and expenditure has blown out to over \$1.2 billion, yet last week we saw supply grind to a halt while the Premier and her natural resources minister played politics with water restrictions. The \$1.2 billion public asset that the Premier promised would solve Queensland's water woes lies idle, rusting and not producing one extra drop of water.

The Traveston Dam has become a political enigma. The government railroaded residents by ignoring their requests to know the location of the dam. When the Premier needed to boost her green credentials going into the election, the project was suddenly on hold and under threat. Now it is back on the agenda. The people of Traveston Crossing want answers. They want leadership. The honourable member for Gympie and his constituents want answers. The Premier says the water grid is now in place and delivering water across the region, but desal has dried up. We are not really sure what is happening with Traveston because the story changes so often. I know that the member for Gympie and his constituents need certainty on this issue.

Let us look at health. When parliament rose after the 2004 election, the Premier claimed to have delivered Australia's most efficient public hospital system with the shortest waiting times for elective surgery. Obviously that was before the Bundaberg tragedy, the Forster Health Systems Review and the Davies Queensland Public Hospitals Commission of Inquiry. Since then we have seen nurses isolated, endangered and ignored in remote communities. We have seen more blow-outs in waiting lists, more bed-block, ambulance ramping and bureaucratic meddling in hospitals. The Bligh government has failed to restore confidence in Queensland's public health system.

In 2008-09 the Queensland Health budget grew to \$8.352 billion, which was an increase of 16.8 per cent on the 2007-08 budget, yet Labor's recurrent expenditure per person, weighted population, in Queensland is less than any other Australian state or territory. Today there are about 35,000 sick people waiting for necessary surgery. There are probably a further 160,000 people waiting

for a specialist medical appointment to find out if their illness is life threatening. Sadly, some of these people will wait several years just to get that specialist appointment. As the shadow minister for health points out, they are on a waiting list to get an appointment.

Unmitigated cumulative demand on health services from population growth, especially an ageing population and an increasing healthcare burden resulting from chronic diseases, poses a significant threat to the sustainability of our public health system. More public hospitals and expanded clinical capacity in existing hospitals, with more real public hospital beds, must be delivered in the smartest, fastest and most cost-effective way.

When it comes to education, we have a government that would rather close down schools than provide adequate resources to ensure every child has a pencil and paper. In 2006, at the opening of the new parliament, the government promised to 'raise standards through the new literacy framework, and provide specialised support for primary school students who need help to meet national standards'. The recent NAPLAN results, which showed that our children are either last or second last compared to others in the country, suggest that it is the Premier's government that needs help meeting national standards.

Literacy and numeracy are fundamental skills that our children need in the early years of education. They are not optional extras. This government has abandoned basic education principles which puts the education and future employment prospects of an entire generation in danger. Our schools need more teachers, more support and more resources. We need full-time teacher aides in prep classrooms so that every child receives the attention and help they need, particularly in the formative years.

And now we see the new agenda, outlined by Her Excellency the Governor yesterday—it is jobs, jobs, jobs. The Premier has promised to create 100,000 jobs in the next three years. She promised Queenslanders we could trust her to get on with the job of job creation. But the Treasurer has come clean on the Premier's job promise. According to the Treasurer's comments in the *Courier-Mail* on 11-12 April, the Easter weekend, not one of the 100,000 jobs promised will be delivered this year. More than 20,000 Queenslanders have lost their job since December. Saving jobs is obviously not a priority for this Premier's government. If it were, she would be working around the clock—as she promised—to create 100,000 new, full-time jobs to help the casualties of the economic crisis.

In these uncertain times, Queenslanders need to be reassured that their government has got its priorities right and is focused on the task at hand. For 20 years this government has had the wrong priorities, and Queenslanders are now paying for those mistakes. The Liberal National Party has its priorities right. We are privileged to have a talented, hardworking team who will provide a strong opposition to keep the Bligh government honest.

We have been fortunate to welcome some new Liberal National Party colleagues to parliament—ordinary Queenslanders who want a better Queensland. The new members in our ranks represent a cross-section of the community—we have small business men and women, professionals, former civic leaders, mums and dads. In our party room we have a good, healthy mix of age and experience. We will use this talent to move forward and deliver Queenslanders a strong, positive opposition to the 11-year-old Labor government. This is a government which is big on spin and targets but does little to deliver on promises.

To the people of Queensland, I urge them not to judge the Bligh government by what it says but to judge it by what it does. The Premier loves talking about targets but her track record in achieving them is poor. Whether they be targets for grade 12 retention rates when she was the minister for education or guaranteeing that no-one in Queensland would be worse off after the electricity deregulation, the Premier moves on to other targets. I have seen this in my own electorate with rapid transit. The Gold Coast light rail system was supposed to commence construction this year. Yet, as predicted, the project has been delayed. Now it may be off the agenda all together, despite the Treasurer's assurances in the *Gold Coast Bulletin* last year that rapid transit will be built in spite of the global financial crisis.

On 21 March, the people of Queensland said that they wanted a better government. By delivering us 11 new MPs, voters said that the LNP is heading in the right direction. But we acknowledge that we need to do more. We have heard the people of Queensland. The task now is to earn their trust and confidence. I will work relentlessly, along with my team, to show Queenslanders we are a credible alternative government. Under my leadership, the LNP will put forward fresh ideas and new policies to deliver the change Queenslanders want. We will work hard to hold the Bligh government to account and to ensure that it delivers on its promise to create 100,000 new full-time jobs over the next three years.

To many people in our community, politics today has become less about ideology and more about managerialism. Who will manage the state health system better? Who will manage our public schools better? Who will manage the economy better? Who will plan and build for the future and actually deliver the services but do it responsibly? I do believe it comes down to ideology, and our ideology on this side is that small business and the private sector will build economies in difficult times far better than large

bureaucracies. I am confident that in three years time the people of Queensland will see the LNP as better managers than the members opposite. I thank my colleagues for the opportunity to lead the LNP forward into the future.

Turning to my electorate, I would like to thank the people of Surfers Paradise for returning me to this House to represent them. It was an election conducted in good humour. My opponent Caleb Rook is a young man who has an identical twin which was a bit confusing on polling day when I saw him at more than one booth.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr LANGBROEK: I did see him. One had bigger gaps in his teeth than the other, so that is how I was able to recognise him. He certainly did work hard. As I say, the election was conducted in a good natured way.

I want to thank many people in my electorate—my constituents and of course the volunteers who helped. It was a great honour to have the confidence of my constituents. I will continue to work hard to deliver results and to provide the best representation for my electorate on issues such as rapid transit, some certainty for the Gold Coast Hospital and of course the old perennial on the Gold Coast—police numbers in an area where we have such an influx of tourists and visitors. We also have real issues with tourism on the Gold Coast at the moment. Small business operators in tourism really are finding it very tough at the moment. I acknowledge that and I will work hard to represent them. I realise that without being the local member, the member for Surfers Paradise, I would not be here at all, and I guarantee to the electorate that I will never forget that.

I also want to thank my staff, campaign team and supporters, and my wife, Stacey, and my three children, who are my No. 1 supporters. The reason I want to lead the Liberal National Party is that I want to create a better future for my family and for all Queenslanders by providing the services that all Queenslanders expect and deserve without a debt that would be carried on for generations for our children and grandchildren to repay. With the support of my family, my Liberal National Party colleagues and our supporters, I am confident we can achieve a better Queensland.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Before calling the honourable member for Glass House, I remind the House that this is the member's first speech. Accordingly, I ask members to extend the courtesies of this House to the honourable member. I call the honourable member for Glass House.

Mr POWELL (Glass House—LNP) (3.25 pm): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Firstly, I thank the people of Glass House. It is an amazing privilege to represent such a diverse group of communities and so many wonderful individuals. I humbly accept the trust that was placed in me on election day just over a month ago. From the outset, I must also thank my family. To my wife, Taryn, not only are you the love of my life and the mother of our four beautiful children but you are my inspiration and support in so many ways. Now you are also my 'level'—ensuring the grandeur of this House and the responsibilities of this office do not go to my head.

Taryn, I know you take very seriously your role as a volunteer counsellor with the Australian Breastfeeding Association, and I stand by my commitment to you and to the association to make my electorate office an accredited 'breastfeeding friendly workplace'. To Daniel, Erin, Brielle and Benjamin, thanks for loving dad even though he has had to spend a lot of time at 'meetings'. Daniel, happy birthday, mate. I know it is a little bit early but I know turning eight next Tuesday is going to be very exciting. Perhaps we can take a cake to share with your soccer team-mates at training. Thanks for being mum's 'big helper' while dad's away. I love you heaps, buddy.

Erin, I know dad got pretty busy during the election campaign—so much so that you had to resort to hugging my corflutes in the neighbour's yard. Something tells me, what with all the political questions you ask, that you might just be gunning for my job if I am fortunate enough to still be serving in this role when you reach adulthood in a dozen or so years. Brielle, my little princess, dad will be home for tickles and wrestles soon. In the meantime, I will blow you a kiss each morning and evening. Be sure to catch them, sweetheart. Ben, mate, you are too young to comprehend what is going on but know, my little boy, I love you and that beautiful smile of yours.

If you have not worked out already, I am pretty sold on my family. In fact, I am a big fan of the whole concept of family. I come from a very large and loving family, and I was able to share the opening of parliament yesterday with my mother and father. I do not know who was more excited—me or my mum. My wife also comes from a large and incredibly close-knit family, and I have a wonderful relationship with my father-in-law and mother-in-law. Both Taryn and I have had brilliant role models to learn from and have the continual support and encouragement of our extended families.

But my recent career in the Department of Child Safety has shown me that, whilst that love, support, fun and adventure might be the norm for most, it is only a dream for some. Too many of Queensland's children and young people continue to grow up in fear of physical, emotional or sexual abuse or grow up neglected. But I do not point the finger at the families, at the mums and dads that perpetrate the abuse and neglect. I point the finger at myself and at the rest of us in broader society who know this is occurring and do nothing to offer assistance and support to these families when they need it most.

My mother and grandmother share stories from their generations. I will not be so naive to believe for one minute that abuse and neglect did not occur or was not covered up in those generations, but there was a sense of community that meant when a family in your street, in your neighbourhood, was in trouble you pitched in and helped. I lament that my generation and others have become fixated with self and have lost this sense of community. I am concerned that our reliance on technology and cars has taken us away from our local community so that we no longer know who our neighbours are. I do not have any miracle solutions but I do know it starts with the family—with my family and with your family. For that reason, I will always look for ways to strengthen and support the family unit in Queensland.

On a lighter note, my parliamentary colleagues will quickly realise I love my sport. As I have already mentioned, I will try to continue coaching my son's soccer team—the Palmwoods under-8 Crusaders. I particularly love team sports, so it should come as no surprise that my recent victory in Glass House was the end result of a concerted team effort. I sincerely thank my team.

In the halves were the dynamic duo of Greg and Joyce Newton. Their combined strategic nous, determination, leadership and commitment to the cause can only be compared to Lewis and Langer. In the centres were Winston Johnston and Margaret Moss, the power and ball-running visionaries of the team. You will never meet a more honourable and true individual than Winston Johnston. Winston came second at our preselection but was the first to sign on to my campaign team. That kind of commitment in the face of individual disappointment is unbelievable. Margaret was our astute and tireless Treasurer. Margaret, I owe you a huge debt of gratitude. The back line was completed by our young speed merchants in Hadrian Davenport, Alaina Megson and Brett Stone—men and women like these are the future of our fine party.

When it comes to forwards, I know many of my LNP colleagues wish they had the strength and experience of my pack—players like John Power and John Waldron from the Woodford-Wamuran branch; Byron Moss and Sherry Wright from Maleny; Geoff Littler and Bryan Kemp from Palmwoods; Gerry Clarke from Beerwah; and a group of wonderful and faithful women I have come to affectionately refer to as 'Andrew's Angels', Annette Brodie, Mavis Robb, Marlene Lewis, Coral McClintock, Ethel Burgess, Florence Woods and Olive Hockings.

Of course no team is complete without experienced advisers and coaching staff, and our team had some of the best. There was the Hon. Peter Slipper MP, the federal member for Fisher—Peter, thank you for your wisdom and time—and the Hon. Alex Somlyay MP, the federal member, my federal member, for Fairfax. I also acknowledge and thank Ms Fiona Simpson, the member for Maroochydore, for her mentoring. Fiona, you have taught me a lot and given me a lot of your time, for which I am extraordinarily grateful.

As well as being a lover of sport, I am a student of geography, having studied it for four years at the University of Queensland. I therefore consider it a double honour to be representing one of South-East Queensland's most geographically, agriculturally and environmentally diverse electorates. Chances are that many of you in this esteemed chamber and many throughout Queensland have experienced Glass House perhaps without even realising it. If you have sampled a strawberry grown in Wamuran or Chevallum, a pineapple from Glass House Mountains or macadamia nuts from Peachester, you have sampled Glass House, with the electorate being one of the state's largest producers of each.

Agriculturally, the electorate is also home to dairy, poultry, beef, buffalo and alpaca farms. It is home to fruit orchards, and it is also home to one of South-East Queensland's largest exotic pine and hardwood plantations. If you have roped a steer at the Conondale Rodeo, danced and sung along at the Woodford Folk Festival or been privileged to share in the rich, Indigenous heritage of the Bunya Dreaming Festival, then you have experienced Glass House. If you have driven the Blackall Range stopping for a coffee in Montville or hiked into the Kondalilla Falls, you have experienced Glass House. If you have stood on Mount Tibrogargan and watched the sun rise in the east, not only have you witnessed one of our nation's most extraordinary views you have also experienced Glass House.

To the people of Glass House, know that I am committed to protecting the natural beauty and the rich agricultural productivity of our stunning part of the world. As the Mary River has its headwaters in the electorate of Glass House, I cannot be clear enough that this includes standing alongside my colleague the member for Gympie in continuing the fight to stop the travesty that is Traveston Crossing Dam.

Many families, including mine, have sampled Glass House and have decided they want to call it home. Like much of South-East Queensland, the population in Glass House is booming. New estates are opening at regular intervals in Wamuran, D'Aguiar, Woodford, Glass House Mountains and Palmwoods. The problems arise when population growth is not being matched by the delivery of key infrastructure. It is clear that this government can write wonderful glossy publications and speeches on what it plans to do. I should know; I have written a few in my time in the Queensland Public Service. My concerns are derived from the fact that this government appears to have trouble delivering on its plans and promises and that has been enough to drive a frustrated career public servant to stand for public office.

If by luck, more so than careful project management, the infrastructure is delivered, it is regularly delivered late and over budget. Poor project management has contributed to the fact that we here in Queensland were well on the way to \$74 billion in public debt long before anyone had ever heard of the phrase 'global financial crisis'. This is what \$74 billion in debt looks like: it is the equivalent of \$6.6 million in interest every day, rising to \$11.2 million per day in 2011, and that does not even touch the principal. That is debt that my generation and those younger than me will be paying off. For how long, who knows.

Now, do not get me wrong. I am happy to pay interest on debt; I am even more happy to pay off interest and principal combined. I am happy to do so when I can see where the money has been spent. I am doing that just now with my own mortgage, but I can see the roof over my head every night. In the case of this \$74 billion in debt, I struggle to see what value the spending has created.

In Glass House, the D'Aguilar Highway is still considered to be one of the state's most dangerous highways. In April last year, the RACQ rated the stretch between Caboolture and Woodford in the top nine killer highways. Yes, there may be commitments to repave sections of the highway, but to truly address safety concerns could cost \$40 million. But where then would we find the interest payments for six days? Unfortunately, it is not the only road in Glass House with significant safety issues. The Maleny-Kenilworth Road between Conondale and Kenilworth is an accident waiting to happen, an accident that could be averted for less than two days of interest payments. I fear that it will take the catastrophic news of a school bus rollover for this government to deliver the much needed widening of this vital link in the upper reaches of the Mary River Valley.

Moving away from roads, Glass House locals have shared their concerns about the on-again, off-again northern rail corridor duplication—another project shelved for the sake of making interest payments, I suspect. Most of the house and landholders in the corridor genuinely accept the need for this improvement in rail services and that their properties will need to be resumed. All they ask in return is for a bit of decent and regular communication, fair compensation and a smattering of good old respect.

Our schools are in desperate need of maintenance. The \$45 million allocated each year is simply not enough to meet the needs of ageing infrastructure. Many Glass House schools, as a result of the population growth, not only need maintenance but they need new and expanded buildings. Many dedicated principals and P&C volunteers in Glass House wait with bated breath to hear whether their schools will be successful under round 2 of the State Schools of Tomorrow program. I suspect though that improving our schools is always going to have to wait when we are busy making interest payments. I will be part of a team that holds the government to account for this debt binge and for its poor spending priorities.

I have mentioned I love my sport and that I am a student of geography. I am also a student of history and politics, and Glass House has had its fair share of both. I had the great pleasure of inviting Mrs Joan Adermann to the opening of parliament yesterday. Joan's late husband, Evan, and her father-in-law, Charles, represented the people of Glass House at the federal level for a combined total of some 41 years as the members for Fisher and Fairfax.

Of similar historic note is that the town I now call home, Palmwoods, was also home to Sir Francis Nicklin, this state's Premier from 1957 to 1968. Following his service during the First World War with the Australian Imperial Force, Nicklin purchased a 20-acre pineapple farm at Palmwoods as part of a soldier settlement.

Nicklin is renowned for many things, including the fact that he lost five elections as opposition leader before eventually becoming Premier in 1957. But once in leadership Nicklin came to be synonymous with what the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* describes as 'trustworthiness and honesty'. It goes on to describe that at 'various stages he demonstrated resilience, conciliation, assertiveness and sternness'—all qualities I see as beneficial in representing Glass House. Perhaps it is no surprise that he is credited with presiding over the most tranquil 10 years of Queensland politics in the 20th century. Clearly, like the honourable member for Mulgrave, I, too, have very large shoes to fill.

When you consider esteemed forebears such as Sir Francis, and as you look around this magnificent chamber, you cannot help but be inspired to greatness. Yesterday I swore an oath on the Bible. In it Jesus says—

Whoever wants to be great must become a servant. Whoever wants to be first among you must be your slave. That is what the son of man has done. He came to serve, not be served.

Let me give you just one example of what this kind of greatness looks like in reality. I am a huge supporter of the school chaplaincy program. These individuals do so much for so little. Talk to any principal, teacher or student and they will tell you just how indispensable their chaplain is, and yet even with some government funding and the hard work of local fundraising committees our local chaplains take home very little in their pay packets. So why do they do it? Because they understand what it is to serve and that serving often requires sacrifice. They sit alongside the kids of their school, providing a listening ear and a shoulder to cry on when times get tough, or a word of encouragement when times are good. We members of parliament can learn from these great individuals.

Whoever wants to be great must become a servant. As a Christian, those words become my creed. They become my direction for how I perform my duties as the member for Glass House. Ultimately that is my goal: to serve. After the faith shown in me, it is the least I can do for the people of Glass House.

Mr SPEAKER: Before I call the member for Beaudesert, I remind the House that this is the member's first speech. As such, I ask the House to extend the usual courtesies to the honourable member for Beaudesert.

Mr McLINDON (Beaudesert—LNP) (3.42 pm): Queensland's greatest years lie ahead of us, and I am honoured to be a part of this parliament, which has the capacity to steer our state in a direction beyond our imagination. Mr Speaker, I extend my congratulations and those of my brother Tristan, who is present here today and who recently had the privilege of having his name printed on the same ballot paper as your good self, on your elevation to Speaker of this House. I wish you all the very best in the instruction and wisdom you will provide to all members of Queensland's 53rd Parliament.

I do not consider myself to be right wing. I do not consider myself to be left wing. The bird with direction uses both to save it from going round in circles. I am merely one voice in 4.3 million people, but I have a clear objective: reform. Queenslanders are no longer interested in wings. We are a people seeking to support nothing more than common sense. I present myself to the parliament today as a reformist.

God willing I live to the age of 79, it is fitting that I divulge my short-term aspirations and a possible 50-year vision. The next 50 years will be the most exciting time of our lives. Come 2059, Queensland will have a high-speed monorail linking the Gold Coast to the Sunshine Coast. Moped and bicycle lanes will run parallel to all major arterial road networks across the state. A single income will adequately provide a comfortable lifestyle for the family. An 'Aus Vegas' project will be created, enabling revenue to be channelled from interstate and international participants whilst freezing and reducing gambling in local communities whose economies are being crippled.

Small business will continue to be the backbone of the state's economy. The Aboriginal culture and tradition will be thriving, with a society that appreciates and embraces its heritage. Government will actually take the time to analyse how successful business operates, with a view to reducing taxes and empowering the consumer. We will again become dependent on our local farmers to meet our global requirements. Globalisation will complete its 360-degree cycle and there will be a return to localisation. Stormwater will actually be collected for the not-so-rainy days. A complete state network will evenly distribute the land's resources whilst we act as responsible stewards of the environment.

All sides of politics will have a clear understanding of the importance of decentralisation. Government will realise that constant intervention and regulation is to its detriment. A fleet of helicopters will be strategically placed across the state for emergency services. New taxes will be introduced only by governments which have become politically lazy. Minimum gender percentages and reverse discrimination will be a folly of the past, as people will succeed according to individual merit.

Queensland will have an upper house, fulfilling its role as a board of review. Payroll tax will not exist. Reformative politics will be the new philosophy that dominates the political arena. The sun will continue to shine in this great state, and our numberplates will continue to proudly say so. We are all on the threshold of a new era. After all, the 52nd Parliament of Queensland was broadcast live for the very first time in this state's history.

As a collective parliament, we must immediately review the role of the state government. As simplistic as it sounds, it is my firm belief that our role and responsibility has been diluted to the point where we are suffering an identity crisis. An effective democratic process built on the obligation of accountability has been missing since the suicide of the upper house. Seventeen-year-olds need to be given the right to vote. Our youth need educating on the levels and responsibilities of government.

In years to come we will have created an informed and engaged public. Decisions will be made based on the considered merit of sound policy in place of the populist surface politics we have seen emerge in recent years. This will lead to a higher calibre of public representatives and a greater pool of intellects willing to embrace the challenge of increased scrutiny by the general populace.

Government needs to introduce into its public health system the benefits of natural, preventative and complementary medicine. This will alleviate the bottleneck system that Queenslanders currently face. Medical doctors, as do truck drivers, need safe work hours given the demands, stress and high-risk environments within which they operate. Carers of people with disabilities need more government assistance and need to be recognised for the honourable role they play in an increasingly self-centred society.

Fluoride being forced into our water system was an ill-educated decision, coupled with the fact that fluoride tablets were already made available at local councils for those that needed its supplement. I never recall my mother telling me to swallow my toothpaste after I brushed my teeth. Maybe there is another poison out there we can add to the water which prevents obesity. How can one size fit all?

Queensland local governments need to be empowered and resourced. Any state government with a basic level of political savvy would work alongside them and assist in all ways possible. It is my hope that the recent injustices inflicted upon Queensland local governments and the Local Government Association of Queensland will be rectified in the near future with a warranted public apology.

The arts and entertainment industry is a sleeping giant right here in Queensland, and it is time the government gave it the resources it requires in order for it to reach its potential. This will not only boost both the artists and the organisations themselves but also make Queensland the entertainment capital of Australia. The talent is already here and will continue to increase. This of course does not include the oxymoron of reality television.

One of the greatest dangers facing my generation is the curse of drugs. Those who operate within the pyramid marketing scheme in this illegal industry need to be held truly accountable. After all, they are in many cases accomplices to grievous bodily harm, wilful damage and murder.

Now is not the time to separate church from state. More often than not it is the political sphere that initiates religious interference, which would explain why the collective body politic would prefer that the body church absent itself from the policy equation altogether. It often amuses me to see crusades of people set out to save the world under the banner of social justice whilst distancing and in some cases divorcing themselves from Christianity, when in fact the Christian ethos was based on social justice and social justice is based on the Christian ethos. As long as people continue to attempt to separate the two spheres, which are intrinsically related, then disorganisation and confusion will always be the consequence. There has never been a better time to be proud of our culture and our heritage than now.

More funding needs to be directed to subsidising children's sport and sporting facilities. This will give families the real ability to participate and become active, physically and socially.

I am proud to see that Queensland has Australia's first Indigenous liaison officer in any state parliament right here in George Street. I congratulate the government on this implementation. As a contemporary culture we do not sufficiently appreciate the original culture of this land. We can only showcase our culture to them until such time as we have empowered their own.

At the age of 15 my father suggested I undertake a work experience placement at this parliament and I thought he was mad. In the fullness of time, I think it is fair to say rather it was I. These five days became a critical turning point in my life before embarking on a 14-year journey which led to my being here today. I pay tribute to the then protocol officer, Ted Newton, who is present here today against all odds, whose encouragement, goodwill and sense of humour has been one of many driving forces in my early years. I see time has not wearied some of the parliamentary staff I came in contact with then who are still here today: Graeme Kinnear, Rona Lynch, John Polistena, Sandy Musch, Kevin Jones, Mary Kolosowski, Helena Simpson and of course the one and only Bob Bradbury in the bills and papers office. Since I first stepped into parliament in 1995, my age has doubled alongside my chin, yet these parliamentary staff members seem to be drinking from a fountain of youth. As a result, it is a pleasure to see some familiar faces around the traps.

I would also like to publicly thank a true Queensland legend in Wayne Bennett, who supported me when I needed him most by launching my 2004 local election campaign in my backyard. It was Wayne's support and encouragement that propelled me into public life and I am forever indebted to him.

To my father and mother, Tony and Kaye, and my siblings, Luke, Lisa, Shawn, Matthew, Michael, Stephen, Bradley and Tristan, and to my wife, Christy, who is present here today, you are all a bunch of champions and you all keep me motivated. To Alice Warby, Barry and Liz Dittman, Rod and Sheila Venz, Dick Darvell, Darryl and Brenda Dennis and the crew of over 200 helpers throughout the campaign, I am here only because of your enthusiasm and commitment to the cause.

I acknowledge the wisdom given to me by my grandfather, Bernard, who, in his living years, was an ardent Labor supporter at a time when the party actually had an agenda and a distinct identity. Today also marks the birthday of grandma Agnes, who left this world before my arrival—I must have given her the heads up.

To Kev and Alison Lingard, on behalf of the Beaudesert electorate, thank you both for your service since 1983 and the difference you have made in the lives of thousands. To Lawrence Springborg and the 2009 state election team—Bruce McIver, Gary Spence, Michael O'Dwyer, Mary Carroll and the crew—you have done us all proud in bringing a political party just eight months young to a whisper of governing Queensland. I now look forward to being part of an effective opposition that will provide positive alternatives under the leadership of John-Paul Langbroek.

Thank you to one of the states most effective federal members of the Australian parliament whom I had the privilege to work for and be mentored by, former member for Forde, Kay Elson, and her dedicated husband, David, and their family and to Jolene, Telena and Selma, who have been a tower of strength behind the scenes and supported me in the times when I enacted my political plans as a bullet proof 17-year-old.

To my competitors for the state seat of Beaudesert—Brett McCreddie, Keith Gee, Pauline Hanson, Richard Somers, Russell Pata and Andy Grodecki—I acknowledge you all have something to offer our community and I look forward to working with you over the coming term. To my university lecturers—Professors Pat Weller and John Wanna, Doctors Liz Van Acker, Giorel Curran and Robyn Hollander—I thank you for sharing your knowledge with me. My appreciation also goes to Associate Professor Paul Reynolds for divulging with me his sea of knowledge.

I wish to congratulate the member for Ashgrove on her appointment as the Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability. I had the privilege of going head to head with her in Queensland's inaugural Youth Parliament held in this chamber in 1996. We fought it out as Youth Premier and Youth Leader of the Opposition. Those days were great and those days are back. It is the mother of the newly elected member for Everton who guided me as a prefect at Springwood State High School, which was the commencement of my leadership amongst my peers. I thank Kathy Watt for assisting me in those early challenges.

I want to publicly thank my band members for sticking with me over the years through thick and thin and I want to let them know that, even though politics ended up getting me hook, line and sinker, they will do well and carry on the dreams we each have within the music industry. I have also been waiting for this moment to place on the public record for the journalists who dubbed our band anti-establishment that, on the contrary, society always needs a form of establishment in order to function properly. My lyrics only ever questioned the sincerity of authority.

The Beaudesert electorate is truly a beautiful desert and I look forward to representing this patch of Queensland to the very best of my ability. My initial focus will be directed towards the reinstatement of the Beaudesert Hospital maternity ward, a public transport system that connects us to our neighbouring regions and the Brisbane CBD, a 24-hour police station in Beaudesert, the construction of the Boonah to Kooralbyn Connection Road, the relocation of the proposed rehabilitation centre from Mount Tamborine—as it will be unable to provide public transport or 24-hour emergency services to those who are at a crucial point in their life—and a carefully considered Bromelton state development area. These projects can all become a reality built on strategic partnerships with the Scenic Rim Region Council—and I recognise Councillor John Brent, who is present today in the public gallery—the Logan City Council and the federal members for Forde and Blair. Members, please also remember that when you sip on some of the wines here at Parliament House you will find the great tasting ones are the fruits of the finest wineries direct from the Beaudesert electorate.

Since serving my first hotdog at Dreamworld to working in a hostel in Hollywood, I have poured over 100,000 beers and served my fair share of munchies in numerous venues over a six-year period in the hospitality industry. I have had the privilege and opportunity of personally doorknocking more than 30,000 homes in two state elections and two local elections since 1997. These experiences made me listen and understand what all of us are thinking and feeling. Furthermore, my political life thus far has been in what Antony Green would describe as Labor heartland. I know what it is that this so-called Labor heartland and the ever-increasing swing voters are seeking—reformative politics.

Whilst I respect every member of the Labor Party in Queensland, it is a reality that they are collectively plagued by the curse of regimental factionalism which will never be able to have the capacity of reaching the point of political utopia. Whilst the Labor Party may appear to be a unified strength on the outside, to the learned it is simply an aged ox that is overweight and burdened by the weight of three separate wagons—one laden with an entrenched factional fundamentalism, another the lack of identity and the last a yearning for politics with substance which it will never have the capacity or opportunity to reach within its current internal regime. While some academics may cast this assertion as incorrect, I am simply translating an observation and a ground truth of what I have analysed through my personal experiences.

To the members for Springwood, Waterford, Albert, Woodridge, and Logan, whom I have worked alongside for the past five years as a local councillor, I recognise the struggle you have in getting your government to assist Logan City in addressing unemployment, the lack of apprenticeships, upgrades of the M1 and the scourge pokies is having on your local economy and the lack of will your government has in bringing your electorates into line with the rest of Queensland and I offer my assistance where possible in your plight.

Humanity is at an intergenerational collective point in time and it is looking for leaders from all ages and from all walks of life to restore our reason for existence. As elected leaders in this parliament, the greatest tool we can provide to our unique generation is one of hopes, dreams and realistic goals. It is our responsibility to empower people and enable them to utilise the gift of opportunity. As the Chinese proverb states, 'If you give someone a fish, you feed them for a day—if you teach them how to fish you will feed them for a lifetime.'

Most importantly, we need to become a parliament that protects and defends those who are the most vulnerable in our communities. This includes those who are elderly, weak, incapacitated, disabled or are without voice. If we are not a voice for the voiceless, then this chamber will merely become a puppet show echoing in an empty vessel floating down the river of time. I believe in the potential of every human being that has been created from day one, including those who will remain forever young.

We all have a journey to share or a tale to tell. Whether you are a Che Guevara, a BA Santamaria, a Zack de la Rocha, a Mahatma Ghandi, a member of Yothu Yindi or the Red Hot Chili Peppers, we are of the same make-up, constantly struggling for justice and peace, of desire and hope, and together we can pool our strengths and weaknesses to create the ideal society we all strive for in the true spirit that is succinctly scribed in Latin on the Queensland coat of arms—'Bold, aye, and faithful too'.

If I wear my boxing gloves during policy debate in this chamber, I will always remove them before exiting. A good sportsman knows that a foe on the field can be a friend off the field. Let us never forget that we have all been elected not to be served upon but to serve others. If we are all here for the right reasons and we collectively strive towards the pursuit of best policy then surely the greatest years lie ahead for Queensland.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Before I call the honourable member for Chatsworth, I would remind the House that this is the member's first speech. I ask the House to extend every courtesy to him on this occasion.

Mr KILBURN (Chatsworth—ALP) (3.58 pm): I am proud to stand here in this House today as the properly elected member for Chatsworth. Firstly, may I congratulate you, Mr Speaker, on your appointment as Speaker and it is my hope—as I am sure it is the hope of the other 18 new members in here today—that you will allow us all a degree of latitude whilst we observe and learn the workings of this parliament.

I would like to take this opportunity to put on the public record my appreciation to the people of Chatsworth for the faith, trust and confidence that they have placed in me. To be elected as only the seventh member for Chatsworth is a great honour and I feel very privileged to have been afforded this opportunity. In the process of researching this speech, I took the opportunity to read the maiden speeches of a number of members from both sides of the House, both past and present. A common statement that appeared in many of these speeches is that the members felt humbled by their election result, and I must admit that I used to feel that this was an overused sentiment. I must, however, now state that I fully understand why this is a commonly used phrase. I do feel humbled—truly humbled—by the opportunity that the people of Chatsworth have bestowed upon me.

I am humbled by the support that I have received from my family, who are here today in the gallery: my wife, Nataleen, and my daughters, Mel, who is not here today, and Kate and Hannah, who are both here. In particular to my wife Nataleen, I would say that the love and support that she has given me during our time together and the unwavering support that she has afforded me before the election campaign and after our fantastic win in the seat of Chatsworth are something that I admire and appreciate greatly and will never forget. I am also humbled by the fact that so many people would volunteer to sit on the side of the road with an election sign, doorknock or hand out how-to-vote cards on election day. These actions demonstrate how strongly Labor Party members and supporters take their commitment to the Labor ideals.

I am especially humbled also that so many people in Chatsworth chose me to be their representative—in fact, 74 more than I needed! The trust that has been placed in me and the many acts of kindness and assistance that I have received have built in me a strong sense of obligation and expectation. I feel this weight of expectation very strongly—not as a burden but more like the comfortable weight of a heavy coat on a cold winter's day. I can feel its weight around me, but I also know that it would be unwise to forget it as I represent the people of Chatsworth now and into the future. I promise the people of Chatsworth that I will work to the best of my ability to repay their kindness and faith.

I would like to acknowledge the contribution of former Labor members who have represented the people of Chatsworth—Chris Bombolas from 2006 to 2009 and Mr Terry Mackenroth, who was the member for Chatsworth from 1977 to 2005 and who did so much whilst he was a member and who still makes a significant contribution to the Chatsworth electorate in his work with the Clem Jones Centre. The Clem Jones Centre is part of a great legacy left to the people of Brisbane and particularly the people of Chatsworth by the great Clem Jones. I look forward to continuing the great community work and social capital building that has been such a big part of the previous Labor representatives, in particular Clem Jones, which has benefited the Chatsworth electorate for many years.

I have been fortunate to meet the administrators and participants of the various sporting groups which operate out of the Clem Jones Centre, one of the many great sporting and recreational facilities available in the Chatsworth electorate. I understand the value to the community of these facilities and I look forward to working with all of the community groups in the Chatsworth electorate to advance the work that these great and necessary organisations do in the community.

There are many other people whom I need to thank, starting with the Premier, Anna Bligh, for her leadership during the election campaign and the fantastic result of being the first woman elected in her own right as a Premier in Australia. I would like to thank the ALP for its support, particularly Anthony Chisholm, Jessica Hill, Linus Power, Chris Forrester and all of the ALP staff who worked tirelessly behind the scenes to ensure a Labor victory. Thank you also to my campaign manager, Peter

Lovegrove. I also want to particularly mention Mathew Deane, a young ALP member from Adelaide who flew to Brisbane specifically to help with my campaign. Mathew is a very keen ALP member and ran for council in South Australia at the age of 19. Mathew worked tirelessly for me during the campaign and I wish him well in his future and thank him for the work that he put in. Both Mathew and Jess put in many long hours assisting me and keeping me focused and on track. I thank you both.

To the Labor Party branch members, in particular the Wynnum-Tingalpa branch and the Carina-Carindale branch: the assistance and support that you provided me with will never be forgotten. Thank you all very much. There are far too many people for me to thank individually during this speech today. Suffice to say I would like to thank each and every person who contributed to my campaign. I valued every contribution, no matter how large or how small.

I would also like to acknowledge the support that I received from the union movement and in particular the United Firefighters Union, a union that I have been a proud member of for the last 20 years. It is through my experience with the aviation branch of the United Firefighters Union that my real passion for Labor ideals was formed. To Angela, Jane, Glenys, Leanne and Paula, thank you for your assistance and support. I would also like to thank my colleagues from the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service and members of the United Firefighters Union who offered their support and assistance throughout the campaign. I would like to especially acknowledge my good friend Henry Lawrence. Henry is the president and industrial officer of the United Firefighters Union. The passion that Henry brings to his job is an inspiration to me. I have known Henry since he began working for the UFU many years ago. Henry, your friendship and support has meant more to me over the years than you realise. Thank you for your support.

To my great friends Adrian, Craig and Steve, thank you for the many long hours we have spent discussing politics and world issues on balconies and in bars around the state and the part that you have played in shaping my ideals and beliefs. Your friendship has seen me through the great joys and disappointments in my life, and I deeply appreciate everything that you have done for me.

As I started writing this speech, I considered the events and people that have influenced my decision to enter politics. Whilst it is impossible to acknowledge everyone who has influenced me throughout my life, I would like to speak about a number of important people and events that have shaped my opinions and directions. Firstly to my father Terry and mother Kay, who are here in the gallery today: thank you so much for providing me with a loving and safe home and also for such an interesting childhood. My parents instilled in me respect for others, honesty and compassion, and these are traits that I appreciate greatly. They did this not through lecturing but through demonstrating these traits, and I am proud to be their son.

I was born in Brisbane and during my early years my family moved to Cairns. In the early seventies the first set of traffic lights was erected in Cairns and my father took this as a sign that there were simply too many people in the town. So in 1973 we moved to Gove, a small mining town in Arnhem Land on the western tip of the Northern Territory. Living in Gove provided me with a number of wonderful opportunities. When we arrived there was no television or radio and at the time I felt that I was terribly deprived. But in hindsight I realised what a blessing this was, as it allowed me the freedom to explore and become engaged with my community and the beautiful environment that is Arnhem Land.

I was privileged to spend time living with the local Indigenous people from Yirrikala, including spending extended periods of time living in remote areas and on islands and learning to survive and live off what we obtained from the land. This was a fantastic opportunity and something that I have always appreciated. This also provided me with the opportunity to have an understanding of the Aboriginal culture and to understand the importance of land and culture and place to the wellbeing of the Indigenous people.

After joining the Navy in 1980 at the age of 16, I trained as an electrical and hydraulic fitter. My first sea posting was the guided missile destroyer HMAS *Brisbane*. This ship is now sitting on the ocean floor off the Queensland coast and it is a goal of mine to dive on this wonderful tourist attraction and to have my photo taken lying in my old bunk. I then spent a number of years on naval patrol boats operating out of Cairns, Darwin and Perth. I was involved in boarding foreign fishing vessels as well as border security, including the detection of asylum seekers arriving in Australian waters. It was this experience in particular that later in life led me towards the Labor Party.

When I looked into the eyes of the fishermen or refugees that I was often involved with, I did not see the cold heart of a terrorist that is so often portrayed now. What I did see was the desperation of mothers and fathers sick of lives full of fear, poverty and violence and simply looking to provide a better life for their families. It was with a sense of shame that I watched the politicisation of the legitimate claims of asylum seekers under the previous Howard government and I am pleased to see a return to a more compassionate and understanding approach under the current Labor government led by our Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd.

My experience in the Navy taught me discipline and the importance of teamwork. Whilst I enjoyed immensely my time in the Navy, the birth of my first daughter, Melissa, significantly changed my life. During the first year of my daughter's life, I spent 10 months at sea away from home. At her first

birthday, she did not recognise me and did not know who I was. It was then that I decided it was time for a change. This experience taught me the need for work/life balance—the importance of working families having options in relation to the care and wellbeing of their family. This is an area where the Labor Party has time and time again demonstrated its leadership.

It is also during this time, whilst working at the Garden Island dockyard in Sydney, that I first began to see the benefits of union membership. I particularly remember an incident involving the removal of asbestos from Navy vessels. In the early 1980s, work was being conducted removing asbestos from the engine room of a ship. The civilian workers—all unionised—walked off the job to ensure the safety of their members and I remember Defence management coming on board and ordering sailors in to complete the task. The sailors then went down and continued the task of removing the asbestos—something that I am sure causes many of these people concern given what has happened with asbestos. It was from experiences like these that I gained an appreciation of the value of the union movement. It was with great sadness that I saw the Howard government, with the support of state Liberal and National members, try to destroy the union movement with their unfair Work Choices legislation. Once again, I am proud to see the Labor Party reversing this draconian legislation.

Upon leaving the Navy I was fortunate enough to follow in my father's footsteps and join the fire service, firstly as an aviation firefighter in Brisbane and Cairns. For the last 14 years, up until the election date, I was with the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service. During this time I served in Cairns, Tully and Brisbane. When I first joined the fire service there were 81 different fire brigades in Queensland. These brigades had different equipment and procedures and were run by individual boards that simply could not provide the people of Queensland with an effective, coordinated emergency response.

Under the leadership of successive Labor governments I have seen the department of emergency services become a national leader in the delivery of emergency services. I was fortunate to be involved in the response to Cyclone Larry and I felt extremely proud to be part of an organisation that provided such an effective and professional response to the Queensland community. I will use my knowledge and experience in emergency management to contribute wherever possible to the ongoing improvement in the delivery of emergency services to communities throughout Queensland.

Throughout my career in Defence and the fire service I have seen many things that have impacted on me greatly. I have seen people at their best and worst. I have been involved in rescues where the actions of firefighters and other emergency services staff and members of the community have saved lives and demonstrated the highest ideals of community service. I have also been involved in incidents where the thoughtless actions of some individuals, or sometimes pure bad luck, have had devastating consequences. I have been part of a team that has felt uplifted after cutting a trapped passenger free from a serious car accident. I have also felt the great sadness of being part of a crew that has had the task of removing a deceased person from another. These experiences have taught me many lessons. I have learned that it is important to keep a sense of perspective. I have learned to stay calm in stressful situations. I have learned the need to obtain as much information as possible before jumping to conclusions, the importance of teamwork and the importance of considering all possible consequences before taking action. I have also learned the need for strong leadership and the need, whilst doing all of this, to treat people with respect and dignity.

My experience has also given me a belief that it is at times of greatest despair that people's true strength is realised. The experience that I have had in the Navy and the fire service and throughout my life has served to highlight to me the need for a well-trained Public Service and strong government leadership in the provision of services such as emergency services, health and education and the role that successive Labor governments have played in working for issues such as reconciliation, multiculturalism, workplace safety, job security, workplace fairness and the provision of public infrastructure. These are some of the reasons I am so proud to be elected as a member of a strong Labor government and to have the opportunity to contribute to the ongoing wellbeing of the people of Chatsworth and Queensland.

During the election campaign I was also fortunate to speak with many people in the Chatsworth electorate—something that I look forward to continuing during my time as their member. I met people who have called Chatsworth home for a lifetime as well as people from around the world who have only just recently arrived. I will continue the ongoing dialogue that I have commenced with the people of Chatsworth and I look forward to meeting as many people as I can whilst I am the member for Chatsworth.

There are many and varied issues affecting Chatsworth, and I will be working with the ministers and the government to try to progress as many of those issues as I can. I will be working with the Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services, the Hon. Neil Roberts, to commence the new Carina Police Station as quickly as possible. I plan to work with the Minister for Transport, the Hon. Rachel Nolan, to progress issues which were raised with me regarding public transport throughout the electorate. The Gateway Bridge duplication and the Gateway Arterial will continue to provide jobs

and improve transport operations for the people in my electorate. I am proud to work with the government as it delivers its \$17 billion infrastructure program, which will continue to provide opportunities in my electorate.

In conclusion, I once again thank the people of Chatsworth for their support and trust. I thank my family for their love and assistance and I pledge to the people of Chatsworth that I will work night and day to advance their needs. I will treat all members of the community with respect and take into account all points of view before making judgements about issues affecting my electorate. I am proud to be the member for Chatsworth and it is a privilege that I will never take for granted.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Before calling the honourable member for Bulimba, I remind the House that this is the member's first speech. I therefore ask the House to extend the usual courtesies to the honourable member.

Ms FARMER (Bulimba—ALP) (4.16 pm): Thank you, Mr Speaker. May I congratulate you on your election. Like many of us here, I have always admired your wit, wisdom and generosity of spirit, and I am proud to enter the parliament at the time that you have been elected Speaker. The House has done well.

I rise today to firstly acknowledge the original owners of the land on which this great house of parliament now stands. I also acknowledge the honour and responsibility conferred upon me by the people of the Bulimba electorate and I recognise the great histories, traditions and responsibilities that come with being a member of this House.

It will always be a personal reference point for me in years to come that as a member of the 53rd Parliament I have become part of the dynamic story of parliamentary democracy in Queensland in this the 150th anniversary of statehood. Robert Herbert, the first Premier of Queensland, would be astounded, I am sure, at the changes which have occurred in and to Queensland over the last century and a half, as would William Hemmant in the time that has passed since his election as the first representative for Bulimba in 1873. There have been 17 members for Bulimba since that time, including me. Labor has held the seat continuously since 1932, with auspicious names such as Jack Houston, Ron McLean and the inimitable Pat Purcell peppering the honour roll.

Irene Longman, the first female ever elected to the Queensland parliament, was the member for Bulimba between 1929 and 1932. There were no female toilets in Parliament House in her time, and as a woman she was forced to eat her meals on the veranda. Now—in 2009—I stand before you as the only other female politician and the first female Labor politician ever elected to the seat of Bulimba, in the same election that Anna Bligh became the first female to be elected in her own right as an Australian Premier. I am proud to be part of Anna Bligh's government and to be joining the men and women on the Labor team, many of whom I have known for a number of years, who are doing their best for Queensland.

While we can only speculate at what our founders may think of the changes over the past 150 years, we do know that they began this state with a clear vision of improving the lives of Queenslanders. Today we face vastly different challenges that need vastly different solutions, but some things do not change. One is Labor's own clear vision of improving the lives of Queenslanders. The other for me is the importance of a sense of community. With a strong community spirit we can deal with anything that comes our way. In the face of economic hardship, community spirit will pull us through.

I was raised in a small town in Central Queensland, growing up in the country town of Gladstone. Gladstone, which was then only just starting to look like the industrial powerhouse that it is today, instilled in me a sense of belonging, trust and reliance upon family and community.

As many members know, a small tight-knit population has real community spirit. In a close community, people look out for each other. They know the highs and lows of their neighbours and their community, and they laugh and cry for both. They cheer for their neighbours' aspirations and achievements, and they rally to help in their misfortune. It is just this strong sense of community that is very real in the Bulimba electorate. It might sound strange to say that of an inner urban community and one that many people know only for its busy shopping, cinema and cafe precinct, but I assure the House that the community spirit is strong and true in Bulimba.

It is not possible to talk about community, particularly in the Bulimba electorate, without talking about my predecessor and friend, Pat Purcell, who personified the very essence of the word. I have heard many stories about Pat's community spirit. There is the story about Pat coming out with his own chainsaw to cut down a tree for a pensioner after a wild storm; the one about him buying a trolley full of groceries for a family who had lost their home, or the one about him fixing the tap of an elderly lady who lived in a public housing unit and who could not manage the job herself. Pat set the standard.

The early Aborigines of my local area called Bulimba Toogoolawah, which means 'heart'. Although I understand this was probably a reference to the heart-shaped piece of land that forms the peninsula of Bulimba, I like to think that it very accurately describes the community that I now represent. This is not just because the electorate has physical boundaries that circumscribe it and make it a place that people go to and not through, with the Brisbane River and Norman and Bulimba creeks forming a significant portion of its boundaries; it is also because of the history of the place as well.

One need only walk through the Balmoral Cemetery, cared for so passionately with the support of the Friends of Balmoral Cemetery, and read the tombstones to understand the history of the place and of the families who worked to make it what it is today—families such as the Wrights, who were the first boat builders in the area and still have their business in the electorate; the Marconis, whose Bulimba forefather Joe invented goanna oil; and the Loves, who have lived in the electorate for seven continuous generations, with five of those generations attending Bulimba State School. I am proud to say that Chris of the seventh generation of the family was a keen helper on my election campaign. There is also the Hardcastles who donated the land that is now Hardcastle Park, from which the Hawthorne ferry terminal operates and where parents take their children to play. Millie Hardcastle, who lives around the corner from me, only recently retired as president of the Catholic Women's League after spending 46 years helping the needy. There are many, many families like those who have lived generation after generation in our area because they belong to the place and it belongs to them.

However, when we talk about community, the almost 200 community organisations that are active in the Bulimba electorate also contribute to our closeness. Despite my own involvement in community organisations like the Morningside Development Association, the Bulimba Meals on Wheels, the Balmoral Local Area Ambulance Committee and the Morningside State School P&C, it was not until the last six months as a candidate, when I had the opportunity to meet all the incredible people of those 200-odd organisations, that I truly understood the meaning of the phrase 'social fabric'.

Those organisations include the kindergarten associations, schools, P&Cs and P&Fs of all the electorate suburbs of Murray, Cannon Hill, Hawthorne, Carina, Camp Hill, Bulimba, Norman Park, Seven Hills, Balmoral and Bulimba; seniors groups such as the Bulimba Senior Citizen's Club and the Morningside Pensioners and Superannuants League; the bushcare groups like the Bennetts Road Bush Defenders and the Perrin Creek-Seven Hills Bushland Rehabilitation Group; the sport and recreation clubs, ranging from the Queensland Hockey Centre, the 16 footers sailing club and the Morningside Flyers Swimming Club, to every football code in existence; the neighbourhood watches like the one at Murarrie that has overseen a consistent downward trend in break-and-enters in its catchment area; the RSLs and associated groups; the Morningside CWA and service clubs like Lions and Rotary; the Villanova Players; the South East Brisbane Chamber of Commerce; the social welfare groups like the Cannon Hill Family Support Centre and the Gateway Community Centre; the east bicycle user group; and the churches like Saints Peter and Paul's and St Thomas', the Bulimba Uniting Church and St John the Baptist, which is most recently famous as the regular place for the media to look for the Prime Minister if he is in Brisbane on a Sunday morning, and many others. All of them make up the social fabric of the Bulimba community. If even one of them ceased to operate, our local community would be a lesser place. Each one of those organisations looks after its own and contributes to the richness of our lives.

Without a doubt, an important part of my role as the member for Bulimba is to support those organisations and to create as many opportunities as possible for them to prosper. However, as the member for Bulimba I must also attend to some of the pressing issues facing our community if we are to retain the quality of life we so enjoy. It is both the established and the new inhabitants of the Bulimba electorate—and I am still considered new, even though I have lived in the local area for most of the past 15 years—who told me quite clearly during the election campaign and in the months preceding it that one of the very top issues for them was that we do not lose our quality of life and that we always do more to help people interact as a community. It was a great encouragement to me to be exhorted to do something that is at the heart of my core values.

However, along with this there are key issues that people are concerned about. The people of Bulimba have put their trust in me and given me the task of preserving and improving the social and economic quality of life in their community. This will be the foundation of my work in the coming years as their member of parliament. The first of those key issues is jobs protection and jobs creation. The Bulimba electorate is diverse, incorporating some highly affluent suburbs as well as suburbs where life can be a struggle. However, in spite of the affluence, the effect of the global economic crisis is clear. Not a week goes by that I do not meet three or four people who have just lost their job or who have applied for a job that 300 or 400 other people applied for so that they did not even get a look in, or who are applying for jobs so that they can earn at least something, even if it means working at a level many times lower than they are used to.

In electing the Bligh Labor government, the voters of Queensland made a very clear choice about the economic development of their state, the need to protect and create jobs and the need to invest heavily in skills development. The Gateway Upgrade Project is a key piece of infrastructure for the Bulimba electorate and will create thousands of jobs over its life. However, it is the government's Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative that is making an immediate impact in the electorate, and I am excited about what this will be able to achieve for us in the future.

Using the funding available under this initiative—\$80 million in the 2008-09 year alone—training organisations such as CES and the great team at our own local organisation, Career Employment Australia, are providing important skills to our young people such as building, painting, planting and so on, to benefit not-for-profit organisations in our community. Recently at Cannon Hill State School I was

able to show the Treasurer the vegetable gardens, chicken coop and specially designed tuckshop kitchen that trainees have constructed. I know the significant sprucing up that will be carried out by trainees at the Morningside and Cannon Hill schools of art buildings, which will benefit an enormous range of community organisations and community members who utilise those facilities. There are a number of major employers in the Bulimba electorate, as well as many thousands of small businesses that are the backbone of our local economy. I will be working closely with employers at both levels to ensure they are able to avail themselves of the policies, programs and services of the government that have been put in place to support them.

Another major priority is education, and this is a passion for me. My father was one of the small number of local GPs serving Gladstone and the surrounding district. Unfortunately, he passed away in my first year of university and I was not mature enough to engage with him properly to benefit from his wisdom. However, what I do remember most clearly, which has influenced me in an absolutely fundamental sense, is his philosophy on education. He would say to my sister and I, 'Education is the tool for social change.' He was a true believer in the power of education and, through education, improving opportunities for individuals and the community to grow. I share this view. It is one of the many reasons that I am proud to be part of this Labor government and to lay claim to the legacy of previous Labor government decisions.

I am proud of initiatives like the roll-out of 240 kindergartens across the state to shore up learning foundations for our children in their early years; the introduction of the prep year, which so many teachers in my electorate tell me has made a real difference to the quality of learning by the time our children reach year one; and the high retention rates in our senior schools achieved through deliberate government measures like the significant investment in school based apprenticeships and traineeships. We all know that the longer our young people stay at school, the more opportunities they will have in life. Now we have the opportunities created by the federal government for new and revamped school facilities through Kevin Rudd's Building the Education Revolution and National Schools Pride initiatives. There is ample evidence to show that opportunities for learning are vastly improved when students are in good quality facilities. The icing on the cake is the commitment all schools have made to ensuring that new facilities are available for community use. I am excited already to hear of the plans many of the local schools in the Bulimba electorate have for this very purpose.

Delivering on fast and reliable public transport and tackling traffic congestion will also be high on my list of priorities. Many of us in the Bulimba electorate are fortunate to be able to avail ourselves of every mode of public transport on offer, not only bus and train but, given our position on the river, also the CityCat services. However, like many areas in South-East Queensland, we are feeling the pressure of increased population density and the effect this has on transport services. There is no doubt that it has also had an effect on traffic volume.

I am looking forward to the completion of the Gateway Upgrade Project and to the delivery of the much needed Eastern Busway as real and practical measures to address our traffic issues. The government's commitment to encouraging active transport through building more cycleways and walkways will also assist. I am excited, for example, that provision has been made on the new Gateway upgrade for cycle and pedestrian paths. I look forward to creating many more local opportunities of this nature.

Lastly, we must not fail on issues such as climate change. The economic crisis will pass but climate change is long term and the greatest threat to our future and to what we leave to our children. The federal and state Labor governments have made clear their commitment to addressing climate change. Locally I know there is the same commitment. Our residents, businesses, community organisations and schools are already making their own significant efforts towards creating a sustainable community.

I think of the new project, for example, which Boeing International has funded in our Gateway Learning Community schools to work with Greening Australia to develop environmental projects in those schools. And I am heartened by the work from the Beelarong Community Farm and Transition East to develop community gardens. There are many other excellent examples. I will be working closely with my friend and colleague Shayne Sutton, the Brisbane City councillor for Morningside and opposition leader in council, to harness the collective enthusiasm around such initiatives and to develop our community further.

But now is the time for thankyou's. Many more times than I can count over the last six months, and certainly even before then, I have felt overwhelmed and humbled by the generosity of the people around me—Shayne, Craig, Bernice, Brian and Barb, Carlien, Susan and Milton, Anthony, Claire, Tim, Kendall, Ross, Shaun, Shaz, Annette, Teisha, Trish, Adam, Di and many more. They know how I feel about them but I want to put my thanks on the public record. There are the special community people like Vilma Ward and Laurie Latham, who are inspirational in their commitment to the community and who have provided so much moral support. And there is a special thankyou to the other Sharon, who is the most astonishing person and who is the reason I am standing in this chamber today.

I must particularly thank our Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, who has found time in his incredible schedule over the last six weeks to check in to see how I was going and to provide advice. I am looking forward to working with him as my federal member. I of course would also not be here without the support of Pat Purcell. I could not have asked for more encouragement than he has given me. He has left a wonderful legacy in the Bulimba electorate which I am honoured to continue. I want to particularly pass on my thoughts and regards to Pat and his family and wish them all the very best.

Most of all I thank my own family. I was fortunate to have been born into a loving family, with a mother and father who nurtured and encouraged my sister and me and who instilled in us strong values of hard work, respect and care for others. My father was a wise man who worked hard for his family and for the community. My mother was the most remarkable woman I have ever known. If I inherited even a tiny fraction of her energy and capacity to love, I would be grateful. It is a great sadness to me that neither of them is here today, as both have passed away. However, I still have my sister, Su, whom I count as one of my closest friends. She, too, is a remarkable woman. She and her husband, Peter, and beautiful daughters, Kate, Ashleigh, Georgia and Bronte—of whom I am so proud—are always close, no matter what I do in my life.

However, it is my husband, Ian, stepdaughter, Lucy, and daughter, Millie, to whom I owe the most. Ian is my soul mate and the other half of me. He has always helped me to be the best person I can be, and I know I could not have got to this point today without him. Lucy and Millie are simply magnificent human beings, and I often cannot believe how much I love them. Millie in particular has been so patient throughout this campaign, putting up with her home being taken over and never, ever having as much time with her mummy as she wanted to. Ian and I took a leaf out of Barack Obama's book and promised a kitten to Millie once the campaign was over, and afterwards I realised how clever Barack Obama is. Kitten Toby is now in place and has taken charge of our household.

Mr Speaker, all of us here in this House have been given a huge responsibility to represent Queensland in these unique and difficult times. It is a trust I will not take lightly. I thank the House.

Mr SPEAKER: Before I call the honourable member for Everton, I remind the House that this is the member's first speech. I therefore ask the House to extend its courtesies to him. I call the honourable member for Everton.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

Mr WATT (Everton—ALP) (4.35 pm): Mr Speaker, I congratulate you on your election to your high office which you richly deserve. I also wish to acknowledge at the outset the traditional owners of the land on which we stand.

Mr Speaker, I come to this House determined to make a difference—for my electorate, for my state and for the world around me. It is an enormous privilege to have been elected by the people of Everton to represent them in this House. Each of us is extraordinarily fortunate to be one of only 89 Queenslanders each term to be given this opportunity. I will never forget what a privilege this is.

I am conscious that my election comes at a time of great economic uncertainty for Queensland and the world. One thing I am certain of is that this means there is no better time to enter this parliament, to step up and help my constituents, and Queenslanders as a whole, negotiate the stormy seas so that they all may share in our state's bounty and all may contribute to its development. I humbly pledge my willingness for this task.

As with all new members, there are countless people on whom my election depended. I want to begin by acknowledging the support and guidance of the previous member for Everton, Rod Welford. Throughout my campaign I was constantly reminded of the affection with which local residents hold Rod. On many doorsteps I was regaled with tales of Rod's past assistance and his involvement in local community organisations. He leaves very big shoes to fill.

I know that Rod will also be missed by his cabinet colleagues for his thoughtful contributions across multiple portfolios. To this day, I respect the insights, the progressive values and the eloquence that Rod brought to the task. On the other hand, I need to hose down any expectation that I will follow his practice of swimming 2.5 kilometres every morning in the Everton Park State School pool. I often point out that while I am about 15 or 16 years his junior he is about 15 or 16 times fitter than me! I can, however, promise the residents of Everton that the famous Rod Welford billboard will be replaced—and this time with the head of a member with hair. And there he is in the gallery.

I also pay tribute to the former member for Kurwongbah, Linda Lavarch, who also retired at the recent state election. Following last year's state electoral redistribution, the Everton electorate picked up the suburb of Eatons Hill from Linda's electorate of Kurwongbah. Linda was an exceptional local member. She was a tireless advocate for community groups and individual citizens of her electorate, and she served all too briefly as Attorney-General of this state. It is a measure of the woman that in her brief retirement she has already visited the Kingdom of Bhutan to promote health care for young women. I have no doubt that she will continue this contribution to the wellbeing of others in her post-parliamentary life.

I wish to thank the many local branch members, some of whom are here today, who tirelessly supported my campaign week in, week out for months. I will always be grateful to the many members of the Albany Creek, Everton Park and Mitchelton ALP branches for taking a punt on a young bloke and for backing it up with months of hard work on the street corners and hills of Everton. In particular, I wish to thank Mary Nash, Bernie Douglas, Laurie Nugent, David Hunt, Carolyn Healy, Rebecca Michael, Damian Barry, Ted Farnsworth, Cassie and Trent McCartney, Jayden Dixon, Scott Casey, James Gillard, Jill Mason, Barry Welch, Fiona Hartley, Dimitri Glianos, Ian and Barb Hungerford, and Scott and Petrina Reichman—all of whom contributed week after week throughout my campaign.

Of course, no campaign can be run without some key individuals calling the shots and determining overall campaign strategy. For this I single out Bob Hartley, David Nelson, Alana Tibbits and Tom McCartney. Each of these people went well beyond the call of duty. I know that firm friendships were forged in the heat of our campaign and that these will last for many years to come.

I was very grateful for the substantial support I received from a number of trade unions in my campaign. As a former employment lawyer, I can vouch for the fact that without the efforts of trade unions thousands of Queensland families would be struggling to make ends meet tonight and every other night. I especially want to thank the AMWU, the LHMU, the miners union, the QPSU, the FSU and the QTU for their generous assistance in my campaign.

Having been an active member of the Labor Party for nearly 20 years, I cannot possibly mention by name each member of parliament, party member, official or supporter who has encouraged, advised or supported me. I simply thank you all, as I do the many personal friends who assisted my campaign and who remind me regularly of the world beyond politics.

The one person whom I do want to mention individually is our Premier, the member for South Brisbane. As many members know, I served as the Premier's chief of staff for nearly five years across a range of portfolios beginning in education. I am proud of the many reforms we worked on together. I am prouder still that my election coincided with hers as the first elected female Premier of Australia. I know of no more intelligent or dedicated person in politics, nor one with as much integrity. These are the qualities that I intend to display in my own conduct as a member of parliament. It takes a special kind of person to lead a state through these tough economic times, and I know from personal experience that Queenslanders could not possibly have anyone better in that role.

I come from a very strong Labor family. My father, Neville, and my mother, Kathy, are the kind of hardworking, caring and honest people that our society depends on. From birth, they instilled in me and my brother, Glen, the importance of looking beyond your own self-interest and thinking about the broader needs of those around you. They were and are wonderful parents and are now continuing that tradition with their four grandchildren. I thank them and Glen for their constant love and support.

My extended family were also responsible for my political leanings, primarily by subjecting an impressionable boy to discussions—or, more accurately, tirades—about the corruption, injustices and disdain for democracy of the Bjelke-Petersen National Party government. The grandparents, uncles and great-uncles who bestowed those words of wisdom can take great credit for the values of fairness that I hold dear today.

I also wish to acknowledge my wife, Cynthia, and our son, George, who turns two on Thursday. Many members are familiar with Cynthia through her years of service as a ministerial adviser in the Beattie and Bligh governments. They know well her fierce intellect and political passion. What they do not know as well is the love, strength and support that she bestows on her family each and every day. Watching Cynthia become a mother has been like watching a beautiful flower blossom, and she grows further and further every day.

Like all fathers, I believe George is the smartest, most beautiful child ever born, and I demonstrate exhibit A in the gallery. He has been making regular contributions throughout the day and no doubt will continue. Every single day he brings joy to our lives. Being George's dad is the best thing about my life and I look forward to what each new day with him will bring. Our family is already becoming familiar with the sacrifices that public life imposes. However, we all went into this with our eyes open and we are taking great care to carve out family time as well. Cyn and George, I love you and thank you for everything.

Of course more than anyone I thank the voters of Everton for their trust in me. I absolutely loved campaigning—primarily because it gave me the opportunity to meet thousands of local residents, each with their own story to tell. I met some fascinating people during the campaign and I relish the prospect of being Everton's voice in parliament over the next three years, and hopefully beyond.

I grew up in the suburbs of Brisbane and I am very pleased to have now returned to the suburbs, both to settle with my family and now as an elected representative to this House. Everton is largely a residential electorate. While it does contain some light industry and plenty of small businesses, more than anything it is the kind of electorate in which people choose to live and bring up a family.

One of the big advantages of a largely residential electorate like Everton is its abundance of community groups. I had a lot of contact with the electorate's schools, P&C associations, chambers of commerce, churches and seniors, sporting and community groups throughout my campaign. It is in

these groups that you see the best in human nature—people prepared to give their own time to foster their community and to nurture the children, older people and the environment that benefit from their time. To date, I have been able to assist a number of these groups obtain funding or negotiate the maze of government, and I am looking forward to building that relationship further in the years ahead.

It is not surprising given Everton's residential character that the kinds of issues that were raised with me during and since my election campaign are those that impact on people's quality of life—roads, traffic, public transport, schools, safety, housing and the need to preserve remnant bushland, parks and creeks. I am looking forward to helping improve Everton's quality of life through determined advocacy on these issues in the years ahead.

There is, however, one issue that was raised by Everton voters that I would like to specifically mention—the government's commitment to build a new Queensland Children's Hospital. While in electing me a majority of Everton voters endorsed the government's position, it is undeniable that on election day a large portion of the electorate held serious concerns about that position. I respect those concerns, and I think they reflect the high level of satisfaction with the care provided by the Royal Children's Hospital over the years. On behalf of Everton families, I pay tribute to the skill and care of all of the staff at the Royal.

Sadly, however, local residents had been misled about the new Children's Hospital for months by dishonest scaremongering by the LNP and by some in the media. Inaccurate claims were made that bed numbers would be reduced and that the Royal was about to be closed. This made it very difficult to have a discussion based on facts. But the facts are that almost all international research shows that consolidating hospital resources in one site delivers better care than splitting those resources between two sites which are only four kilometres apart.

As a parent of a small child, I completely understand the desire of parents to have a high-quality medical facility nearby. We have all made those rushed trips to the hospital in the middle of the night and I know well the fear that accompanies them. That is why the government's commitment to build a dedicated children's emergency department at the Prince Charles Hospital is such good news for families in Everton.

High-quality emergency care will be available for Everton children within a few kilometres of their home from 2012 when the new emergency department will open. This will be backed up with a world-class, single Queensland Children's Hospital in South Brisbane. I give one anecdote to demonstrate the benefit of this commitment. At a function shortly after the election, I met a specialist who currently splits his time between the Royal Children's Hospital and the Mater Children's Hospital. He pointed out to me that on that very day he had driven from one hospital to the other six times to treat patients and that this was not unusual. Think about the extra children he could have treated that day in the time he spent in his car. Think about how many extra children that adds up to over the course of a year. Just this one example I think demonstrates why building a single children's hospital will lead to better health care for Queensland kids.

When it comes to deciding whether the new Children's Hospital will benefit children or not, I choose to believe the experts over the LNP. I believe paediatricians not political game players. I am grateful that my appointment as the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health will give me the opportunity to play an active role in delivering the new Children's Hospital, as well as the dedicated children's emergency department at the Prince Charles Hospital. I guarantee that, while the care received by local children at the Royal Children's Hospital has been excellent, the new Queensland Children's Hospital will provide even better care.

There are of course a few issues that I intend to pursue in my time as a member of this House that affect our whole state in addition to my own electorate. As I have already mentioned, I have worked in government for several years. The upside of this is that I have gained knowledge and contacts which will help me to get results for my electorate. However, I must admit that working in government you also learn how difficult it can be to get things done, whether because of funding needs, existing policy decisions, political opposition or other factors. Consequently, it can make you overly focused on what is achievable rather than what should be done. It can also distance you from the real world impacts of decisions and actions of government on individuals and communities.

I am pleased to say that campaigning over the last few months really reconnected me with my basic values. It has reminded me of the things that I fundamentally believe should be done as well as those that can be done, which is just as well as I believe it is those values that differentiate the Labor Party and its representatives from the alternative offered by the LNP.

In the time available, I can only cover a few of my personal priorities while I serve in this House. The first is job security. The government's core commitment at the recent election was to protect Queensland jobs, not cut them. One of my other previous occupations was that of an employment lawyer. Day after day in that role, I represented people who had been sacked, often without warning and sometimes without the payment of any of the entitlements that they were owed. I still remember the anguish that this caused people. I pledge to join the fight to protect jobs and the self-respect that comes with it, both in Everton and around the state.

My second priority is to tackle entrenched disadvantage. While recently the economic climate has deteriorated, in recent times we have lived years of plenty and still there remain too many families and individuals with poor living standards and the poor health and housing that goes with those living standards. Those poor living standards are most seen in our Indigenous communities, and they are a special priority, but we must work every day to give all Queenslanders the standard of living that all human beings deserve.

My third priority is to help improve the quality of education that our children receive. Many of my family have a teaching background. Not surprisingly, then, the importance of a good education was drummed into me from an early age. I believe there is no better vehicle to improve a person's life chances than to provide them with a high-quality education. I have therefore focused much of my time as a candidate and as a member on helping Everton schools obtain the funding they need to give their students the best. This is something I will continue in the years ahead.

Fourthly, I want to play a role in promoting environmental sustainability. I think it is fair to say that the Labor Party has been a late convert to the need to protect our environment. This is understandable given our historic mission has been to improve the material living standards of those less well off and the fact that this economic progress has largely come at the cost of our environment. However, we now understand that the real challenge of the 21st century is to improve living standards while retaining a habitable planet. I think this will possibly be the public policy conundrum of our times, and I look forward to being part of solving it.

Tied to this is another of my priorities and one that is highly relevant to my electorate. One downside of suburban life is its lack of public transport in many cases, and Everton suffers from this problem. It results in congestion on our roads and hurts our quality of life. I pledge to work for better public transport in partnership with federal and local governments in Everton and elsewhere.

Finally, in terms of my priorities I want to assist in lifting community participation in our democratic decision making. In recent years it has been fashionable, particularly on the right wing of politics, to debase the role of government in building a better society. This is possibly best represented by this quote from Ronald Reagan—

The most terrifying words in the English language are, 'I'm from the government and I'm here to help.'

During my campaign doorknocking, I was struck by how out of touch this view is with the community at large. Far from wanting government out of their lives, Everton residents wanted government to do things. Of course, at times they were critical of things that governments had done, but I saw no sign that people wanted government to cease to exist. What people did want was for government to be more responsive to their needs.

Queensland has a proud record of community participation in democracy. We became the second jurisdiction in the world to publish an official record of parliamentary debate in *Hansard* in 1864. In more recent years it took a Labor government to reintroduce community cabinets, regional parliaments and e-petitions, but we cannot deny that despite all of these improvements the level of disengagement with politics is growing. The evidence is all around us—low political party membership, falling voting and enrolment numbers, and rising informal voting rates—but contrast this with the strong opinions within the community about what governments should do. We need to hear that people retain strong views about politics and governments but reject using existing structures to communicate those concerns.

I do not claim to be able to solve this disconnect right now. Possibilities may include online referenda and citizens assemblies. These concepts no doubt have their flaws, but I think it is worth exploring how we better engage the community in decision making, and this is something I will undertake in my time in this House.

In conclusion, while Queensland remains the best state in Australia and Everton remains the best place in Queensland, there is much to do to preserve our unique lifestyle, prosperity and environment. I relish the opportunity to help tackle these challenges. We have a great head start with our intellectual and natural resources. We are a tolerant and respectful community. We have excellent political leadership. I believe that no challenge is too great. We can do it. I pledge to use each minute of my time in this House to advance the interests of the residents of Everton to the very best of my ability.

Mr SPEAKER: Before I call the honourable member for Mudgeeraba, I remind the House that this is the honourable member's first speech. I therefore ask the House to extend every courtesy to her.

Ms BATES (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (4.54 pm): I rise today in this chamber humbled, grateful and privileged—humbled by the confidence the people of Mudgeeraba have placed in me, profoundly grateful for the support of all those who have worked so hard to get me here and deeply privileged at the opportunity afforded me by the people of Mudgeeraba. Let there be no doubt: I am here to represent the residents of Mudgeeraba and represent them I will. I am conscious of the honour they have bestowed upon me, I am conscious of the trust that they have put in me, I am conscious of their rightful expectation that I will work tirelessly on their behalf, and I am conscious of the enormous responsibility that now rests with me as the member for Mudgeeraba.

The electorate of Mudgeeraba covers the rural hinterland of the southern Gold Coast west of the Pacific Motorway as well as urban centres west of the Robina Parkway. It includes the Robina Hospital, the Robina Town Centre—surely now one of the world's great shopping centres—and Skilled Stadium, home of the mighty Gold Coast Titans and the newly formed and eagerly anticipated A-League team Gold Coast United.

The Mudgeeraba electorate encompasses some of the most beautiful areas in Australia including Springbrook, Natural Bridge, Numinbah Valley, Advancetown, Austinville, Lower Beechmont and the sought-after lifestyle centres of Bonogin, Gilston, Mudgeeraba, Reedy Creek, Tallai, Worongary, Merrimac and sections of Carrara and Robina. If one were to sit down to design the ideal area to represent, an area of both natural beauty and modern convenience, an area of exciting growth and centuries-old natural wonder, an area of commercial excitement and superb lifestyle, then tell them to stop their designing: it has already been done and it is called Mudgeeraba. This is an area and these are people that I have come to know well, especially over the last few years.

My family and I have been Gold Coast locals for over 10 years. My children and I originally moved from a small country town in Victoria known as Healesville. Ours was one of the very early Healesville families where my family name is well known as local dairy farmers. As a youngster you would have found me harvesting with my cousins, riding horses with my sisters, and learning to drive a car and motorbike in our paddocks. My father worked for the Forest Commission and was a Country Fire Authority volunteer, and my mother was a proud second-generation schoolteacher.

AFL footy was a big part of my life. Apart from being a trainer for the Healesville Football Club, I barracked for North Melbourne while my father played for Melbourne and other relatives played for Geelong and St Kilda and, I regret to say, even Collingwood. My parents moved to the Gold Coast in 1989, and the children and I regularly holidayed on the coast every year before we finally made the move to be with the rest of our family.

I joined the Liberal Party in 2000 and quickly found myself immersed in the political world, having campaigned in every state, federal and local council election on the Gold Coast since that time. I was a candidate for the Liberal Party in Mudgeeraba at the 2006 state election where I was narrowly defeated. It was during that campaign that I doorknocked more than 7½ thousand homes in the electorate. For those of you who know the Gold Coast hinterland, this was not an easy task. Up hills and down valleys, I learned from residents in farmhouse kitchens, on the balconies of town houses and in the common rooms of retirement villages. I heard the views of people working on shop floors, business owners in their home based offices, customers in coffee shops, police officers and firefighters, and mums and dads at local schools and sporting events. I listened to schoolteachers and parents, nurses and patients, retirees and professionals. On more than one occasion I shared the unforgettable ordeal of passengers on the infamous 'Bombay Express'. I travelled and learnt from the people the length and breadth of the electorate. I learnt that overwhelmingly the residents of Mudgeeraba understand that our area is one of contrasts.

Like much of the Gold Coast, Mudgeeraba is characterised by rapid population growth as thousands of southerners cross the border into the great state of Queensland. Alongside that rapid growth is the development of related business infrastructure. We need look no further than the magnificent Robina Town Centre precinct to see an area that is growing as a commercial and retail heart required to serve the surrounding region. That dynamic growth contrasts dramatically with the heritage listed pristine forests of the hinterland—bushland areas that remain untouched and are recognised internationally for their diverse wildlife, incredible plant life and remarkable views; areas that contribute to our state's tourist industry year in and year out by drawing tourists from all parts of the world.

I learned that the people of Mudgeeraba understand their right to be treated by government with the respect, dignity and honesty that is the right of every single Queenslanders. Having my home and family in the area and speaking with thousands of fellow residents over a number of years has helped me crystallise a shared vision for our wonderful electorate—a vision that I dedicate myself to making a reality during my time as the people's representative. That vision includes: a significant increase in police numbers in Mudgeeraba and surrounding electorates that will lead to a major reduction in graffiti crimes and hooning; underground powerlines as the norm rather than the exception, where new developments and major projects listen to the voices of residents and do the environmentally and aesthetically right thing; a reduction in traffic concerns for local residents and a significant amount of mandatory community consultation that is both meaningful and credible, especially for those residents west of the M1; solutions to the Mudgeeraba traffic gridlock caused by cars utilising Robina Parkway and Robina Town Centre Drive and again driven by meaningful community consultation; reconsideration of the closure of the Elysium Road overpass which will severely affect residents and businesses in the area and requires much more consultation during the planning for the eventual upgrade of the M1 to eight lanes; consultation on the restriction on cold production burns which remains a huge safety concern for the residents of Springbrook and surrounds in the wake of similar communities being totally destroyed in the recent Victorian bushfires; rapid and significant upgrade of the treacherous Beechmont Road where families are concerned for the safety of their children on school buses and where 14 motorists and cyclists have sustained injuries since December 2008; the introduction of more east-west

bus services for the residents in the towns west of the M1; an increased response to community concerns in the Merrimac area where the dangerous lack of crossings on Bourton Road is a safety concern for the elderly and children; greatly improved access to their own homes for the residents in Carrara at River Gardens Caravan Park and Casino Village Caravan Park; increased fire services to the 4211 postcode area and fast-tracking of the long awaited Nerang Fire Station which will serve areas such as Carrara; and a dramatic increase in patient services on the Gold Coast, particularly cancer services, so that our oncology and radiation oncology patients do not have to travel on a bus to Brisbane.

These are all concerns that have been raised with me over the past four years whilst campaigning full time in the electorate and which form part of my vision for Mudgeeraba. You will hear much from me on these and many other issues of concern to the people of Mudgeeraba. I will not go quietly into that good night on these and other issues. The people have elected me to represent them in this place and represent them I will, without fear or favour.

I have worked tirelessly in the local community for the past four years as a candidate and as a spokesperson for the Mudgeeraba Action Group. I will continue to fight to improve a whole range of local services, including: to ensure that the government keeps its promise to underground the overhead powerlines in Reedy Creek; to lobby for a new state high school much needed west of the M1; to pressure for a significant increase in our local police numbers; to continue working to save the Elysium Road overpass at exit 75; to bring about fast-tracking of the long awaited duplication of the M1 and further community consultation for those interchanges at Mudgeeraba, Robina and Reedy Creek; and dramatic upgrading of Worongary Road, Springbrook Road and Beechmont Road.

The health system is very close to my heart. I have been a registered general nurse for over 25 years. I am still a registered nurse in Queensland. I was motivated to run for the state seat of Mudgeeraba in 2006 after watching my two sisters, both nurses, and many of their nurse friends being burnt out by a system that did not reward or recognise their contribution to nursing. I was formerly the general manager and director of nursing at the Wesley Gold Coast Hospital. During that time I was awarded the Royal Australian College of Nursing distinguished services award for Queensland as well as the Prime Minister's Centenary of Federation medal for distinguished service to the Australian community in health. I am particularly delighted that I will be able to provide to this place that vocal and credible representation that nurses are so rightly demanding. I will ensure that this most trusted and dedicated profession gets the acknowledgement it deserves.

I have been a successful businesswoman and a vocal health advocate and was the winner of the Telstra Queensland Businesswoman of Year AusIndustry category in 2000. I was also awarded the outstanding role model award in 2001 on International Women's Day for my services to the Gold Coast community in health. This is part of the background I bring to my role. You can rest assured I will focus my skills and experience to stand up for locals and provide strong representation on behalf of the residents of the Mudgeeraba electorate.

Before continuing, Mr Speaker, I would like to pause to congratulate you on your appointment. I look forward to seeing your legendary fairness, good humour and even-handedness permeate the proceedings in this chamber for the life of your appointment.

My sincere good wishes also go to the former member for Mudgeeraba. I wish her well as she rediscovers her family after representing Mudgeeraba. I hope that her future is everything she wishes for herself.

As well as the electors of Mudgeeraba who have helped me to properly understand so many local issues, there are some other people who have helped me on my journey to this place. My campaign team was outstanding. Many of those who assisted in the 2006 campaign again assisted with this latest campaign. Some are here today and I must thank them. My campaign manager, Nikki Ross, has learnt in this hotly contested political battle just how significant are the demands placed on family. I thank Nikki, her husband, Craig, and our Mudgeeraba mascot their young daughter, Ella, for their time, their unwavering support and their friendship.

My parents always believed in me. In particular, my father Snowy who passed away before the 2006 state election—I can hear him saying today, 'We expected it of you, Mate.' My mother, Barb, who passed away less than six months ago and is buried in the Mudgeeraba cemetery, would have been cheering me on from above during many a protest at the Mudgeeraba interchange. I know my mother and father are watching over me today. I pray the courage and determination that characterised their lives will live on in me.

My sisters, Josie and Cathy, who have always been there for me, who helped on election day and at many of the 75 listening posts I held during the course of campaign and in all sorts of other ways, have watched their sister achieve many things since moving to Queensland and I know that they are very proud of me and will continue to keep me grounded as only sisters can. Many people today have spoken of family. Without my family none of my achievements would have been possible. I can never thank them enough but I will leave them to last.

There are other people from my campaign team, booth captains and workers to thank such as Di Hayson, Lindy Sloane, Eunice Simpson, Richard Lennon, John Snell, Jacquie Clarey, Rod Clarey, Bryan Durham, John Kearney, Geoff Provest, Greg McKenzie, Ray Cavanaugh, Peter Pedersen, Peter Yaun, Glenn Snowdon, Robert Magyar, Di Grayson, Sarina Patane, Wendy Flett and Cheryle Royle. I thank my very good friend and confidante Geoffrey Greene who I frequently say was the one person who drove me onwards to this place, often against insurmountable odds.

I thank the big bloke from up north for his advice of 'Never give up, never give in', for his support and encouragement during many dark days both politically and more importantly personally during my mother Barb's illness and subsequent death. I thank the political mentors and people I so very much admire—the Hon. John Howard, Senator the Hon. Nick Minchin, the Hon. Tony Abbott, Dr the Hon. Brendan Nelson, the Hon. Alexander Downer and the Hon. Bronwyn Bishop—all of whom have supported me both personally and politically over the years and who in many ways have moulded me as the progressive conservative who stands before you today.

I must make mention of three other servants of the people—firstly, my colleague the member for Southern Downs and shadow Attorney-General, Lawrence Springborg, rightly described as the father of LNP. I was privileged to work closely with him in the historic formation of the party as a united conservative force. His advice, support and friendship are deeply appreciated. Secondly, I acknowledge the universally respected the Hon. Bob Quinn for his solid advice and friendship over the years that it has taken to get me here today. Thirdly, I acknowledge the Rt Hon. Ian Sinclair, the former federal Leader of the National Party, who provided me with support, encouragement and his own personal endorsement even in a three-cornered contest when I first stood as the Liberal candidate in Mudgeeraba in 2006 and again in 2009 as the Liberal National Party candidate.

I thank Tom and Ruth Tate, Daryl Fenell, Terry White, Peter Ord, Kevin Ryan, Bob Bryan, the Hon. Warwick Parer, Dan Wood, Peter Epstein, Christopher Stear and many others who never gave up on me after my narrow defeat in 2006. I thank close friends such as Kaye and Shane Martin and Lyn Fidler and my parliamentary colleagues such as Steven Ciobo MP, Stu Robert MP, Tim Nicholls, Jann Stuckey, Mark McArdle and John-Paul Langbroek for their guidance and friendship over the ensuing years until I finally arrived at this most momentous of occasions—my maiden speech. To all of the amazing residents in the electorate who have travelled this journey with me such as Ross Kouimanis, Lucy Moss, Diane Ednie, John Crauford, Mary Hegarty, Ian Bolton, Stewie Elliott, Jill Waddell, Barb Malcolm, Kim Wooler, Karen Fullarton, Lloyd Mills, Des Brown, Pat Bastow, all of the business owners at City Links estate, the residents who had my sign sites proudly displayed in their front yards and to those tireless workers during the campaign who stood on the side of the road with me every weekend, my thanks to you can never be repaid.

Finally and most importantly, I thank my children, Ben, Greg and Jill. Their support, love and sacrifice have enabled me to be here today. My children have lived and breathed the last four years of politics with me and have sustained me through many highs and lows during this process. To my sons, Ben and Greg—Ben is here today—who sat on the side of the road with me every weekend, who hammered in corflutes, who set up booths in the rain, who manned polling booths and scrutineered, who put out A-frames at the crack of dawn on the Nielsens Road roundabout for a year so that it was safe for me to protest later in the morning and for the countless hours of stuffing envelopes, running errands and cooking dinner when they needed to: I have never been so proud to be your mother. To my daughter, Jill, who worked tirelessly through my first campaign and flew up for this campaign to make sure she was here to help me win: I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

So many people have put their faith and trust in me to deliver in this place to work on their behalf and to be a voice for their concerns—a voice that will help shape the future for our children and grandchildren and for their children and grandchildren. That is the case with every one of us who is privileged to sit here today. In good conscience, how can I or any other member not return that trust by way of total commitment, honesty, loyalty, focus and dedication? I have lived my life by the motto, 'If you tell me I can't, I will show you I can'—doubtless the catchcry of many successful people and especially, by necessity, many successful women.

To the residents of Mudgeeraba, my resolve to effectively and vigorously serve you is made even stronger by your continued support and encouragement. You told me many times my role is to champion your local issues, and that is how I will spend my time. My pledge to you is that I will not let you down. Your concerns are my concerns. I will continue to listen to you and I will continue to fight on your behalf to ensure that our needs are loudly and effectively represented in this parliament.

Mr SPEAKER: Before calling the honourable member for Coomera, I remind the House that this is the first speech of the honourable member. I therefore ask the House to extend every courtesy to him. I call the member for Coomera.

Mr CRANDON (Coomera—LNP) (5.13 pm): I am honoured and feel humbled to be standing here today at the end of one journey and at the beginning of another. The people of the new state seat of Coomera have demonstrated their trust and confidence in me to be their first representative for Coomera in this House, and I will honour that trust. I wish to acknowledge the support of so many

people who were committed to the singular goal of winning this new seat for the Liberal National Party, the LNP. But before I do, I want to acknowledge my family. Firstly, I acknowledge the most important person in my life—my wife, Pauline, who has been my most committed supporter. Throughout our almost 40 years together, she has believed in me and made it possible for me to achieve goals that would not have been possible without her dedication. Pauline, I love you and I thank you for being there for me through thick and thin.

I acknowledge our sons and our grandchildren and their love for Pauline and me, because it means everything to us; my mother, who passed away more than a decade ago at too young an age, who taught me and my siblings the meaning of unequivocal love; my father, who, in his 80th year, remains committed to helping his ever-expanding family and who works so hard to keep in touch with all of them. Father, thank you for all the ways you have helped me, for the advice you have given me and for your enduring love for our family. I and my brothers and sisters know how difficult life has been at times for you and are in awe of your devotion to mum during those last 18 months of her life. Lastly, I want to acknowledge my brothers and sisters and their families, who have shown so much love and support to me and their commitment to our extended family.

It is said that one rarely has more than a few true friends. I believe this to be so, but I am glad to say that I have some of the truest. Some have been lifelong friends and others are very new. I will cherish those friendships during the years ahead and gain strength from them. Our new friends have come to us through this campaign. They come from varying backgrounds and have one thing in common: a desire to make a difference through a new conservative political party—the Liberal National Party, the LNP. I have noted through many conversations that some had not been active members for quite some time but, because of the merger, have returned to the fold. This alone is proof of the success of the merger strategy and reinforces the view that one conservative party—this conservative party—will be a force to be reckoned with in the years to come. As stated earlier, the people of the new Coomera electorate have put their trust in me. My promise to you is that I will fight for what is right for Coomera. I will focus my energies on the priorities that you, the people of Coomera, have told me are important to you.

My family comes from proud but humble beginnings. My parents are UK immigrants from the early 1960s. We were ten-pound Poms no less. My dad had a dream: to build his own home. He achieved that dream at Kippa-Ring on the Redcliffe peninsula. I can remember dad working on the house with very primitive tools by today's standards until late into the night and on weekends whilst working two jobs to help pay for materials. His example instilled in me a work ethic that, I am proud to say, has allowed me a degree of success and has in turn allowed my family to enjoy the benefits of that hard work.

Pauline and I moved our young family to Eagleby in 1978 where we spent the first nine years of our life in the then Albert electorate. This is when our community involvement began, with the delivery of phone books to help raise the funds to build a scout den. I am happy to report that that building continues to serve the community needs as a local church. My business activities commenced in Beenleigh in the early 1980s. A change of vocation saw me commencing work as a financial planner in 1987 in Loganholme. We then returned to work in Beenleigh with our financial planning practice in 1993 and remained there until selling the business last year. Following almost 10 years with the Rotary Club of Beenleigh, I became closely involved with the Beenleigh Police Citizens Youth Club, joining the committee. I look forward to continuing to work with this wonderful organisation which does so much not only for underprivileged youth but for all young people right throughout Queensland.

Around the same time I accepted the role of area chairman for the Salvation Army's Red Shield Appeal, and I would encourage my fellow members to get behind this worthwhile cause on the weekend of 23 and 24 May in your local community. Once again, the Salvos do so much wonderful work to help those less fortunate in our towns and cities. I believe that my business and community activities, together with my academic qualifications and life experience, collectively give me a unique view of the world that will hold me in good stead when helping those who have put their trust in me.

I feel the journey that brought me to this House started all of those years ago in Eagleby, and how wonderful it is to find myself here today representing that very same community. It would be remiss of me not to mention the diversity of the electorate, which has the M1 as its western boundary. In the north and south respectively are the suburban communities of Eagleby and Helensvale. Between these two ends there are very diverse communities, which include rural areas such as Alberton, Norwell and Woongoolba, village type communities such as Cabbage Tree Point and Jacobs Well, and relatively new suburban areas such as parts of Ormeau, which are promoted for marketing purposes as Jacobs Ridge. As well, there is Coomera Waters, which many people living in South-East Queensland would not know exists due to its location behind the Dreamworld precinct. But Coomera Waters is at the centre of the fastest growing region in Australia. The planned Coomera Town Centre on Foxwell Road will cause a further explosion in that growth. Then there are the areas that include Hope Island, some of which are gated, and the gated community of Sanctuary Cove, which is unique in the world.

I said at the beginning that I am at the end of one journey and at the beginning of another. What I mean by that is that my business life is over and now I look forward to representing the people of Coomera in public life. It is because the new seat was formed that I felt it time for me to step up to the plate—that and the formation of a new conservative political party. Had these two things not occurred within weeks of one another and had I not recently sold my business, I would not have commenced this new journey. The incredible coincidence of these things occurring has given me this wonderful opportunity to serve the people of Coomera and Queensland. It is destiny and I embrace the opportunity. Once all of this was set in motion, the most incredible group of people began to form. It seemed that they were stepping into a play just on cue to take up their positions. It has been an amazing time.

There are many local issues, both big and small, that I will be fighting to resolve over the coming years. A major one is access to and over the M1. Imagine, if you will, the idea that, as a mum or dad wanting to take your children to school, you will most likely be in a traffic jam for the best part of an hour for the round trip. I am not talking about traffic on the M1; I am talking about traffic trying to get from Coomera on the eastern side of the M1 to schools located on the western side—schools that are just a few kilometres away.

We then have railway infrastructure. The Coomera electorate has within its boundaries three of the five railway stations servicing the Gold Coast: Helensvale, which also services the Gaven and Broadwater electorates, and the other two stations, Coomera and Ormeau. In addition, many of the Coomera residents in the north use Beenleigh Railway Station. During peak times most of the Coomera electorate commuters look forward to standing for the 75-minute journey to work or sitting on the floor. Many have taken to bringing their own chair. I ask the House: is it any wonder that the Gold Coast service has been referred to as the 'Bombay Express'? During my campaign I heard my opponent, when confronted by local people complaining about these two issues, use the excuse that we are in the middle of unprecedented growth in our region. My response to that statement was, 'Exactly, and we have known about it for more than a decade. Why has something not been done about it? Why has the government ignored these issues?' These critical issues will only be exacerbated by the huge growth expectations that I mentioned earlier.

The M1 and our rail service have to be two major priorities for this term of government. If they are not resolved now, the area will be crippled as the population explodes further. As well, there is the question of the draft South East Queensland Regional Plan, together with the draft north-east Gold Coast land use and infrastructure study. So far as the northern part of the Coomera electorate is concerned, specifically an area known as the cane fields, these documents contain major flaws and inaccuracies regarding, for example, land use suitability, which make the recommended outcomes totally inappropriate. These issues must be addressed. We need a shorter term plan for this area with accurate information regarding land use suitability—a 10-year plan, a plan that gives more certainty to those families who have been living and working in the area for four or five or even six generations, as to what they can expect for their hard work. The cane farmers are ageing and their sons and daughters are moving to more certain futures—certainty that cane farming cannot give them.

I now come to a medium- to long-term goal. With all that is happening in the electorate of Coomera—the population explosion, the Coomera Town Centre and so much more—it is my intention to push for planning to commence now for a new hospital. From what I have read, I understand that the land has been earmarked. The indication is, however, that a hospital is slated for consideration some 20 years from now. That is too far away. I urge the government to fast-track the planning process for a new Coomera hospital—a hospital that will be needed far sooner than the current planning suggests, a hospital that can be available for the population needs of Coomera and the surrounding area within 10 years.

On a broader matter, I must say that I am passionate about the dual issues of mental health and drug and alcohol abuse. These two issues go hand in hand. The evidence tells us that both have cause and effect. People suffering mental illness often turn to alcohol and drugs as a coping mechanism. They are self-medicating and soon discover it only exacerbates their problem. On the other hand, our young people who experiment with drugs and alcohol risk causing mental health issues later in life. We need funding for education programs about the dangers of self-medicating and experimenting with drugs and alcohol. We need an increase in funding to facilitate an expansion of management programs for those in our society who are already caught in the grip of these terrible twins. I call on the government as a matter of urgency to adequately provide what is needed.

This new state government has some huge challenges ahead. Knee-jerk reactions to economic management cannot continue. This government must act more responsibly with regard to how it spends state revenues. For example, the cost-plus concept that was implemented in building the water grid invited abuse. Every dollar spent by the contractors guaranteed them greater profits. I have heard reports of some workers not having a full-time role, yet they were full-time employees drawing a significant wage. By overemploying workers and, of course, having to spend money on training and induction programs—all on a cost-plus basis—the contractors were simply pocketing greater profits.

This flaw in the concept contributed to the huge blow-out in costs to complete the grid. Queenslanders will go on paying for that blow-out in additional interest for years to come, on top of increases in water rates.

I now turn to the matter of recognising some outstanding individuals and groups who have given me so much support leading up to the election. With their help, we achieved the biggest swing in the state to win a seat. That swing was over 10 per cent. There were other, greater swings, but they did not determine the result in the electorate. The swing in Coomera won the seat for the LNP. Firstly, I must recognise the honourable Ivan Gibbs, who represented the Albert electorate—much of which is now Coomera—so ably for 15 years. I must also recognise Ivan's principal supporter, Doris Gibbs OBE. I am so fortunate to have Ivan and Doris living in this newest state seat. I thank them both. They treated Pauline and me like family. I thank them for their total commitment to us and the campaign following the preselection. I also recognise the honourable David Jull, the federal member for Fadden, retired, who gave me such outstanding advice and provided me with an insight into politics that has proven to be invaluable. To Gary Berndt, my campaign manager, and his wife, Robin: it is a simple fact that without them we could not have done it. I thank them both.

I thank Warren Pike, the Coomera SEC chair and Glenice, his wife. Thank you so much for your support and friendship. Vivienne Shield was my right arm during the campaign. How pleased I am that you decided to take such an active role. Thank you, Viv. To John Hayward, my 72-year-old doorknocking partner, I say thanks and I am sorry we never got to the pub. What a wonderful group the ABC ladies are. The efforts you put in, often at short notice, were invaluable. You also managed to keep the kitchen well stocked with biscuits. Thank you. Thank you, also, to those totally committed members of the Coomera North branch and the Gold Coast North Shore branch who made such a commitment. You know who you are. I thank also those LNP candidates and members of parliament who showed such camaraderie during the campaign. Finally, to all family, friends and partners in the community who volunteered their time and effort to help me in this endeavour: I will remember you forever.

Some years ago I was given as a gift a framed copy of a poem attributed to Ralph Waldo Emerson. It is entitled *A Philosophy to Live By*, and states—

To laugh often and much;

To win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children;

To earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends;

To appreciate beauty, to find the best in others;

To leave the world a bit better, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch or a redeemed social condition;

To know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived.

This is to have succeeded.

All those years ago I adopted that poem as my philosophy to live by. Today, I dedicate it to all of those people who showed their commitment to our cause, because in so doing they have given me the opportunity to further my commitment to the people of Coomera and Queensland. Once again, thank you.

Mr FOLEY (Maryborough—Ind) (5.31 pm): I rise to participate in the debate on the address-in-reply motion. Firstly, I congratulate Premier Anna Bligh and Leader of the Opposition John-Paul Langbroek for their comprehensive wins. I also pay tribute to the Speaker on his election and the Clerk, who has provided invaluable assistance to so many members.

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Mr FOLEY: No, he was not. I take that interjection from the erstwhile member next to me. It has been a great process. In the last couple of days I have spoken to my local media about what this week has been like. I said that even though this is my fourth election, it has been easily the most positive week I have ever experienced in parliament. Some new blood has come in and this is a new day. I look forward to the 53rd Parliament.

I pay tribute to my three fellow Independents who I am delighted have been returned in their various seats, and to my staff, Barbara and Paul, who have really looked after me, have always done the right thing by our constituents and have worked so terribly hard. I thank the people of Maryborough who voted for me. I paid a lot of people five bucks each to vote for me! That was great. I thank the parliamentary staff who have worked so hard to make the election process and transition period for new members easier. In terms of my election campaign, I really need to mention Kevin and Gloria Banting who worked tirelessly. Even though they were very busy, they gave up their own time to help out. I thank Lauretta Wright, who dropped everything to jump in and help, and all of the people who worked on my campaign.

It would be remiss of me not to mention my greatest supporters, my family. My first wife Glenys is in the visitors' gallery. She is a superwoman. We call her the mother of many nations. She is a pathology scientist, a triathlete and a great looking girl. When most people meet her they say to me, 'Chris, I'm glad to see you brought your daughter along.' Glenys, thank you for all your hard work. I thank my

children: my oldest two, Chelsea and Jessica, who are currently living in England, Jared who is 16 and Caitlyn and Brittany, my darling little girls. They have all been a wonderful support and a fantastic family. I pay tribute to them. Most members would realise that often the family pays the greatest price for someone having a public life.

We find ourselves in difficult economic times. Families and businesses are doing it extremely tough. I think this is a time to reflect on the people who may lose their homes because they can no longer afford mortgage payments. I am really concerned that in Australia, and particularly in Queensland where we have enjoyed some serious economic sunshine in recent years, we work hard because economic stimulus really comes from stimulating business. It is the engine room of the economy and it creates real wealth. A quote that is attributed to Margaret Thatcher, although I do not believe it was said by her, states—

The trouble with Socialism is that eventually you run out of other people's money.

I think that is a very salient point. Something that Margaret Thatcher did say and that I think is also very relevant to members of parliament is—

If my critics saw me walking over the Thames, they would say it was because I could not swim.

There is a sense that all members of parliament, who live in the public spotlight, have to be beyond reproach. They have to show integrity that surpasses what we would regard as the average in society. Integrity is doing the right thing, even if nobody is watching.

Earlier this week Mr Speaker said that the best social security system is a job, and I wholeheartedly agree with him. I think it was Teddy Roosevelt—or one of the American Presidents—who said, 'The harder I work, the luckier I get.' When I moved to Maryborough 26 years ago and married my first wife and—let me set the record straight—my only wife, Glenys, we worked very hard. We arrived with nothing and the town has been very good to us. Again I thank all the people of Maryborough for their confidence in me by returning me to this parliament for a fourth time.

We have a lot of priorities in Maryborough. I said that if the Independents held the balance of power the first thing we would insist on would be the scrapping of the Traveston Dam. I do not reside from that position. I will fight the Traveston Dam until my dying breath, because I believe it is an ill-thought-out proposition that deserves to be scrapped. It has already cost the government a minister, that is, the former member for Hervey Bay. I urge the Premier to give some serious consideration to whether it would be better for her to just walk away from the dam. Let us consider the cost of building the Traveston Dam. The previous Premier, Peter Beattie, invited members of this parliament to go to St John's Cathedral to pray for rain. I assure the House that I think that is a far more sound financial proposition than building the Traveston Dam.

The Maryborough Hospital continues to be a major focus of the people in Maryborough. I would like to see a return to birthing suites being provided at the hospital. In recent times we have had all sorts of fusses and fights over the fact that Maryborough mums must have their babies at the Hervey Bay Hospital and are not even allowed to spend their recovery period in Maryborough. I campaigned strongly on that issue. Right now I call on the government to, where it is clinically appropriate, make it a right. The Hervey Bay Hospital is bursting at the seams. The people of Hervey Bay absolutely deserve that hospital. They do not need the Hervey Bay Hospital overrun with Maryborough people who do not need to be there when we have such a wonderful facility as the Maryborough Hospital. Eventually I would like to see birthing, and not just postnatal recovery, brought back to Maryborough.

Over the years I have spent extensive time with my parliamentary colleague the member for Hervey Bay, Ted Sorensen. Ted and I are great mates. We go back a long way to when he was the mayor of Hervey Bay. We have worked well together. I will continue to work well with him. We are of one mind about the issue of the hospital. I would like to see the Maryborough Hospital be the main accident and emergency hospital for the area because of its proximity to the highway. If Hervey Bay is cut-off by floods, the people in our area can die or have babies in ambulances and so forth because of the extra travel required.

During the election campaign I gave the example of a person who lived in Bauple going into labour and calling an ambulance because they do not have any transport to get to the hospital. By the time the ambulance drives 35 to 40 minutes out to get them and has to basically drive straight past Maryborough Hospital and go to Hervey Bay, we realise what a nonsense it is not to have Maryborough, because of its geographical position, be the major A&E facility.

Maryborough is a wonderful city. We do special events better than any other city in Queensland. There would be a few members who would disagree with that, but that is all right. We have some iconic events each year, such as the human-powered vehicle races. The Maryborough Equestrian Centre is becoming a hub of equestrian eventing of all types, including rodeo. A friend of mine is the CEO of the Queensland Pops Orchestra and he regards the Brolga Theatre as the best theatre in country Queensland. It is a fabulous facility. We have a couple of little gems that people may not know about, such as the Maryborough Military and Colonial Museum run by John Meyers and his team. That is an absolutely fabulous place.

I would like to see the government provide extra funding to the Fraser Coast Regional Council to finish off some of Trevor Reddacliff's original ideas in relation to the Brolga to the bridge concept, in particular the walkway. Queens Park could then be opened up as one of the best running and cycling tracks one could possibly find. It is a great place. It has so many other advantages. As a result we would see a drop in crime and people hanging out in the park because it is opened up and lit up to provide for those facilities. That is a very small spend for a very great result.

This Thursday at 2 pm in the Undumbi Room I am launching a paper on cannabis, suicide, schizophrenia and other ill effects. It is a peer review paper put together by Drug Free Australia, which was previously called Parents for Drug Free Youth. This is a fantastic paper. It illustrates the critical problem of cannabis use. Even our own Premier, Anna Bligh, remarked with horror when she heard there were children in Queensland as young as five using cannabis. It is a serious problem. I urge all members to be in the Undumbi Room at two o'clock for the launch, even if they come for only 10 minutes.

One of the things that has weighed on the minds of many people this week is Anzac Day. I know that many members will be keen to get home. They will have Anzac Day programs in their schools on Friday and then Anzac Day itself. This is something that is very dear to my heart as both my parents served with distinction in the Australian Army. I proudly display their medals on the wall of my office. This particular Anzac Day I will be marching with my youngest daughter, Brittany, who will be wearing her grandmother's medals.

I would like to see some serious economic stimulus provided to the Fraser Coast Regional Council. We have had a number of potential fantastic projects, such as the marine industry precinct and the flight training school, fall over in recent years. These would have provided a major economic stimulus to our city. I would also like to see more ambulance paramedics in our area, because Maryborough is situated in a central location right on the highway and becomes a feeder point for so many other areas.

I would also like to see the Mary River put to better use. That is one of the reasons I am so adamantly opposed to the Traveston Dam. Construction of this dam will lead not only to destruction of fauna but also to destruction of the river in terms of being a channel. Maryborough is one of the most historic cities in Queensland and used to be a major immigration port. I want to see a return to the commercial and industrial use of the river for things other than just tourism.

There are many roadworks going on in and around our city between Maryborough and Hervey Bay for which I am very grateful. I would like to see the local government minister given more powers to have control over some decisions that are made at the local council level. There has been an alarming number of people complaining to me about the increase in rates and other charges post amalgamation.

We need more police in general. I have fought hard and secured extra police for Howard, which is a great little community in my electorate. We need more police in the City of Maryborough to patrol the town at night to combat ongoing vandalism.

Maryborough has done very well in the area of affordable housing. Unlike other members—and this is the great thing about being an Independent—I pay tribute to the fact that my electorate has received over \$963 million in funding from state government programs over the last six years that I have been the member. May the cheques continue to flow; I love it. I say to the government: whenever you pick up the chequebook, think Maryborough, Maryborough, Maryborough every time'. There have been a number of innovative projects, such as motels being bought and turned into single women's accommodation. That is a very, very practical use of the spend on government housing.

I would like to see the 8c per litre petrol subsidy passed on more meaningfully through petrol stations. In relation to the gas rebate, I would like to see people on bottled gas get the same rebate as those on mainline gas. That rebate is currently unavailable for bottled gas which completely defies logic.

We have many people, as every electorate does, who travel long distances to seek medical help. I would like to see an uplift in the travel and accommodation subsidy that is paid to people requiring medical attention out of town. My firm belief is that if your local district cannot provide a service then the government needs to pay for people to be able to travel. It needs to meet the whole cost, not just a small amount of rebate.

Our bus interchange system needs upgrading. I would like to see a rail museum in Maryborough, because Maryborough is really the heart of the rail industry and the major manufacturer of rail cars and locomotives not only for Queensland but for places as far away as Perth. I would like to see a timber museum as well.

There are many social programs, such as Glendyne, which works very hard to connect with youth who have fallen through the cracks. Ray Krueger and his team do a magnificent job. One of my friends, Bob, runs a program called Operation Hard Yakka that desperately needs funding. It is a fantastic program for disengaged young people.

I pay tribute to all of the people in the Grace Community Church, particularly to my associate pastor, Di Allen, who is an experienced counsellor and a great connector with people who provides tremendous pastoral support to people in our community. Last Sunday night there was a concert by the Old Boys Gospel Band from the Gold Coast. They did a fantastic job. They also went to the Maryborough Correctional Centre and did concerts there. It made my heart sing when I heard some of the classics. This is showing my age. When they fired up *Taking It to the Streets* by the Doobie Brothers I was very, very excited.

I was driving to the concert with my 16-year-old boy, Jared, who is a great guitar player. He had to be dragged kicking and screaming to this concert but he absolutely loved it. I said to him, 'Look, son, these are old blokes but they can really rock.' I am amazed at the propensity of teenagers to multitask. I think my children could send text messages and swing on a trapeze at the same time. My son was sitting there sending text messages to his many friends and I was telling him about the concert and I said, 'Mate, they are old blokes but they can really rock. They're, like, Mick Jagger's age'. He looked at me and said, 'Is Mick Jagger going to be there?' So, of course, the message was lost on youth. We had a great time.

We have a fantastic team at our church who feed disengaged people every Sunday night. We have Aboriginal families, we have people suffering from mental illness and we have people who are homeless. We have a great opportunity to connect and engage with them. I am so very proud of my church family and the way that they bring the gospel, the message of hope, to the people in our community.

In closing, let me say to all of the new members of this parliament that I wish you all the best. This is a fantastic place. You will quickly realise that even youngsters like me who have only been here for six years passionately love the role of representing our constituents. It is a great honour to be elected to the parliament of Queensland. Only 89 people at any given time can say that they are a member of the Queensland parliament. When you look at the fact that the turnover at every election is not 89 people, you realise that it is indeed a tremendous honour and privilege—in fact, I would call it a calling—to be in this place, to represent people and to bring integrity, justice and mercy to the people who most desperately need it.

Mrs CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone—Ind) (5.50 pm): At the outset I congratulate the Hon. John Mickel on his elevation to the role of the Speaker. I wish him the very best in his endeavours to fulfil this responsibility fairly and impartially. It is a privilege to be returned to this chamber to represent the wonderful community of Gladstone, which incorporates the city of Gladstone and the urban, industrial and rural precincts of the former Calliope shire. It is a great community to work for and work with.

I would like to place on the record my sincere thanks to all those who assisted in my campaign. To Wendy, Trish and Floss: thank you for your tireless efforts. Thank you to those who were sounding boards for issues and directions during the election period and who supported so willingly my campaign efforts. To all those who volunteered to be rostered at the polling booths, including prepolling and as scrutineers: thank you for your willingness to be a vital part of the election process. To individuals who had corflutes on their properties: thank you. The generosity of spirit of each of you is valued greatly.

To my husband, John, to daughters Wendy, Rebecca and Emma and their husbands and to other family members: thank you so much for your unfaltering support. The families of members of this chamber are directly impacted by the demands of the work. While we as representatives accept the time constraints, our families wait for us often to make that important and looked-for time for them. Their generosity of spirit directly affects our ability to give to our community. As far as that is concerned, I am truly blessed.

Each election brings with it its own style. This election saw the Premier of Queensland visit the electorate three times during the campaign period, as well as a visit by the Prime Minister. We welcome these visits and hope that the leaders will continue to come and gain a better understanding of the needs and aspirations of residents of my electorate. They may even have the courtesy to let the local member know they are coming.

Disappointingly, at at least one of the gatherings I was advised by someone in attendance that the Premier stated that I sat on my hands and did nothing in parliament and that she could not remember the last time I asked a question. Can I clarify now that I ask a question at every opportunity available. We here know that the opportunities to speak in this place come about by an allocation or a roster type system. With that in mind, I have used and will continue to endeavour to use every opportunity I can during debates on bills, in questions and so on to raise concerns brought to me by constituents.

Another campaign tactic used was to claim that I voted against Labor in excess of 80 per cent of the time. There was no clarification about that 80 per cent being at divisions versus decisions for which no division was required. The Deputy Premier correctly pointed out yesterday that much of what occurs in this chamber is by agreement. I believe his statement puts the ALP campaign's mistruth in its correct context.

During the election campaign, the Premier repeatedly stated that this election was about jobs, jobs, jobs—that jobs were in the Labor DNA. Gladstone workers now need to see those statements translated into actions. Rio Tinto has terminated or made redundant approximately 250 people already. Those people were involved directly with Rio or as workers for subcontracting firms. Those who particularly live locally will face a significant challenge in getting new employment. This is borne out by contact I have had from workers in my electorate.

I was advised by one gentleman, whom I will call Tim, that he was given no notice that he was going to lose his job. He said that it is very difficult. He went down to Centrelink yesterday and there was a line-up out the door and onto the street. He said that he left and was going to go back today. Yesterday he and a mate who was a rigger went to several businesses and submitted their resumes but were told there was not much likelihood anything would come up soon.

Another constituent named Rod said that he did not attend the rapid response team meeting but his mate Darren did. Darren gave him the hotline number and when he went through the process he said he talked to four different people and he was told that he would be sent out a pack. Rod stated that the pack just told him the same information that everybody knows about Centrelink. Rod mentioned that he had heard Kevin Rudd state when Pacific Brands sacked their staff that, regardless of whether you receive a redundancy payout, there would be no 13-week waiting period before you could receive benefits. Constituents in my electorate are looking for that sort of assistance.

We need this government to make practical decisions in relation to job creation and indeed job protection. While the rapid response team will provide a point of contact and information to workers, Tim and Rod are your average workers and reflect, I believe, a reasonable point of view and indicate the level of concern amongst workers in my electorate who are losing their jobs.

According to Rio's announcement a week or so ago, another 400 people will lose their jobs. It is not clear whether these are people who are being terminated unexpectedly or whether they are contractors who knew that their contracts were being finished. Many of them, however, had an expectation based on the past that the contracts would be renewed, albeit in a slightly different format. So there are many, many workers in the electorate who are without work and who were certainly not expecting that to occur.

We have asked for the state and federal governments—and in this context the state government—to initiate decisions which would fast-track real job creation. These could include state and federal government funding for the Gladstone Airport. I have said this publicly on a number of occasions about funding the airport, but given the loss of employment in recent days this becomes more important because the initial work for the rebuild of the airport will be exactly the same sort of work that is being lost at Rio Tinto—that is, earthworks, construction and concrete laying.

When Steve Hodgson from Rio Tinto rang me on 7 April as soon as he had explained Rio's intentions, I emailed the Premier requesting that the rapid response team respond to the Gladstone electorate, but I also wrote to her with some suggestions about opportunities for the Queensland government to stimulate employment locally with things like the Gladstone Airport and the recycling project proposed by QAL. This project submission was put to the previous minister, the Hon. Warren Pitt, in relation to local government funding for reducing water reliance by Queensland Alumina—that is of potable water and raw water. It was rejected at the time because it did not fit strictly within the guidelines. With the number of people who are unemployed and facing unemployment in the electorate, it would be good if those guidelines were more flexible.

We heard the new Minister for Housing talk about the federal government initiative for significant housing investment in Queensland in the next couple of years. If the affordable housing construction could be fast-tracked, it would provide a lot of opportunities not only for workers who have ceased employment but also for apprentices whose apprenticeships are at risk of being terminated or suspended. This problem has increased exponentially in the electorate over the last little while. If the affordable housing construction program was accelerated, most of the construction apprentices would find that there would be an opportunity for them to continue and, in many instances, complete their indentures. There are a number of people working out at Yarwun 2 who are tradespeople but who left their trade and put the tools down to go into construction because of the attraction of construction wages. There are opportunities for an expanded and accelerated affordable housing program to provide opportunities for increased employment.

The Commonwealth funding for educational facilities—and there is a significant investment by the federal government in our educational facilities in Queensland—I hope will also provide opportunities for the construction workforce. A new initiative but not new to this state would be the lobbying that I have received for a birthing centre to be co-located at the Gladstone Hospital. That would again provide construction work but also a much needed facility in terms of birthing options for our community, which is comprised of a significant number of young families.

During the election campaign, job protection was much talked about. That must go hand in hand with the current job creation program, essentially because of the downturn in employment. Some of the issues raised with me in relation to placing jobs at risk have been things like an exponential increase in

EPA licensing fees. One family who own a small family sandblasting business contacted me because the renewal costs for their EPA licence increased by 500 per cent. They are having to look very closely at the spread of their business and their employment opportunities because of those increased fees.

There are opportunities to protect our existing employment—to protect our fishing industry, for example. With changes to regulation with regard to the fishing industry, it is important to keep in mind that every change, every increase in cost, every closure that is brought on by this government at this point in time puts jobs at risk.

With any financial downturn, with any financial stress comes increased strains on the family. As a region directly impacted by the economic crisis that we are facing generated not only by the worldwide economic crisis but also by decisions of the previous government in Queensland—the Labor government in Queensland—families in my electorate are facing significant stress on their family structures. We need increased investment in services such as Child Safety not only for its child protection facilities but also for its early intervention programs. Child Safety is a very specialised area of work. I look forward to working with the new Minister for Child Safety to see an improvement and an increase in staffing for child safety in my region. I commend the staff who work in Child Safety in Gladstone.

Mrs Keech: Hear, hear!

Mrs CUNNINGHAM: I acknowledge the comments from the former minister for child safety. They work tirelessly and under incredibly difficult circumstances trying to make decisions based primarily on the best interests of the child but also trying to understand the various circumstances, the validity of claims of harm to children and the substantiation of those claims. With an increase in the number of young families in my electorate and the need for early intervention to prevent family breakdown, it will be essential for more resources to be allocated to the department.

I was surprised in the run-up to the election at the level of frustration within the Queensland Teachers Union in relation to the conditions that teachers are working under in this state. During most elections in my electorate Kevin and Michelle Giles from the Queensland Teachers Union have organised 'meet the candidates' meetings. They do it very well and very evenhandedly. At these meetings I could tell that, although teachers were operating previously within a framework where they felt the government was doing reasonably well for them, members of the QTU do not have that same sense at the moment. They are frustrated with the government's decisions in relation to their conditions and their pay. There was a significant campaign during the election in relation to Queensland teachers being almost at the bottom of the pay scale for Australian teachers. Given the responsibility that teachers have in the early formation and teaching of our young people, and the importance of that as an investment in the future of our state, I believe the pay and conditions of teachers need to be carefully handled, carefully decided on and done very fairly.

I have stood in this chamber on many occasions to bring to the attention of the Minister for Health the concerns of staff and of residents at the Gladstone Hospital in relation to the services that they can provide for the community. I commend all Gladstone Hospital staff. I place on the record my appreciation for the staff of the Mater Hospital. Both hospitals work closely together to provide services, but I would have to say overwhelmingly that my community want to see an increased access to specialist services at the Gladstone Hospital precinct. They do not want to have to travel for everything.

Even though on the map Rockhampton is only a quarter of an inch away, it is an hour to an hour and 10 minutes away and there is no public transport. That results in a significant dislocation for residents in my electorate who have to access services in Rockhampton, not only for oncology and renal dialysis but also for those deemed complex childbirth situations. Some of them are not, by an ordinary person's standard, complex. Those families are then divided. I have had mums complain that they have been told they cannot have their child in Gladstone because they are overweight, and yet it may be only by five pounds. Those sorts of assessments are frustrating for families and make families feel very disconnected at a time when bonding and closeness are vitally important.

Mental health facilities in the electorate have also been on the agenda and continue to be an area of concern. We continue to need a secure patient ward, particularly for those who have just gone off their medications because of the type of illness they suffer, to allow an opportunity for them to stay within the community, to restart and balance their medications and to be assessed or reassessed electronically. This would provide a better continuity of service for them.

The importance of public transport cannot be underestimated in rural and regional Queensland. For people who live in the south-east corner it may sound like hollow words because you have a fairly impressive rail system and bus system, but people outside of the south-east corner rely on a bus service that is not anything like Brisbane's. It lacks continuity. It often does not have any weekend services. That provides a significant challenge to people living in rural and regional Queensland. Funding for the roundabout on Kirkwood Road and dredging of the Boyne River mouth remain high priorities for people in my community.

We have a wonderful band of people who access disability services in my electorate. Not only are they an incredibly impressive group of people; their carers and parents are amazingly resilient. They deserve the support and funding that would assist them in achieving quality of life and consistency in accessing services that would make their lives so much better. I want to put on the record the Community Linking Agency and Endeavour, which constantly provide support services to people in need. I cannot underestimate the value of the parents and the carers of people with disabilities.

We have needs for increased policing services and for increased sporting facilities. At the top of the agenda in my electorate is synthetic turf for the hockey fields. We have world-class hockey players and certainly national-class hockey players who do not get chosen because they have little experience on artificial turf, otherwise they would be. It has been articulated to the association as bluntly as that.

I also put on the record my appreciation for the hundreds of volunteers in the electorate who work tirelessly across a wide range of organisations to enhance and improve the quality of life of people in our community. I am not going to single anyone out, because in doing so I am sure to forget somebody of equal importance, but their sacrifice, their willingness to volunteer and offer their services, improves our community beyond belief.

The electorate of Gladstone is a dynamic and energetic one. We are being hurt at the moment with unemployment. It is a community of visionary people who work tirelessly to ensure that people in the community have, as much as possible, equality of access to services. From my electorate's perspective, prosperity is assured provided we have fair support from state and federal governments in the area of infrastructure and services to support the growth and development that we are experiencing.

I do have a wonderful electorate. I thank all those who supported me in the election. To those who supported other candidates: I give an undertaking to work as hard as possible for you as for the electorate generally. It is a privilege to be in this chamber. I look forward to representing my community to the best of my ability.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr O'Brien): Order! Before calling the member for Hervey Bay, I remind the House that this is the member's first speech. I therefore ask the House to extend the normal courtesies of the House to the honourable member. I call the member for Hervey Bay.

Mr SORENSEN (Hervey Bay—LNP) (6.10 pm): It certainly is an honour to be here today as the elected member for the state seat of Hervey Bay. I feel both humbled and honoured to have been chosen by the constituents of Hervey Bay to represent them in the Queensland parliament. I acknowledge the presence here today of my wife, Jenny, who has provided me with tremendous support during the lead-up to my election here and during my political career as a councillor. I would also like to thank our children, Julie, Paul, Joanne, Angela, Craig and Donna, and all our grandchildren. It is an emotional day for me. It is fantastic to be here. It is fantastic to represent the community that I was brought up in.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the people of Hervey Bay for their support and encouragement during my 14 years in local government. I also acknowledge the Butchalla people, the traditional custodians of the land on which the city of Hervey Bay is situated. It was a great pleasure to have Les Muchan, a representative of the Butchalla people, as my guest here yesterday. Les was a councillor on the Hervey Bay City Council. I was very proud to have him as a councillor. He worked as hard as or even harder than some of the other councillors. It was great to have an Indigenous representative on our council.

Having grown up in Hervey Bay, I certainly have a lot of people to thank. I thank my foster-parents, Tom and Dora Taylor, for looking after me. I grew up on a property where we did not have electricity or running water. All we had in those days was an old battery operated radio. The battery used to go flat occasionally and we would have to get it charged up at the local service station. The only thing I got to listen to was the local news. I listened to a lot of political statements on the radio. My different experiences made me realise how important it is to have water on a property. Later on I enjoyed watching Jim Killen and Fred Daley debating issues on the television. I always thought they were very good entertainers. I relate things back to those two politicians.

I went to Bingham Road school, which was a one-teacher school. It was closed down and then we were bussed to the school at Torquay. Bus transport in those days was nothing like bus transport today. There were some comical things that happened. They used to cart the pigs up to the sale yards in the bus and then clean it out before the afternoon when we went home. The smell was still there in the afternoon. I learnt a lot from those days.

There are other people that I should thank. One is Jeff Keen, who talked me into getting into council in the first place. He said, 'We need someone with your background on the council to go and represent us.' In 1994 I put my name up to be a representative on the Hervey Bay City Council and I was elected. There were some councillors who helped me along in those days. Barbara Crowle was one of the most helpful councillors. Councillors Kathleen Nioa and Derek Struik were great supporters.

The next election I won was 1997. I was Deputy Mayor of the Hervey Bay City Council for the three years from 1997 to 2000. I ran for mayor in the 2000 election and was elected mayor. I remained the mayor of Hervey Bay until 2008. It was during the latter part of my period as mayor that I became very disillusioned by the lack of recognition that Hervey Bay appeared to be receiving from the state government and the lack of funding and the lack of infrastructure that came our way.

During my term as councillor and as mayor I took great interest in the projects that occurred during this time of dynamic growth in Hervey Bay. I took a keen interest in water infrastructure. I would like to thank Tim Waldron for his many years of support and knowledge. He was fantastic to have on board.

Raising Lenthalls Dam was one of the most difficult things I have ever dealt with. It took us around 12 years, 50-something reports and even a report into the black-breasted button-quail, which somebody thought they had found tracks of. We persisted over a long period and we finally secured the water supply for Hervey Bay. After that we actually built the water treatment plant which provides some of the best treated water in Queensland at this point in time. We looked to the future with the sewage treatment plant at Nikenbah currently under construction.

Over the years we did a lot in terms of leakage control and demand management and pressure control. The difficulties we had with some government departments in terms of trying to get this introduced was absolutely unbelievable. Nobody wanted to know us, but we persisted.

The other area we looked at was stormwater harvesting. We used water out of the lakes in Hervey Bay for different purposes. We built retention bases and used that water for irrigation purposes. Noble Lakes was one of the best examples of a developer using stormwater to irrigate lawns. They actually built a lake around the resort and used that water to irrigate. They directed all the stormwater into the lake. We can do a lot in terms of water for our state. We have to make sure that we look after every litre of water that we have. It is a precious commodity and it should be used sparingly. I would like to thank Fred Kleinschmidt, the mayor of Hervey Bay in the early 1990s, for introducing the effluent re-use scheme. This scheme provided water to cane fields, golf links, sporting grounds and so on.

Another interest I had in council was aviation, and especially the upgrade of the airport to take jet aircraft. In July 2005 we had the opening of that airport which saw jet aircraft fly from Sydney to Hervey Bay. This increased tourism to the area enormously. I do not believe people realise the importance of having such good facilities in their town. The airport provides for the evacuation of medical patients. In Hervey Bay we have four to five flying doctor services to Brisbane every day. That is a large number. One of the things I learnt after the airport upgrade relates to the issue of connecting families. I did not realise this at the time. The number of pensioners and children wanting to go back and forwards to see family in Brisbane accounts for 30 per cent of passenger numbers.

It was great to have Jetstar and Virgin come on board to deliver those services. Hervey Bay also has an aviation industry and Seabird Aviation has developed a surveillance aircraft, and I believe the government should look at that surveillance aircraft. Don Adams spent many years designing that aircraft, which has cameras on board for surveillance. I believe that we should be looking after Queensland industries by supporting the aviation industry in the Wide Bay area. There are another two operators building aircraft, and I guess that they are about the only ones left in Australia today that are actually building aircraft. I believe that governments of all descriptions should get behind the aviation industry.

Another issue which is very important to every community is the community halls, especially in smaller communities. I have always supported and will continue to support community halls, especially the new hall that we are trying to build in Hervey Bay and I hope that we can manage to get the funding for that hall. With regard to foreshore upgrades, one of the most emotional times that I have ever had as a councillor was when we tried to do something to save some houses. A lady whose husband was dying of cancer had an issue with her house and the foreshore, but nobody would let me do anything about pushing the sand up to save the house. When the dingo fence was constructed on Fraser Island, they dozed down a midden heap. They also went through sand dunes, cut into the sides of hills where the gradient was too steep and went through tea-tree swamp areas—that is, areas of significance—yet we were not allowed to save this house from beach erosion. Another area that we should always try to maintain is boat ramps in order to provide facilities for the boating community.

I have always held the Hervey Bay community at heart and am a member of various organisations and help out many other organisations. I am a member of the Rotary Club of Hervey Bay Sunrise, a member of the building committee of Meals on Wheels, a member of the Hervey Bay RSL, a member of the Hervey Bay Boat Club, a member of the Hervey Bay Chamber of Commerce and also the chairman of the Salvation Army Red Shield Appeal. I want to thank Russell and Jackie Morgan for helping me and offering me the job when I gave up being the mayor. It was a great experience to come to Brisbane and go to Moonyah to see the people who are there. Everybody and every politician should go through that facility to see what can be done. It was a great experience for me to be able to do that.

I also support the chaplaincies in the schools, especially Owen Blackwell who has been the chaplain for nearly 20 years at the Hervey Bay State High School. He has helped many children over the years to get back on the right track and also helped them through other areas of life. We should never, ever forget the volunteers in the SES and the rural fire brigades who spend a lot of time out there helping the community. We should never forget those people, and I do not believe that they are sufficiently funded for the work that they do, especially the SES.

The electorate of Hervey Bay covers the central and eastern parts of the former Hervey Bay council area and includes the suburbs of Booral, Dundowran Beach, Eli Waters, Kawungan, Pialba, Point Vernon, River Heads, Scarness, Torquay, Urangan, Urraween, Wondunna and Fraser Island. After council amalgamation in 2008, Hervey Bay is now in the Fraser Coast Regional Council area. According to my research, Hervey Bay was named after Augustus John Hervey, the third Earl of Bristol. The bay was originally named Hervey's Bay by Captain Cook in the admiralty copy of his journal when he passed by there on 21 May 1770 after naval officer the Hon. Augustus Hervey, who was a British admiral and a politician.

The region's industry includes pineapple farming, cattle, sugar cane, fishing and logging and coalmining in earlier times. A large jetty was constructed at Urangan in 1917. A large part still remains and is used by the fishermen nowadays and is great for tourism. The jetty was used for exporting, including coal. It carried rail traffic with a line connecting to Maryborough and beyond. The beaches are very popular with locals and Maryborough residents during their holidays and continue to be a very popular area. Tourism has become a mainstay industry in Hervey Bay, particularly during the whale season. Humpback whales visit the pristine waters of Hervey Bay during the annual migration from July to November. We also have the World Heritage listed Fraser Island, which attracts many tourists. I offer my condolences to the families of the backpackers who died on Fraser Island recently in an accident.

There are many people that I should thank. Most of all, I want to thank John Howard and Peter Costello for leaving Australia in such good shape. We are one of the lucky countries in this whole global recession because of the management of those two people. I want to thank all of my campaign team who worked with me to get me here. I thank my campaign director Geoff Godfrey, whose maturity and counselling have been invaluable not only in this campaign but the previous ones with the council. I thank my campaign manager and treasurer Michael Nyenhuis, who guided the logistics and the all-important dollar. I want to thank all members of the campaign team from the campaign captains, booth helpers, corflute team to the office support. I want to thank Steve Dixon and especially John Rutherford. A special thanks also goes to Norma Hannatt and her committed and dedicated team standing at polling booths during prepolling. I also want to thank Bruce McIver, Gary Spence, Lawrence Springborg and Mark McArdle for bringing the LNP together. That was one of the best things and one of the most emotional days I have ever experienced. When they pulled the walls apart, women of both parties were actually crying. It was a great day. I was glad to be there and I hope that we can honour those people by being a good government in the future.

Last but certainly not least, I want to thank my ever-supporting wife Jenny, who has been next to my side all the way through, for her strength, together with the support of my step-daughter Julie, who has been there for both of us. I also want to thank Wayne and Dale Fehlhaber and John Waite. To the people of Hervey Bay, again thank you for entrusting me to represent you in our fine democratic institution of the Queensland parliament. I will work hard to represent and protect our lifestyle for future generations and endeavour to see that Hervey Bay gets its fair share. I look forward to a constructive term in parliament and working with my parliamentary colleagues for a better Queensland.

Sitting suspended from 6.28 pm to 7.30 pm.

Mr SPEAKER: Before I call the honourable member for Greenslopes, I remind the House that this is the honourable member's first speech and, therefore, I ask the House to extend every courtesy to him on his first speech.

Hon. CR DICK (Greenslopes—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Industrial Relations) (7.30 pm): I start tonight by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land where this parliament stands who have served and nurtured this land for centuries. I pay tribute to them and their great role in our history. It is in this reflection of history that I begin tonight.

In December 1862, three short years after the birth of our great state, whose 150th anniversary we celebrate this year, the sailing ship *Conway* arrived in the small Queensland settlement then known as Moreton Bay. History little records the fate of the *Conway*, its passengers and its crew, but one thing is known about that day in December 1862: that is the day my family arrived in Queensland and began its Queensland journey.

Almost 150 years later, that journey has taken me to this place, the Queensland parliament. I stand tonight as a representative of the people in our state's legislature, not only as a fifth-generation Queenslander but also with great humility and honour as a son of the state seat of Greenslopes, the electorate I now serve as a member of parliament.

My first thanks this evening go to those people who make up the community of Greenslopes. It is a wonderful and diverse community and I look forward to serving them to the best of my ability. This electorate is very dear to my heart. It was at Holland Park, in the Greenslopes electorate, that I was raised as a boy. I am proud to say I attended Marshall Road State School—a school that will shortly celebrate its 50th year—in the electorate of Greenslopes. It was at this school and in my family's Holland Park home that I learned many of life's important lessons, which have made me the person I am today. But my story is not special; nor is it unique. It is not unlike the story of so many residents and families of Greenslopes—people who came to our state, and to the south side of Brisbane in particular, seeking a new and better life, a life of hope and opportunity, where working together we can make a better future for all, no matter who they are or where they come from.

To be the state member for Greenslopes is to be a custodian. No one person, no single party, owns or is entitled to a seat and a voice in this place. I am extraordinarily privileged to serve the people of Greenslopes and that privilege, which humbles me greatly, is something I will not forget as long as I have the opportunity to serve as a member of the Queensland parliament.

My commitment to the people of Greenslopes is simple: to listen, to act and to deliver for the community. As the newly elected member for Greenslopes, I follow in the footsteps of a very long-serving member of this place, Gary Fenlon. All across the community I have heard the same story from residents: that Gary listened, that he acted when people needed help and that he delivered for the suburbs of the electorate he represented. I pay special tribute tonight to his service to his party, to this parliament and to the people of Greenslopes. I am proud to have followed Gary into this place.

As we embark on a new century, Queensland faces many challenges. We face unheralded and unexpected economic and financial challenges. We face the challenge of a surging population—people who are moving to not just the Sunshine State but the sunrise state, seeking new and better opportunities for themselves and their families. We face the problem of growing family pressures and, for some, dysfunction, in a time of economic uncertainty. We face the need to ensure that we continue to grow the Queensland economy and deliver jobs. I believe there are three key areas the residents of Greenslopes are most worried about: the delivery of important infrastructure, the protection of jobs and our economy, and the protection of our lifestyle and our environment. These are issues I appreciate because of where I come from: the streets and suburbs of Greenslopes, the same streets and suburbs I now represent today.

My family's connection to Greenslopes and the south side of Brisbane travels back many decades. My great-grandmother, Margaret Green, lived in Douglas Street, Greenslopes, which I am proud to say is in the electorate. My grandparents on my father's side lived and began a small business along Wynnum Road in the suburb of Morningside. Both of my parents, who I am so very proud to have in the gallery tonight, lived through the Great Depression and saw firsthand the horror of a world economic downturn. My father served his country in the Navy during World War II and after the war my father began a successful small business career as a butcher on the south side of Brisbane with his younger brother, my late uncle, Milton Dick senior. Through sheer hard work and determination, they worked long hours to build their business. Like the children of so many Queenslanders today, I know what it is like for a father to go to work in the dark and then arrive home in the dark each day. I know what it is like to have a mother who always put her children first, so they could be the best they could be—so that my brother, my sister and I could be where we are today.

My mother and her family grew up not far from here in West End, and she trained as a nurse at St Martin's Hospital. After they married, my parents very wisely chose the suburb of Holland Park, almost five decades ago, to raise their family. Through their hardship early in their lives they demonstrated a commitment to hard work and the notion of a fair go. They also instilled in my sister, my brother and me the importance of volunteer work and giving back to the community. As some members would be aware, my brother, Milton, has also served the community through his leadership as a successful state secretary of Queensland Labor and now as a councillor and deputy leader of the Brisbane City Council opposition. But just as important is the work of my sister, Susan, who has been a dedicated primary school teacher for over 20 years, helping to teach the next generation of Queenslanders.

In times of challenge and adversity—a time like today—people also ask: why Labor? In answering that question, I look to the past and say people should look no further than our great early 20th century Premier, TJ Ryan. In 2009, the Queensland Labor Party will celebrate the centenary of Ryan's first election to this place. Ryan may have been elected to this parliament 100 years ago but his life and public service remain an example to all of us who carry the Labor standard.

Ryan was a fierce, uncompromising and passionate advocate for the cause of Labor his entire life. And in doing so he championed the cause of the average Queenslanders. He sought to expand the franchise by arguing both for an increased role of women in politics and for lowering the voting age to 18 years. He attacked vested and entrenched interests in society to ensure a fair go for farmers, labourers, tradesmen and public servants. He sought to expand the democratic project by abolishing the Legislative Council, thereby ensuring that power in Queensland was exercised by the many and not the few. He challenged market monopolies and combines by seeking a fair and balanced marketplace. Most

importantly, both as a barrister and as a representative in this House, he stood up for working men and women, for their right to argue and fight for better wages and conditions and to do so through collective action through organised trade unions. He was a man who fought for safe workplaces and who introduced a landmark workers compensation bill into this House.

Ryan believed in fairness and equity; in social, economic and industrial justice. But, most importantly, he believed to his core in the never-ending and always necessary need for reform and progress. These are Queensland values. They are enduring Labor values. And they will guide me during my period of service in this House.

In politics, as in life, individual success and accomplishment only comes through the hard work, enthusiasm and determination of others. To represent the Australian Labor Party in this parliament is to stand on the shoulders of giants—not just the great lions of our party like Ryan and Theodore, Forgan Smith and Hanlon, Goss and Beattie but also the unsung heroes of our party, rank and file trade unionists and party members who seek no greater glory, no greater reward than to see Labor candidates elected to public office and to see Labor achieve in government. They are people like local Greenslopes branch members. I cannot mention them all tonight, but as a few representatives of this extraordinary group of people I mention Dennis Cross, Brian Merrin, Paula Dove, Ray and Hazel Smith, Michael Garton and Joe Kelly.

I wish to thank my timeless Labor friends and supporters such as Peter Wood, Frank Inglis and Harry Zaphir, Len and Shirley Fallows, Phil and Carmen Davies, Jacki Power, Charis Mullen and Hazel Hubbard. I wish to particularly thank Troy Spence, who guided my campaign as my campaign director. Troy is a young man with a great future in our party. I wish to thank my dedicated electorate office team, Therese Ferlin and Jade Simmons, who to me epitomise the essence of hard work and loyalty. I wish to thank my great friend Anthony Chisolm, State Secretary of the Queensland branch of the Australian Labor Party, who ran a brilliant campaign; Linus Power for his friendship, support and campaign expertise; and Mike Kaiser for his wisdom and advice.

As representatives of my personal friends, I wish to acknowledge Michael Noad and, in particular, Malcolm Catchpole, who have stood by me and with me for more than a quarter of a century. To them I say thank you. I also wish to thank Bill Ludwig, a leader not only of the Australian Workers Union but also of the ALP here in Queensland, whose faith in me and support over many years I will not forget. I also wish to thank the Hon. Con Sciacca, Senator the Hon. John Hogg, Senator the Hon. Joseph Ludwig and Chris Ketter for their kindness, encouragement and support over many years.

As I look around this House, particularly on this side of the House, I see people for whom I have enormous admiration and respect. More importantly than that, they are people whom I regard as my friends. People like my caucus and cabinet colleagues, Anastacia Palaszczuk, Minister for Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs and member for Inala, and Stirling Hinchliffe, Minister for Infrastructure and Planning and member for Stafford. I have known Anastacia and Stirling for more than half my life. I am very proud to serve with them in the cabinet, to improve the lives of Queenslanders.

As I look up I see the Speaker of this parliament, John Mickel, the member for Logan. The member for Logan will distinguish himself as Speaker and will bring dedication and dignity to that high office. The member for Logan has been a voice of wisdom and I have always admired his passion and commitment to the cause of Labor. He has been a mentor and friend for a long time. I also wish to thank my caucus and cabinet colleagues Treasurer Andrew Fraser, Minister Stephen Robertson and Minister Phil Reeves for their friendship and support over many years.

I have known the Deputy Premier and Minister for Health, Paul Lucas, since we were law students at the University of Queensland. Paul has carried the cause of Labor in his heart his entire life. He has one of the most incisive and penetrating minds in this parliament and is ceaseless and restless in his desire to improve life for the disadvantaged and the powerless. His complete dedication to public service is an example to all those who serve in the cabinet and in this House, and I thank him most deeply for his advice, his encouragement and his support over many, many years.

To the Premier of Queensland, Anna Bligh, I express my heartfelt gratitude. The Premier is a woman of great vision and fortitude. During the election campaign she demonstrated enormous courage and conviction. Like all great Premiers, she connects with the people of Queensland, and our great state is in secure hands with her at the helm. Very few Queenslanders have the opportunity to serve in this parliament. Fewer still have the very great opportunity to serve in the executive branch of government as a cabinet minister. The Premier has humbled and honoured me, as have the people of Greenslopes. The Premier has humbled me by asking me to serve as the Attorney-General and Minister for Industrial Relations in her government. I thank the Premier for her faith and her confidence.

I come from a close and loving family. More than anything else this evening I wish to acknowledge their love and support. To my parents, your life's example remains a beacon for me. To my brother, Milton, I wish to say not only is he one of the finest political strategists in the country; he is now a dedicated public servant of our party and the people of Richlands, whom he represents in the Brisbane

City Council. But most importantly, Milton is my best mate. I thank him for his support and wisdom, his enthusiasm and perspective, and his energy. I also thank my sister, Susan, and her beautiful family, for their quiet and unquestioning belief in me.

If faith could move mountains then my wife, Therese, could single-handedly move the Great Dividing Range. Well before the possibility of my standing here tonight was realised, she believed in me. And she does so every day. It is this, her belief in me, that has sustained me through my journey so far. Her ongoing support means an enormous amount to me. Through the miracle of technology and by the innovations put in place by Labor Speakers of this parliament, she watches me tonight via the internet as she cares for our two young sons, Samuel and Jonathan. Sam and Jonny represent the future that all of us who serve in this place dedicate ourselves to improving. They are my greatest achievement and will always inspire me.

This speech ends where my life's journey began, in the state electorate of Greenslopes. I have a very big job ahead of me to serve the people of Greenslopes, which I will do to the best of my ability. My commitment to them is to work as hard as I can to honour the trust placed in me and to deliver real and substantial benefits for the people of Greenslopes and the people of Queensland.

Before his death, Robert Kennedy, who served as a United States senator and as the Attorney-General of the United States, said—

An honourable profession calls forth the chance for responsibility and the opportunity for achievement; against these measures, politics is a truly exciting adventure.

The people of the Greenslopes electorate have honoured me by giving me that chance and that opportunity. I am humbled to serve this community, and I look forward to sharing with them the adventurous days ahead.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Before I call the member for Morayfield, I remind the House that this is the member's first speech. Therefore, I ask the House to extend all courtesies to the honourable member.

Mr RYAN (Morayfield—ALP) (7.47 pm): It is with great honour and humility that I rise in this place for the first time. In doing so I congratulate Mr Speaker on your election to the position of Speaker of the 53rd Queensland Parliament. All elections are historic in their own way, but the election of members to the 53rd Queensland Parliament is especially important as this election occurred in the year when Queensland celebrates its 150th birthday and the people of Queensland elected the first female Premier in Australian history. I extend my congratulations to honourable members on their election to this place and their contribution to the history of our state, Queensland.

I acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we meet today and the traditional owners of the lands on which the Morayfield state electorate is based. I trust that this parliament and the state government can continue to work in partnership with our Indigenous brothers and sisters to effect real and positive change throughout our state.

At the outset I extend my thanks to the people of the Morayfield state electorate who put their faith in me to serve them as their representative. My commitment is to serve you, the people of the Morayfield state electorate, to the best of my ability, to involve you in the political process and to represent your views in this parliament. You should expect me to be a person of ethics, integrity and honesty. I expect you to continually remind me of the great privilege and responsibility that you have entrusted to me. At this point, I must acknowledge the support and encouragement that enabled me to be in this place today.

To my family who are in the gallery this evening, thank you for supporting me, empowering me and challenging me to achieve great things. Whilst politics does not really run in my family, my late grandmother, Edith Ryan, was a long-time supporter of the Australian Labor Party. She would call me every Sunday afternoon to discuss politics and current affairs. She would always end her phone calls with the words 'Up the workers'. I honour her memory today and thank her for inspiring me to make a difference in our world.

To Ken and Janet Hayward and Michelle Burgett: thank you for encouraging me to seize opportunities and teaching me to never blink when confronting adversities.

To my campaign team, members of the Australian Labor Party and to all those who assisted with my campaign: thank you for your tireless support. In particular, I acknowledge the exceptional work of my friends, some of them in the gallery tonight: Kelley Rogers, Rebecca Pennicott, Mitchell Lawrence, and also Wendy Turner, Murray Daniel, Ellen Heath, Patrick Maher, Gary Taylor, Chris Whiting and John and Monica McCullagh. I am truly grateful to all who were involved with my campaign and am overwhelmed by your generosity of time and spirit.

To my friends from the union movement, especially Gary Bullock, Scott Zackersen and the LHMU; members of the AMWU; the RTBU; the CFMEU; the QPSU; and the CPSU: I thank you for your support.

The Morayfield state electorate is a new electorate created in the growth corridor between Brisbane and the Sunshine Coast. It includes the suburbs of Caboolture South, Upper Caboolture, Rocksberg, Moorina, Morayfield, Burpengary and Narangba. It is a great area with great people and I

have lived there for most of my life. The Morayfield state electorate was created from parts of the Pumicestone state electorate, the Kallangur state electorate and the abolished Kurwongbah state electorate. I congratulate my colleague, the member for Pumicestone, on her re-election. I acknowledge the hard work of the retired member for Kurwongbah, Linda Lavarch, and wish her well for her next adventure. I also pay tribute to my good friend and the retired member for Kallangur, Ken Hayward.

The use of the word 'Morayfield' dates back to the 1850s when George Raff, who was the first member for Brisbane in the first Queensland parliament in 1860, bought some of the land held by the failed Caboolture Cotton Company and called it Moray Field, although it was often written as Morayfields. The word 'Morayfield' has never been used as a name for an electorate before. So in this 150th year of Queensland's existence, it is with a sense of history that I come to this place as the first member for Morayfield. Let the history books show that it is not just my presence in this place as the first member for Morayfield that should be recorded but the fact that the first member for Brisbane in the first Queensland parliament named the place which is now represented in this 53rd Queensland Parliament.

On another historic note, it is with great pride that I serve as a member of this parliament alongside the honourable the Premier, who is the first woman elected to that position in Australian history. I emphasise this history not only because it has taken our parliament 150 years to reach this point but because it is the Australian Labor Party with its commitment to fairness, equality, opportunity and social justice that has contributed to this defining moment in the history of our state, Queensland. Through you, Mr Speaker, I extend the congratulations of the electors of the Morayfield state electorate to the Premier on her historic achievement.

The state electorate of Morayfield is one of the fastest-growing areas of South-East Queensland. This growth presents the community with many challenges but also many opportunities. For instance, let us consider transport in the Morayfield state electorate. As a long-time resident of the area I have experienced firsthand the demands on local road and public transport infrastructure.

I am proud to say that the state government, through its record \$17 billion infrastructure building program, is responding to these demands. As a result of this record building program, local people in the Morayfield state electorate will see more road and public transport infrastructure and services in future years. This is important because transport, especially public transport, is crucial to regional communities. Public transport links people and provides people with opportunities to work, study and be active within their communities. Reliable, accessible and affordable transport alternatives are some of the best antidotes to marginalisation, isolation and disadvantage in communities. Put simply, good public transport services empower people.

As a long-time resident of the Morayfield state electorate, I have witnessed the dynamic growth of the area. Today, there are more traffic lights, more people, more shops, more houses and more cars in the local area. There is no denying that our neighbourhoods and localities, and to that end our state, have experienced tremendous population growth in recent years. Managing and responding to population growth and increased demand for government services and infrastructure is core business for Labor governments. I am proud to say that successive Labor state governments have responded to population growth in the Morayfield state electorate.

Recent achievements for our area include a new police station at Burpengary, new primary and secondary schools at Burpengary and Narangba, new buildings and facilities for primary and secondary schools in Morayfield and Caboolture South, a new ambulance station at Narangba with intensive care paramedics on staff, a new fire station at Burpengary, and additional car parking facilities at Morayfield and Burpengary train stations. As our population continues to grow, so will the demand for government services and infrastructure. I look forward to contributing to the proud tradition of successive Labor state governments of delivering government services and infrastructure for the people of the Morayfield state electorate.

Let us now consider the importance of supporting local businesses and local jobs. Key industries in the Morayfield state electorate are the retail and commerce industries. Many people in the electorate are employed locally in these industries. However, these are tough economic times and businesses and workers, not only in the Morayfield state electorate but also around Queensland, may be experiencing hardship. At this time, more than ever in our history, Queensland does not just need strong and experienced leadership, Queensland needs compassionate government. We need a government that invests in its people. We need a government that truly cares for its citizens. We need a government that is committed to protecting and creating jobs.

I am proud to say that only the Australian Labor Party has the record, the commitment and the compassion to help people through these difficult times, and only the Australian Labor Party has the vision, the plan and the experience to invest in local jobs and continue building vital infrastructure projects. Locally, there is great potential for governments of all levels to work in partnership with community and business groups to promote and support local businesses and in turn support local jobs.

For at least the last few years I have been involved with a number of community organisations that assist marginalised and disadvantaged people. Those organisations include Rosies—Friends on the Street, the Homeless Persons' Legal Clinic, the Welfare Rights Centre, and the Catholic Justice and

Peace Commission. These organisations are just a few of the many organisations that provide assistance and support to people in our communities. I acknowledge their hard work and thank them for all that they do.

In 2002, the ABC produced an episode of *Compass* called 'Saving Claymore'. In that program, Paul Power from the Society of St Vincent de Paul said—

... if things are ever going to change you don't look at people for their disadvantage, for their negatives, for the things that are going wrong in their lives. But you look at everyone, every single person as a person brimming with potential, as a person who has a commitment, potential commitment to change if the circumstances can be created where that change can occur.

I am passionate about empowering communities and the people within them. I see the role of government as one not of compelling communities to travel in certain directions or take certain paths but one of support and empowerment. Every person has the potential to change and the potential to make a difference in their community. It is the role of government to support, encourage, empower and harness that potential.

I am proud to say that the state government has a strong record of supporting and empowering local people and community groups in the Morayfield state electorate. The Community Renewal Project in Caboolture South, the investment in our young people to ensure that they are learning or earning, and the financial assistance provided to local sporting clubs are some examples of how the state government is encouraging people in the Morayfield state electorate to realise their full potential.

I am a member of the Australian Labor Party because the Australian Labor Party is the party of potential and opportunity and because I truly believe that the Australian Labor Party, with its commitment to social justice and proud history of support for working and marginalised people, is the only political party that has the capacity and willingness to deliver fair and equitable government for all members of the community.

In his award-winning book *Profiles in Courage*, which was published in 1955, former President of the United States of America John F Kennedy wrote—

Today the challenge of political courage looms larger than ever before. For our everyday life is becoming so saturated with the tremendous power of mass communications that any unpopular or unorthodox course arouses a storm of protests ... the idealist who dreams of independent statesmanship is rudely awakened by the necessities of election and accomplishment.

He continued by saying—

For democracy means much more than popular government and majority rule, much more than a system of political techniques to flatter or deceive powerful blocs of voters ... The true democracy, living and growing and inspiring, puts its faith in the people—faith that the people will not simply elect men who will represent their views ably and faithfully, but also elect men who will exercise their conscientious judgment—faith that the people will not condemn those whose devotion to principle leads them to unpopular courses, but will reward courage, respect honor and ultimately recognize right.

Perhaps this is why I find it hard to understand why it is often said that the Australian public are angry and dissatisfied with the performance of their political representatives. In fact, Dr Sally Young from the University of Melbourne has written a paper called *Why Australians hate politicians*. In her paper, Dr Young suggests the current cynicism towards politicians represents a crisis of confidence in our political system.

Irrespective of whether these views are ill founded or not, it is important for honourable members to appreciate the basis for these views. I do not believe that these views are based on a default acceptance that politicians represent a lowest common dominator position. Rather, these views represent a desire of the electorate that its political representatives be role models. The electorate wants its political representatives to do better. The electorate wants to be engaged by its political representatives in political discourses. The electorate puts its faith in its political representatives and in doing so the electorate expects us to be leaders, to make hard decisions for the greater good, to show courage and to exercise conscientious judgement. These are worthy expectations. Whilst the burdens of public life may be heavy, we are challenged to do better, to reach new heights and to implement good public policy.

As members of parliament, we cannot expect people to be miraculously interested in the political process just because this place exists. Our role as political representatives is to engage, inform and involve the electorate, especially young people in our respective electorates, in the political process. Young people have many experiences. They have enthusiasm, energy and an openness of mind. They look to the future and have a strong sense of community. To that end, engaging young people in political discourses is not only important for our democracy, it is essential to its continued relevance.

I commend the Queensland parliament on the Everyone's Parliament and the e-democracy programs as positive and constructive engagement strategies. However, more can be done and I would encourage the parliament to consider the possibility of lowering the age for provisional enrolment, keeping the electoral roll open up to and including election day and including an enrolment form on driver's licence application and renewal forms as options for strengthening our democracy. Encouraging participation in our democracy through participation in the electoral process is just one of the many challenges facing governments in contemporary times. Access to the law and access to government services are other challenges.

Our lives are rapidly becoming increasingly complex. For most people, navigating legal problems is expensive and time consuming. As a lawyer, I have experienced both private commercial and pro bono community practices. In both practices, I realise that the issues relevant to engagement in the political process are the same issues relevant to access and involvement in the legal system. All citizens are assumed equal under the law and all are deemed to know the law. According to longstanding legal precedent, ignorance of the law is no defence. Nonetheless, some citizens are less than equal and some citizens do not in fact know aspects of the law and therefore do not appreciate the extent of their rights, duties, obligations and responsibilities.

I am concerned about this reality—not just because our society is structured on adherence to certain legal constructs and frameworks but because people cannot be fully empowered in their communities if they do not appreciate the extent of their rights, duties, obligations and responsibilities. This issue goes beyond mere awareness of the legal, governmental and political processes. This issue is about engagement and empowerment and we need to continue the strategies which take government to the people. I commend the state government on its community cabinet and regional parliament initiatives.

Earlier, I quoted from John F Kennedy's book *Profiles in Courage*. I would like to conclude my first speech in this place by referring to him once again. He said—

To be courageous ... requires no exceptional qualifications, no magic formula, no special combination of time, place and circumstance. It is an opportunity that sooner or later is presented to us all. Politics merely furnishes one arena which imposes special tests of courage. In whatever arena of life one may meet the challenge of courage, whatever may be the sacrifices he faces if he follows his conscience—the loss of his friends, his fortune, his contentment, even the esteem of his fellow men—each man must decide for himself the course he will follow.

I trust that my time as the member for the state electorate of Morayfield will be characterised by uncompromising service to the people who have put their faith in me and by opportunities to show courage, to stand up for principle, to assist those in most need and to work for the greater good of our communities. I hope people will look upon my time in this place and acknowledge the courage, honour, integrity and conscientious judgement which I intend to display in my role as not only a person who is focused on those great and lofty aspirations of empowerment and opportunity but as a person who dared to inspire difference through hard work and example.

Mr SPEAKER: Before I call the honourable member for Kawana, I remind the House that this is the member's first speech. I ask the House to therefore extend all the courtesies to him on this important occasion for him. I call the honourable member for Kawana.

Mr BLEIJIE (Kawana—LNP) (8.07 pm): What an enormous privilege it is to rise in this chamber as the new member for Kawana—an enormous privilege and a great responsibility. I thank the voters of the Kawana electorate for having the confidence they have placed in me to be their representative. At the outset, may I congratulate you, Mr Speaker, on your election to your high office. You have now moved out of the ruck into the referee's role and you can be sure that those on this side of the House will give you our full support in your duty to ensure that the parliament always prevails over the executive government of the day. I acknowledge Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Queen of Australia, who provides such a distinguished example of public service to us all and to the sovereign's representative in this state, Her Excellency the Governor.

When I look around at my LNP colleagues, it gives me a great sense of pride and enthusiasm to be involved in a political party with such a diverse range of peoples, varying in age and experiences. I thought upon my election to this House that I may have possibly been the youngest member to serve in this 53rd Queensland Parliament, but that title goes to the member for Morayfield. I can say, however, with excitement and pride that I am the youngest conservative member of the 53rd Queensland Parliament. I envisage that my youth will bring to this House a fresh perspective, and I can particularly stand up in this House and bring to the attention of the House the plight of young Queenslanders.

Someone said to me soon after election day that I must feel a great sense of achievement. I pondered that for a while and decided that, no, I do not feel a sense of achievement because that means that personal ambition is the most important thing, but I do feel a profound sense of responsibility. I remember studying political science, learning about the different political philosophies and whether members of parliament are elected to be delegates or representatives. I will not breach the rules of inaugural speeches by being too politically controversial, except to say that all of us in this chamber, regardless of the political party that we represent and regardless of any office that we hold, are representatives for our constituents. The complexity of the issues that come before us mean that we have an obligation to research and study important issues and then ultimately, in our party room discussions and on the floor of this chamber, vote for what we think is in the best interests of our constituents and the people of Queensland.

One of the guiding lights for me in this journey that has led me to take my place in this chamber has been the support of my wife, Sally, and the love and support of our two daughters, Taylor and Madison. During the campaign when the day might not have gone as well as I would have liked, I knew

that when I returned home it was to an oasis of unconditional love and support—unconditional but not, I hasten to say, uncritical. We all know that sometimes it is our family members, and I include my extended family, who ground us and it is the most important aspect.

I have lived on the Sunshine Coast for most of my life. The Sunshine Coast is a fantastic region, with the Kawana electorate one of the jewels in its crown, offering a wonderful mix of lifestyle, business and tourism opportunities and the perfect place to raise a family. I completed my schooling on the Sunshine Coast at Caloundra Primary and Caloundra State High School respectively. I then studied arts, majoring in politics, at the University of the Sunshine Coast before completing my law degree at QUT in Brisbane. Can I say how proud I am to have the University of the Sunshine Coast, a first-class university, in my electorate.

Along the way I balanced my study with an involvement in a wide variety of local organisations and community groups. In that role, but more sharply since my preselection and during the campaign, I have been constantly reminded that volunteering is the glue that holds our communities together. We must do more to recognise and acknowledge our wonderful volunteers.

It is with some trepidation that I admit to the House that prior to coming to this chamber I was a practising lawyer. I was constantly reminded during the campaign of lawyers. People often asked me, 'Jarrod, what do you call 100 lawyers at the bottom of the ocean?' I did not know and they always said that it was a good start. Quite seriously, I hope that my legal training will help me in working to the best of my ability for the people of Kawana.

Apart from my professional work, I have been fortunate to be a Rotarian. When I was preparing this speech for tonight, I thought that the motto of Rotary International 'service above self', which was the guiding principle of our founder of Rotary, Paul Harris, was not a bad principle to follow as a member of parliament. I have also been lucky enough to be involved as a board director of Mercy Ships Australia. Some members might have seen the movie *Blood Diamond*, which highlights the purpose of Mercy Ships' global charity. The aim of the charity is to fund hospital ships to go to devastated countries like Sierra Leone and Liberia to help them get back on their feet and to provide an immediate and self-contained hospital in places which often have no public infrastructure. It is a relatively simple idea. Of course, the principle of hospital ships in the naval service is well established, but the profile of Mercy Ships Australia is not as high as it could be. I hope to be able to tell people more about this organisation and the life-saving work that it does when the opportunities arise. It certainly deserves public support.

Australia is by some merit a secular country, by which I mean that we do not have any state sanctioned religion. That is the very important decision taken not only by our Founding Fathers but adhered to in colonial Queensland and in other colonies before 1901. However, having said that and having made clear that I strongly support the right of people to profess their faith, or indeed profess no faith at all, I would like to lay down some of my own personal principles.

Australia is predominantly a Christian country and Queensland is predominantly a Christian state. We begin sittings of this House with a prayer which encompasses the Judeo-Christian tradition. For myself, I am not bashful about declaring that I am a practising Christian. I am an elder of the Kawana Waters Uniting Church, and worship and church activities play a major part in our life. I am sure that it will sustain me in this new role.

One of the major factors that encouraged me to run for public office was in 2006. I was involved in the Caloundra city future leaders program run by the Caloundra City Youth Partnership and now the Sunshine Coast Youth Partnership Inc. This program was inspired by former mayor Don Aldous and Mrs Heather Aldous. Don and Heather have a passion for youth on the Sunshine Coast and sought to strengthen the skills and qualities of young people. The future leaders program was based on leadership, development, career mentoring, project management, sharing wisdom and making new connections.

A major part of that program was building community spirit. We had to manage a local community project in our area, the Kawana electorate. My project was 'Know your neighbour'. I was challenged to come up with a project in my local area to bring my community together. I started to research projects to see what would benefit my local neighbourhood. Looking around my own neighbourhood, I recognised the need to know our neighbours better. We tend too much in our lives to only know of our neighbours by a simple wave bringing the wheelie bins in at night or checking the mail in the afternoon. When I was researching various projects to build neighbourhood community spirit, I began to see a sad fact occurring time and time again. I kept finding newspaper articles and media reports of fellow Australians passing away in their homes and their deaths going unnoticed for quite some time. In one article a man was found dead after dying more than eight months earlier in his house, and no-one noticed. In another instance it was six months before another man was found dead in his public housing unit. Again, no-one noticed.

Four days later police discovered the remains of an elderly woman in her home on the New South Wales Central Coast. Postal workers called the police only because she had not collected her mail for six months. No-one noticed. There were many other examples both in this state and in other parts of the

country. This made me stop and think. We pride ourselves on progress in technology, support for community centres and wonderful advances in health care but, with all of this and all of our national affluence, why in 2009 are these fellow Australians spending their last days alone and even then are still not noticed?

These types of reports and articles made me not limit my community project to my street but made me extend it to my neighbourhood. I found that the community responded eagerly and approximately 150 people turned up to 'Know your Neighbour Day'. Part of the reason for this underlying problem, I think, is that in so many cases today people are so busy and simply do not have the time to get to know their neighbours. This is particularly so with the increase of high-density apartment block housing. I found these cases so very sad. They gave me the sobering thought that just possibly if the neighbours of these people had taken the trouble to say hello on a regular basis or sit down with them and have a coffee these sad situations could have been avoided. It does not take much. One major contributor to this problem is that people increasingly feel they should go about their daily lives minding their own business. I will repeat that phrase: minding their own business. Too often that means looking the other way or crossing to the other side of the road. Too often that means seeing a crime being committed and not reporting it. Too often that means not supporting the police when they are trying to do their job.

There has been a great deal of public debate about citizenship and how people should know their rights. We have even seen public calls for some sort of bill of rights. Perhaps it is time that we balanced the ledger and emphasised the importance of people knowing their responsibilities. When I was at school, if I came home and told my parents that I had got into trouble with a teacher my parents would invariably side with the teacher. That was not because I was a particularly bad student; it was because they realised it was vital that parents give the level of support to teachers for a school to properly function. Increasingly, my friends in the teaching profession tell me that not only do children, even primary school children, stubbornly assert in some classroom situations that they have rights, but there are increasingly cases where parents will instantly side with their children and do nothing to support the school or the principal. That does nothing to engender a sense of responsibility in our next generation and it does nothing to educate the child concerned.

There is a major danger in the re-election of a government which has now been in office for more than 10 years. Because of the conventions applying to inaugural speeches I will not dwell on this, but on another occasion I will have something to say about the growth in bureaucracy and red tape and how significant a factor that was in the slowness of the response to the devastating oil spill on the Sunshine Coast.

I will also have more to say about another symptom of a government which has been in office for a long time. That is the increased propensity for local communities not to be consulted about major infrastructure developments which affect them or at least to get only lip-service consultation. The Traveston Dam, fast-paced greenfield site developments, the taking of the Sunshine Coast water and forced council amalgamations are to name but a few. Now is not the time to delve into these issues, but they are just some of the important matters that I look forward to raising in this House and on which I intend to hold the government to account.

The member for Buderim in his first speech in 2006 referred to the health system as being a basket case. Unfortunately, not much has changed since 2006. We have serious health shortfalls on the Sunshine Coast. I am, however, looking forward to the government building the Sunshine Coast University Hospital as promised by 2014—a greatly needed piece of infrastructure; an asset for the Sunshine Coast.

Our Westminster system works well under the authority of a constitutional monarchy with its established web of reserve powers and checks and balances. But a Westminster system also needs an opposition which probes and scrutinises relentlessly if necessary. Under the new Leader of the Liberal National Party, with his newly invigorated team, I look forward to contributing wholeheartedly to that vital task.

The journey to this parliament is not an easy one and, as members would understand, a journey that cannot be taken without assistance and support. Many people assisted me in my successful campaign. I would like to acknowledge those who have made a profound contribution to my campaign. En bloc I would like to thank my entire campaign team and the campaign helpers, for I know that without you and your tireless efforts over the last six months of our local campaign I would not be standing in this House as the member for Kawana. To my state colleagues on the Sunshine Coast, thank you.

I must today, however, pay particular tribute to my campaign director, Mrs Carol Humphries, and my assistant campaign director, Mrs Elizabeth Worthington. Carol and Elizabeth ran a campaign with the utmost professionalism and style and endeavoured to put up with my generation Y campaign thoughts and enthusiasm.

I thanked my wife, Sally, earlier in this inaugural speech and I must now express from the bottom of my heart my thanks to my parents, Pieter and Christine Bleijie. I recall during the election campaign a regular assertion being made that by choosing the legal profession as a career, as I had, and being a practising lawyer I must have been born with a silver spoon in my mouth. This assertion is wrong and those close to me know that I had a very modest upbringing.

I was born in Griffith, New South Wales. My father was a fuel tank driver and my mother had one of the most important and difficult jobs in the whole world—being a full-time mum. My family and extended family are very close. So when my Uncle Lindsay Cooper met with the late Ken Maynard, the artist of one of Australia's most famous landmarks—the Ettamogah Pub—he told Ken that he had the vision and determination to transform the cartoon into a reality and build Australia's most famous pub. We followed Uncle Coop to Albury where he built, owned and operated the first Ettamogah Pub.

Following the success of the Ettamogah Pub in Albury, my family moved to Queensland in 1989 where again Uncle Coop continued the dream and completed the Ettamogah Pub on the Sunshine Coast. Shortly after that my parents opened a local camping store in Caloundra where I often helped on the weekends and when I was not serving customers at KFC.

My parents, although enjoying politics, were never involved in any party politics and when my interest in politics arose they were not members of any political party. They had a set of ideas, beliefs and values that they wanted to impart to me, my brother, Linden, who serves in the Australian Army, and my sister, Jessica, who is working abroad in business marketing. I want to thank my mother and father for the support and encouragement they have given me over 27 years. They have helped shape the person that I am today, the values that I hold dear and the values that I now teach my daughters. They taught me to believe in myself, to strive for excellence, to work hard, to assist the needy and to develop my own set of values but never shy away from good, old-fashioned values, manners, responsibilities and obligations. These were imparted to me by my parents, my Nanna Joan and my grandparents Jacobus and Myra. I might add that I believe that we have a lot to learn from our grandparents' generation in terms of self-respect and owning up to our responsibilities and obligations as a society and the shift away from the blame game that we often play these days.

This Saturday, 25 April, is of course Anzac Day. To the diggers of the past and the present I would like to pay tribute to the dedication you continually show when serving this country and the manner in which you conduct yourselves in battles abroad.

As I stated earlier, I was a lawyer prior to entering parliament. I would like to thank the partners of Sajen Legal, Mr Tony Sowden and Mr Kyle Kimball, for the encouragement and personal support they afforded me when I decided to contest the seat of Kawana. They are articulate lawyers and have provided me with many of the tools that I feel will hold me in good stead in this House.

I draw much of my political inspiration from Sir Robert Gordon Menzies. He stated—

What may be before us we do not know, nor how long the journey. But this we do know, that Truth is our companion on that journey; that Truth is with us in the battle, and that Truth must win.

Members may be aware that this quote was made by Sir Robert Menzies in his 1939 speech advising that Australia was now at war. However, in the context of our roles and responsibilities in this House the words make sense, and I have never forgotten to apply them in every aspect of my life, and this will hold true to my role in this House.

I commit now, whether my time in this parliament is long or short, to work hard for my constituents, to hold the government to account, to contribute constructively to debate in this place and in committees, and to hope that I am able to make a contribution to the betterment of our state, and to the true welfare of the people of Queensland.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Those wishing to congratulate the honourable member might do so in the corridor so that I can see the honourable member for Indooroopilly. Before I call the honourable member for Indooroopilly, I remind honourable members that this is the honourable gentleman's first speech in this place and I therefore ask all members to extend the courtesies of this House to him. I call the honourable member for Indooroopilly.

Mr EMERSON (Indooroopilly—LNP) (8.26 pm): In a democratic society there is no greater honour than to be selected as the representative of your community in its parliament. I wish to thank the people of Indooroopilly for giving me that honour. For those who voted for me, I hope my efforts over the next years will reward their faith. For those who chose otherwise, I will be working to earn your support. In either case, I am here to serve you.

I would also like to thank my family for its support in the lead-up to and during the campaign: my wife, Robyn, whom I met more than 20 years ago when we were students at the University of Queensland at St Lucia; my daughter, Kate, who is fast becoming a young woman but it seems just yesterday that I was taking her to ballet lessons at St David's parish hall in Chelmer; and my son, Jack, who could barely reach the boom when I was teaching him capsizing training at the Oxley Sailing Club but by the end of the year I suspect will be taller than me. They endured, without complaint, the long absences and roller-coaster of emotions that a campaign inevitably brings.

I need also to mention the efforts of my campaign manager, James 'Josh' Mackay. His hard work, enthusiasm and commitment to this endeavour were crucial to its success. While James is not one to be selfish about credit, I think it is important to note that it is done and he did it. I also need to thank Councillor Jane Prentice for her friendship and encouragement over many years. Jane is a talented and tireless worker for her Walter Taylor ward. It is significant that her husband, Ian, was once member for this seat in the early eighties when it was named Toowong and fought for greater accountability of government during his time in this place.

Today I would like to outline what I see as my role in this parliament and what principles will guide me in the deliberations ahead. As we celebrate the state of Queensland's sesquicentenary, it is appropriate that we acknowledge the milestones on the historic map of our last 150 years, and indeed the times before that.

The people and lands of Indooroopilly have played a significant role in Queensland's history—from the lost convicts that guided John Oxley along the stretch of the Brisbane River, which this electorate, alone of all seats, straddles, to the world-class scientific breakthroughs achieved at the University of Queensland. It is right to recognise and revel in our great history. But I see it as incumbent on me among colleagues in this place to build positively on that past and dedicate myself to the collective task—indeed duty—to guide our state into the future. I do not use the word 'duty' lightly. It is something that has been instilled in me from an early age. I was proud to have my 81-year-old father in the chamber gallery for yesterday's opening ceremony of this 53rd Parliament. He served for many years as an officer in the Royal Australian Air Force and then after leaving the military worked tirelessly in his own local Brisbane community with numerous volunteer organisations. His efforts left an indelible impression on me. I will strive to achieve the same level of dedication, diligence and determination in serving the Indooroopilly electorate that he demonstrated over so many years.

Entering this chamber as an MP for the first time, I reflected that I was in a rare, if not unique, position. As a journalist for both the ABC and the *Australian* newspaper, I reported extensively on the proceedings of the Queensland parliament and its members. I am sure there are examples of where I commented adversely on the performance of some long-serving members in this House. However, I like to believe and hope that that reporting was fair and balanced. I now expect to be exposed to similar rigorous scrutiny by members of my former profession seated in the press gallery. I am not foolish enough to believe that reporting will always be favourable. The media has a fundamental role in keeping the Queensland public informed about the proceedings of this House. That should not be their responsibility alone. I believe that the business of the Queensland government and parliament is the business of the Queensland people.

Too often we have seen government slouch towards secrecy, skulking behind cabinet doors rather than embracing scrutiny, and parliamentary rules manipulated to thwart rather than facilitate open discussion. It is not just the media that is obstructed in its efforts. Queenslanders are stymied when they seek to discover what is being done in their name and paid for by their taxpayer funds. Open, transparent and accountable government is fundamental to good government. It is always easy to make decisions behind closed doors, free from scrutiny and the need for explanation. But when so many decisions are made in secret, it risks undermining faith in government and its processes. While there needs to be a balance between on the one hand reasonable confidentiality in order to functionally administer government and on the other hand transparency of government, I am committed during my time in this House to err on the side of openness rather than obstruction when it comes to the work of this parliament.

As for the work of parliament, I do not believe, and I do not believe that Queenslanders believe, it is the government's or parliament's job to do everything. What they do expect is that this parliament is relevant to a people who have grown up in a modern, tolerant, progressive Queensland. I believe Queenslanders want a parliament that respects the individual's right to choose how they live in a free and tolerant community. They expect their parliament to promote an economically progressive agenda that respects the right to choose in an open and competitive market. They also demand an efficient government that effectively plans and manages the state.

In my electorate of Indooroopilly I have seen firsthand the failure to plan and manage. Like other members of my community, I wonder why traffic congestion seems to worsen by the day; why there has been a failure to ensure the Western Freeway and Centenary Highway can cope with demand and not force rat-running through suburban streets; why the train line that runs through the electorate is the most overcrowded in Brisbane; why a \$26 million redevelopment of the busiest train station outside the CBD failed to provide even one park-and-ride space; why pressure builds on precious green space in the face of inappropriate and short-sighted development; why the failure to manage the economy means students graduating this year from the University of Queensland face rising unemployment, massive state debt and increasing taxes—burdens that no-one sitting in this House has seen in their lifetimes; and why each child born in Queensland in our 150th year is born with almost \$13,000 of state debt just because they are born a Queenslanders.

These are difficult economic times, but they can be made far worse by poor choices. The solution will not be achieved through the growth of government departments, the multiplication of rules and the imposition of endless regulations. I believe the solution lies with promoting individual freedom and free enterprise, a light and fair-handed government which encourages and respects private sector initiative, and low taxes. Having run my own business over the past five years, I understand the challenges of creating jobs and also how important a job is to a functioning and healthy society. I still believe our best hope for future prosperity rests, in the words of Sir Robert Menzies, with the 'divine restlessness and ambitious enterprise of the individual'. In difficult economic times, I believe the challenge for us as parliamentarians is to do more than just frighten people. We must do more than spend our energy indulging in smear, scare and false scandal. Truth and integrity must underpin our decisions and the goals we set. I believe we must be aspirational and in turn we must inspire. Our task is to explain the challenges, promote the opportunities and provide leadership.

There are two areas that I would like to particularly mention—the environment and the community. Today most reasonable people accept how important the environment is. We are all environmentalists now, whether we are farmers who long ago recognised their livelihood depended on the health of their land, Indigenous people with a deep spiritual understanding of responsibility—a responsibility that deserves recognition—or urban Queenslanders who see a clean, green environment as an essential part of their modern lifestyle. Unfortunately and increasingly, the environment is used as a wedge issue, divorced from genuine concern and hostage to political expediency.

Having warned of that risk but paying heed to that practical mantra which calls on us to act globally and think locally, I want to raise an issue in Indooroopilly. It is a growing urban electorate that desperately desires to preserve and enhance its green space if we are to ensure our children and our grandchildren room to run, play and breathe fresh air. Much to our surprise, Brisbane people have suddenly woken up and, in the face of population pressure, found ourselves short of green space. That childhood spent climbing mango trees and playing in the local bush has been replaced in many cases by a distant park you have to drive to. With the state government mandating that room be found for an additional 140,000 dwellings by 2026, this will be even more the case in future.

Those of us who love the local communities at Indooroopilly understand that growth has to be accommodated, but so does our lifestyle. I call on the state and federal governments to reserve considerable tracts of land for public use in perpetuity. They can do this in Indooroopilly by not selling the Alan Fletcher Research Station in Sherwood and the CSIRO and DPI land in Long Pocket. That land is owned by taxpayers. It is an investment in the future and, in the view of many of my constituents, a contributor to future lifestyle. It should not be sold off for quick funds. No-one is making extra land. Once it is lost, it is lost forever. This is an opportunity which must not be lost. Losing this land is a price too great to pay.

We all understand the importance of community. My own journey to this place has involved a longstanding commitment as a community advocate. My wife, Robyn, and I co-founded the St Lucia Community Association seven years ago and for more than two decades together we have fought to make our local community a better place—over the years working with bush care, sporting, education, crime prevention and history groups. I know I can and will rely on her guidance in the years ahead and she would argue that good community groups keep you honest and grounded. They are the ones who pull on gloves and pick up mattocks to clear weeds and protect suburban waterways, work with local police to make our streets and homes safer and get our kids away from the computer and out onto the playing field each weekend. These committed and caring groups will be central among my advisers and the electorate of Indooroopilly has more than 200 such groups, all staffed by volunteers working to making their community a better place.

Despite the efforts of these many volunteers to support their local community, there is in our society a sense of a loss of community in the face of change and uncertainty. That provides a challenge for us who sit in this parliament. Social commentator Hugh Mackay warns that the sense of change and loss of community cohesion tempts us to impose a kind of regulated morality on society where we take the short cut to good behaviour. We ban, we regulate, we legislate, we control. This exposes us to the risk of limiting our freedoms. The essence of morality lies in our freedom to make moral choices. If we impose too many regulations in areas previously left to the dictates of our consciences, we may discourage people from thinking that moral choices have to be made. I accept that strongly held views on matters may never be reconciled. It was John Stuart Mill who argued that exchanges between individuals should be based on free will and mutual tolerance of different moralities. He said—

... the only purpose for which power can be rightly exercised over any member of a civilised community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others.

For myself, as I deliberate on the many decisions I will make in my time as a member of parliament, it is about recognising that there must be a limit to the interference by government in people's lives.

In conclusion, let me again thank the people of the Indooroopilly electorate for granting me the honour to be their member of parliament. I hope that my efforts here will ensure that for all Queenslanders in the years ahead, to quote Menzies words, 'life is free and its horizons wide'.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Before I call the honourable member for Redlands, I remind the House that this is the honourable member's first speech in this House. I therefore ask that all members on both sides extend every courtesy to the new member.

Mr DOWLING (Redlands—LNP) (8.43 pm): Thank you, Mr Speaker, fellow members, family, friends, guests, Queenslanders. I also recognise in the gallery Bob Harper, a former member. It is with great pride and humility—and we have heard that a number of times today—that I rise in this House to deliver a maiden speech as the member for Redlands in this, the 53rd Parliament of Queensland. I begin by expressing my gratitude to the residents of Redlands who supported me and voted for me and the party that I represent, the LNP. Thank you for trusting me to be your voice here in this place.

While preparing to step up for the first time, I found myself reflecting on the journey here and those who shared that journey. I was born in England almost 48 years ago in the midlands city of Leicester. I was born to Irish parents, Peter and Brigid. Dad was from Dublin and mum was from Clifden. Mum was here yesterday to witness the opening and the swearing in ceremonies of this parliament—something I am certain she would never have imagined when the five of us arrived in Melbourne almost 40 years ago as ten-pound Poms: mum, dad, my brother, Michael, and my sister, Sheena. It did not take long before we moved away from Melbourne. As anyone in Australia knows, Melbourne in July is not blessed with the subtropical climate that we were looking forward to. So we travelled north to Brisbane and eventually settled in Loganholme which, back then, was out in the wilds. I have very fond memories of growing up in the area that I now represent, with our original family home now only about 100 metres outside the electorate. It is very satisfying and gratifying to have such an affinity to this place.

As a young boy, I went fishing and camping along the banks of the Logan River. I sailed out to Coochiemudlo Island on a catamaran, holidayed on Straddie regularly and took trips to spook hill at Mount Cotton where you would swear that you could see your car rolling up the hill, which is how it got the name spook hill. I used to go courting at what is now Capalaba Kmart. It used to be a drive-in cinema, fellow members—a long time ago. Also, there were late-night laps around Mount Cotton and the mini hill climbs. It was a great adventure. It was a different place back then and it was a different time. At that time I did not fully appreciate the value of schooling or education. Like so many others at that time, I could not wait to get out of school. I left school at the end of grade 10 with my junior certificate in hand and set out to find a job.

When you left Beenleigh State High School at the age of 16, you had very few choices from a work point of view. You could work at the local meatworks—Teys Brothers out at Beenleigh; you could go to GMH, the Holden factory out at Acacia Ridge; or you could find a trade. I was fortunate enough to get an apprenticeship as a painter and decorator—a trade that saw me owning my own business, employing up to 20 men and more, and later as a supervisor, foreman and leading hand on some of the major projects around the south-east corner. After swinging a paintbrush for 10 years or so I decided I needed a change—something different, something a little easier. So I worked for 12 months labouring on the New South Wales rail line at Yeerongpilly cleaning trains and being part of their derailment crew—certainly not easier.

With a passion for radio and a face for it, a career in radio was a given—or at least that was what I was thinking. I became involved in community radio at 101FM Radio Logan, where I volunteered for approximately seven years. However, my next career was not to be in radio; it was to be in sales working with some of the best-known products in the world and for some of the major companies, such as SC Johnson, Castrol, Pennzoil and Valvoline.

My working life took a fairly significant change in March 2000, but before I continue it is important that I fill in some of the other pieces of my life. I was only 14 or 15 when I first met Helen. I did not know it then, but she had me in her sights—or at least that is what I believe. It was not until two or three years later that I actually noticed her and it took another few years before her plans came together and we were married in 1982. I was 20 and Helen was 17. Twenty-seven years later, she is still putting up with me, loving me, advising me and being a great sounding-board for life. Helen also blessed me with two children: one I refer to as No. 1 daughter, who is 23, and the other, No. 1 son, who is almost 18. While I have been busy working Helen has managed to run the family home, raise the children and work full-time for most of those 27 years. I do not know how she does it. Thank you, darling. She is here tonight.

Helen and I have always been involved in our local community through volunteering. I have already mentioned 101FM Radio Logan. Some of the others are the school P&Cs, obviously enough, where our children were educated, neighbourhood watches, progress associations, the SES up on Mount Tamborine, Meals on Wheels, Clean Up Australia days, the Cancer Fund and many, many more. We have struggled over the years—from living in flats, caravans and under relatives' homes to having our first proper home at Kingston. Then we moved to Mount Tamborine and then to Victoria Point, where we have lived for 16 years.

Helen and I embrace change, and as you get to know me you may notice three things; you may even hear me say these from time to time. I always see the glass as half full—I am forever the eternal optimist—I believe that if you are not part of the solution you are the problem and for evil to flourish good men do nothing. I realise they are all very cliché. They are simple, but honest.

That pretty much brings us to March 2000. March 2000 led me to this place because in March 2000 I was fortunate enough to be elected to the Redland Shire Council. I was privileged to be elected three times, in 2000, 2004 and again in 2008. During my nine years on council I chaired the Development Assessment Committee from 2002 to 2006 and was deputy mayor from 2006 to 2008. I enjoyed my time on council but felt I could contribute more for my community in this place. Being forced to resign from council and to run for state parliament was a personal risk, but for evil to flourish good men do nothing and I promise that will be the last cliché in this speech. What possesses someone to do that? What is the motivation for someone to do that? My motivation is my extended family, my friends, my LNP branch and a community that believes in me and the party that I represent. Those same people also believe that there is vast room for improvement in the Queensland parliament. Those same people believed that they did not have a voice in this place so they asked me, via the ballot box, to be that voice to ensure that they are heard.

The election was close, with the final count taking 13 days before a winner was declared. Thirty-four votes is not many, but the message was clear. The incumbent had a 6.7 per cent swing against him and an 9.8 per cent swing against him in the primary. The people who make up what is the Redlands are from Thornlands, Victoria Point, Sheldon, Mount Cotton, Coochiemudlo Island, Russell Island, Karragarra, Macleay, Lamb and Purulpa islands, Redland Bay, Carbrook and Cornubia. I could speak for 20 minutes on each of those locations, but I will not. I will endeavour to enlighten the House on all of the attributes of those communities during the term.

The issues that are important to them are important to me. They are the issues also raised in the Governor's address yesterday. They are health and the lack of services in the past 11 years, people being turned away and unable to be admitted to hospitals or care facilities. They are infrastructure or lack of planning and delivery in the past 11 years. We have already heard about how traffic is ever escalating. They are education and the system that is letting our children down. They are the public transport system that does not arrive or, if it does, when it arrives it is full and it does not connect with other transport services. It is about law and order and it is about water. It is very much an issue for Redlands residents. I echo the sentiments my friend and member for Kawana made during his comments.

I developed a very real sense of how important this campaign was and my mantra became 'I must not fail my community'. We must not fail our community. That is why I stood and that is why Helen allowed me to risk our lifestyle. That is why my sister, Sheena Hewlett, and her husband, Lance, stood on the side of the road, rain or shine. It is why they stood beside me in shopping centres, listening to Redlands issues. It is why every day there were 20 or 30 people wearing LNP T-shirts who were passionate about positive change needed for Redlands. It is why party members like Lee Stone and Bob Barnes held roadside information booths. They are why I am here today. It is because of Gary Fisher and his coordinating skills that we had booth workers. On election day we had over 150 people on the ground.

I will be the voice of the Redlands and the many communities that make up the Redlands. There are six gems dotted out in Moreton Bay that are part of my electorate. They are the bay islands of Coochiemudlo, Russell, Macleay, Lamb, Karragarra and Purulpa. They are home to over 5,000 people. Those people feel disenfranchised. They feel they are not being heard. My mainland residents are telling me that they, too, have been neglected. I will be their voice from today and for the life of this 53rd Parliament and beyond, if they so choose.

There are so many issues that are vitally important to mums and dads, families and all the people whom we represent. It is my duty to raise issues in this place that are relevant to my community and to support people like Paul Stanley in his crusade against youth violence. Paul Stanley is the driving force behind the forming and ongoing work of the Matthew Stanley Foundation, a foundation whose work I support and will continue to. I will be more than happy to discuss in detail at any time with fellow members from either side of this House who may not be aware of the foundation and its work. This issue should have a priority in this House.

Another issue has been raised by Redlands residents who watched with interest the recent election and the system of voting, wanting to understand how it works. Members of this House should be concerned that there is no need for proof of identity when a person presents themselves at a polling station, other than your name and address. It has also been brought to my attention that it is more difficult to rent a video movie. In Queensland to hire a \$5 movie you have to prove you are who you claim to be, yet no such process exists when casting a vote. To my way of thinking, that has the potential to undermine our democratic process and our democratic system. It should sound alarm bells in a civilised modern society. We need to ensure that our electoral process is robust and beyond question.

Another local issue is the fishing exclusion zones in Moreton Bay and their negative impact on local businesses and family recreation. The commercial fishermen are also concerned about the licence buy-back process and the negative environmental impacts that is having today in our bay. I am concerned, as is my community, about the shortage of beds and healthcare facilities available for

Redlands residents. With an ageing community and being a most desirable location to retire to, senior health care will need to be a priority for my community and this House. It would take all night to raise all the issues that were raised with me by my community.

Let me close by taking this opportunity to thank those involved in my being elected to this place. I thank my family, who had to put up with me not being there for the last few months. To my wife, Helen, who I often refer to as 'the minister for war and finance, love and council', I say thank you for being there, for backing me and for standing with me. I thank my now adult and largely independent children who supported me through this campaign and the previous three council campaigns, my daughter, Peta-Sharee, and my son, Callum. I love you both. To mum, Evelyn Dowling, thank you for being a mum. To my sister, Sheena, and her husband, Lance, who have been my biggest fans and campaigners through all four wins, thank you. Without your love and support I could not do what I do.

I thank my campaign director and committee. Mitch Redford was responsible for an amazing local campaign. I thank Gary Fisher, whom I mentioned earlier; Michael Hewitt; Lee Stone, who was responsible for some of the loudest, proudest, in-your-face positive campaigning ever seen in the Redlands; and her family who mobilised like an army. I thank Gayle Nemeth and Danny Galanti aka 'Automan'. They planned and implemented a winning strategy at a local level. Thank you all in the LNP head office. You were the engine room of my campaign. Your backing and guidance was invaluable. You are an amazing team and you deserve to be proud of what the LNP has achieved in less than a year. Thank you to my branch who endorsed my candidacy late last year. I thank the many clubs, groups, organisations and schools who encouraged me as the campaign rolled on.

I thank the churches in our community that were praying for leadership in the Redlands. The priest from my own parish of Saint Rita's, Fr Leon Burke, had his own private torment. He never did let on who he voted for as he had two candidates as parishioners. It will remain in the confessional, I am sure. I thank the business community that supported change in the Redlands. I thank the people who wanted to help, who wanted to buy raffle tickets and organise local letterbox drops. You made the difference of 34 votes. To the workers on the day, your diligence and passion paid off and I thank you.

There are so many other volunteers that it would take another 20 minutes to call the roll. I will try, as quickly as I can, to run through a number of those volunteers: Kurt, Jane, Jeff, Mark, Crystal, Audrey, Neil, Steve, Greg, Gary, Mark Robinson, my electorate neighbour, the member for Cleveland, Bill, Rod, Peter, Mark, John, Craig, Hailey, Alan, Sue, David, Michael, Doug, Graham, Bob, Joan, Denis, Phil, Karen, Albert, Bob, Tony, Adrian, Brett, Graham, Shane, Paul, Amanda, Brad, Lisa, who was omitted from a previous maiden speech, Jill, Louise, Bruce, Mike, Barry, Mal, Catherine, KW, Chris, Lynn, Linda, Fran, Colin, Ann-Marie, Craig, Danny, Elizabeth, Tim, Paula, Margaret, Stephen, Neville, Janet, Rod, Warren, Val, Jo, Dick, Elaine, Donna, Murray, and Bob Harper, who was instrumental in the win. Finally, I thank the residents of Redlands for their support and their trust. I will do my utmost to serve them well in this 53rd Parliament, and I thank you, Mr Speaker, and members one and all, for the respect shown tonight. Thank you.

Ms DARLING (Sandgate—ALP) (9.00 pm): Congratulations on your appointment, Mr Speaker. It is lovely to see you up there in the big chair. I am thrilled to be serving in this place for a second term representing the people of the electorate of Sandgate. I welcome the residents of Northwind Estate, Bald Hills, to my electorate who, along with the residents of the suburbs of Fitzgibbon, Bracken Ridge, Brighton, Deagon, Shorncliffe, Taigum and, of course, Sandgate, make up my electorate. I pledge to serve all of the voters of my electorate with an eager mind, an honest heart, boundless energy and unflinching compassion.

Listening to my new colleagues deliver their inaugural speeches in this House, I am reminded of my maiden speech and the direction I set in my first term. I spoke of reducing the gap between the haves and the have-nots, and I have indeed spent much of my time fighting injustices, fixing problems and pushing for a better deal for all of my constituents. In these uncertain economic times it is essential that I keep up this fight. I will be focusing my energies over the coming term on ensuring the workers of my electorate have choices, support and training and on ensuring students of this electorate have choices, support and a decent learning environment to put them in the best position to find work upon graduation.

I pay my respects to the wonderful teachers in all of the schools, both public and private, in the Sandgate electorate. I also acknowledge the hardworking small business owners in my area and I look forward to working with them all to offer information and support as well as listening to ideas that will help ease the pressures on small business. Two particular business owners in Bracken Ridge, Michael and Jenny White of the Bracken Ridge Tavern and Rod Chiapello of Bracken Ridge McDonald's, are particularly valuable sources of feedback for me. I appreciate their advice and support and I look forward to continuing to work with them.

Congratulations to our wonderful Sandgate & District Chamber of Commerce, which held the famous Bluewater Festival over the Easter weekend. It is where we have the start of the Brisbane-Gladstone Yacht Race. It is completely put on by volunteers and it is a wonderful chamber event.

Mrs Cunningham interjected.

Ms DARLING: It ends in quite a good place, member for Gladstone, I agree, but it does start somewhere slightly better!

The Bligh Labor government will create new jobs, will respond to the areas of need and will invest where needed to help Queenslanders ride out this recession. I have seen many lives turned around following the rebuilding, training and community employment programs offered by organisations such as SANDBAG, Jabiru and Kurbingui and, of course, funded by the Queensland government. The Bligh Labor government will be rolling out the Green Army program as well as continuing the \$17 billion infrastructure program that will create new jobs while delivering essential roads, bridges, energy and health facilities.

My job is to keep the needs of the people of Sandgate at the fore during development of policies and implementation of programs. I always enjoy campaigning because of the opportunity to discuss government policies and ideas with local people. I particularly thank the groups in my electorate that provide very valuable sources of feedback: the Sandgate Senior Citizens Centre, particularly a couple of lovely old gentlemen who really keep me on my toes and ask me all sorts of interesting policy questions from around the state; the Pensioners and Superannuants League; the National Seniors; all the many sports groups, P&Cs, P&Fs and churches in my area; Bracken Ridge Lions and all of the service clubs in the area such as the Sandgate Zonta Club, Bayside Community Options and Ladybirds. I enjoyed visiting so many of my community organisations, as I do at all times regularly throughout the term, but it was a wonderful opportunity during the election campaign to really have time to sit down and have a cup of tea and discuss the issues of importance to people.

I acknowledge that elections are often very difficult for people as opposing candidates make varying claims and the voters must discern fact from fiction or, more likely, evidence from opinion. The Queensland Children's Hospital was one such issue, and I fully understand the concerns raised by mums and dads when I was on the campaign trail. I must say that I was disgusted that an issue as important as children's health was politicised and central to a scare campaign perpetuated by the LNP. To make matters worse, the doctors and specialists that we look to for advice were arguing publicly about many aspects of the Children's Hospital plan. How could parents make an informed decision in such an environment? I thank the many, many parents who took the time to raise their issues with me regarding children's health. I appreciate the feedback and I will be discussing all of these very legitimate concerns with the health minister.

Once I had the opportunity to explain the government's plan for the Queensland Children's Hospital, which will comprise a new single tertiary hospital and a network of paediatric specialists at hospitals around the state, most people were happy with the plan. There were concerns about the timing of the closure of the current Royal Children's Hospital. This will not close until the new hospital and new emergency department in Chermside are up and running. There were also concerns about transportation to the new site. I will provide detailed road routes and train and bus timetables to my electorate in time for the opening of the new hospital and I will also take those ideas that I was presented on patient and family transport to the health minister.

There were also concerns about the research facilities, and I look forward to taking a delegation of constituents to discuss these with the health minister. I truly believe that the sickest children, especially those with multiple conditions requiring the services of several specialists, will benefit enormously from the new hospital. Any mum would know that you would go to the corners of the earth for the best treatment for your children. I would be more than happy to travel an extra four kilometres for the best care for my kids.

I have enjoyed working over the last term with a wonderful and dedicated team of community professionals as we explored the needs and opportunities of community services in the electorate. We have become firm friends, and I pledge to continue to battle for recognition, extra support and extra funding for your important programs. In particular I will be pushing the case for our family and domestic violence counselling service operated by SANDBAG. As job losses increase, so, too, does the pressure on families, and the services offered by SANDBAG help the whole family to heal.

I can tell my constituents that I heard their concerns about public transport loud and clear. I will be working to see the extra carparking at Bald Hills and Sandgate railway stations delivered as soon as possible, as well as working to address the need for more buses and trains on the north side. Sandgate electorate residents also told me that they were very keen to play their part in helping reduce greenhouse gas emissions and were keen to see government programs to encourage this in practical ways. I will continue to take your great ideas forward, because the best ideas come from those who are keen to make a difference.

I am excited about the housing and lifestyle opportunities that the Fitzgibbon Urban Development Area offers, and I will continue to communicate with local residents and represent their views on the ideal community structure. There is great potential to also improve recreational facilities like the outdoor recreational areas and protected bushland planned for Fitzgibbon and hopefully a new sporting club for Bracken Ridge which is currently in the planning pipeline.

I also congratulate my colleague the honourable member for Aspley, Tracy Davis, on her win. The Fitzgibbon Urban Development Area straddles our two electorates, and I look forward to working with her on a great result for both of our local areas. I will miss the former member for Aspley, Bonnie Barry, who was a great friend and mentor. Tracy has big shoes to fill but I know that she, like me, has the best interests of her electorate at heart and that we can ignore political differences and, as two local women representatives, can work together for northside residents.

Finally, I thank the people who helped me throughout my last term and the election campaign. The passion and energy of the members of the Australian Labor Party never cease to amaze me. The members of my three local branches are funny, proactive, intelligent people who keep me challenged and in touch with local happenings. I thank them all for their hard work and dedication to the Labor cause. My campaign team had a mix of experienced old hands and new, enthusiastic members and I appreciated the buzz of our meetings and the fun of the campaign. Thanks to my campaign manager, Graham Slatter, for his steady and calm influence.

My office staff, Di, Lewis and Leanne, kept me sane, on track and always out and about. I thank them for their tolerance and endurance. Again I thank the electors of Sandgate for putting their faith in me and giving me the opportunity to finish some important projects and to start some new ones.

Finally, my family are my home, my sanity and my solace. I am married to my best friend and the love of my life, John. With him I have two beautiful, intelligent children, Jack and Billie, who are growing into thoughtful and interesting human beings. I love you all and I thank you for completing me and allowing me to give so much to so many other people.

Mrs PRATT (Nanango—Ind) (9.10 pm): I rise to give this address-in-reply to the Governor in this the 53rd Parliament. In so doing, I would first like to acknowledge the fact that the electorate of Nanango has changed significantly due to the recent redistribution. For those who recently joined us here in the Nanango electorate, the word 'Nanango' means waterhole. When white settlers first moved to the area, there was an Aboriginal tribe nearby and Nanango was the name of one of the head men of the tribe. Legend has it that the settlers made Nanango a king and they had his name engraved on a copper plate which he wore around his neck on a piece of green hide.

Over time, the copper plate was lost but it was finally rediscovered in the possession of one of the original settler families who agreed to sell it to the Nanango council for \$2,000. I think that was probably a pretty cheap bargain. It now rests proudly in the local council chambers so anybody who wishes to visit the township of Nanango can view where the word 'Nanango' came from.

At this time, I would like to mention the constituents who were lost to me in the redistribution. They are the people of Woodford, Mount Mee, parts of D'Aguilar, Bellthorpe and the surrounding districts. These people have been very good to me over the years and many became firm friends. I thank them very sincerely for their friendship, which was hesitant at first because they were fairly fixed on belonging to a party, but over the years through getting to know me and realising the effort I put in, they came to trust me and I believe our friendship became a very good, strong working one which was for the betterment of the communities, I hope.

To the people in the new areas which stretch from Cabarlah, Meringandan, Crows Nest, Kulpi, Quinalow, Haden, Goombungee, Cooranga North and districts, Cooyar, Perseverance, Acland and Bowenville areas—although we have yet to really get to know each other, I hope in time our friendships will also grow. I did not get out to that area as much as I would have liked, due to the passing of my mum. Mum was one of my greatest supporters and at this point in time I still have not come to terms with her loss. These new areas have received a little rainfall but it is by no means enough. They have shown me in the last three months, however, that theirs is a beautiful area and I will be very proud to represent them in this place.

The people also are very beautiful people, for I am a stranger to them yet they opened their doors to me, they offered me cups of tea. One time during the campaign, I was in a town that I did not know and I was going to a function there later that night. I let it slip during a conversation early in the day that I would probably change for the ball in the public toilet—as I often do when I go to some places due to the lack of time—but they sought me out and offered me their home to have a shower. I thought to myself that these people are true country people, they offer true hospitality, and I thank them for that. That was not an isolated incident; it happened quite often. So I believe that I have the best, the most beautiful and the most generous constituents and I am very grateful for that.

At this point, I will pledge to them and to the whole of the Nanango electorate, as I do at the beginning of each term, that I will represent them, the people of the Nanango electorate, with freedom from outside control and freedom from any personal objectives. I will serve them as I may to the best of my ability. In the recent election, people were able to separate rhetoric from reality, personality from performance, and I thank them for that most sincerely.

As an Independent and without the formal structure of a party, it is often a daunting prospect to man 39 election booths, as members might imagine. It is a lot of people. A campaign office has to be manned also. Hundreds of corflutes had to be distributed over a large area. To run a smooth campaign

can be very daunting for anyone with a support system around them, but the Independents rely very much on the generosity of so many people. For me, those people came out of the woodwork; they were people I had never seen before.

I have always had a solid team, but over the last 11 years many have moved away, have suffered ill health or passed on. I would like to acknowledge their efforts in the past, and for all of those who regretted they could not assist me this year I would like to let them know that their place was ably filled and, although we missed them, our ranks were full and overflowing.

As I said, many were complete strangers to me but they offered to place corflutes in their yard. This was particularly true of those who lived in the Somerset Regional Council area, which had banned all corflutes except on properties where the people were known. People saw this as an unfair advantage for the entrenched party, which in that conservative area was the National Party but is now the LNP. Many people found that discriminatory against me as an Independent, discriminatory against the Greens candidate and discriminatory against the Labor candidate.

So it was a case of people being quite willing to put their hand up just to make sure there was a little bit of fairness. It was the only regional council that did ban corflutes on Main Roads property, and it was the first time in five campaigns that I had ever come across that. I must admit that this election was a lot cheaper because the councils did not impose large fees to put my corflutes out, which was quite helpful and I was grateful not to have spent even more money than I did.

Among all those who helped me, there are a few people I would particularly like to thank because they did perform an outstanding effort for me. Debbie Quilty and Mary Weildon operated my campaign office free of charge for the whole time. Mary has suffered ill health but she was still prepared to come forward and work hard. I thank Jim Hughes, an elderly gentleman who packed up his little truck virtually the day after the election and headed out on a long, extended holiday. He had put his holiday off for the period of the campaign so he could work with me. He put out all my corflutes and recovered them, and I have to thank him for that. He would not even think of me paying for his fuel.

One particular man I would like to mention is a very close friend who passed away from cancer only days after the election. He insisted on leaving his hospital bed in Brisbane to work on my booth. He has been with me a long time and was not going to miss this election. He used strength he should have saved for himself for me, and I will be forever humbled to know that someone believed in me so much that his last efforts were to see me re-elected. So I say: rest in peace, mate. You know who you are.

I would also like to thank Jim and Darlene. Jim was recently knocked from his motorbike and suffered considerable damage to his knee and he has had a lot of difficulty hobbling around, but he and his lovely partner, Darlene, insisted on travelling from Ian Rickuss's electorate to help me. Jim has always said that he was my lucky charm. Jim in fact is my ex-husband, and his booth result was the first to be phoned in. I have never won that booth before so perhaps he was my lucky charm this time.

My profound thanks and gratitude must also go to my husband, Tony, who puts up with me being away most of every year but more so at election time. I believe he has actually kept the baked beans industry alive single-handedly while I have been away. I think perhaps it is the only thing he has learnt to cook, but after 11 years I still have hope for him. Probably the truth is that he enjoys the space when I am not around.

Mr Reeves: Does he have it with toast?

Mrs PRATT: I am not sure he knows how to cook toast, to be quite honest, but he does make great pancakes on a Sunday morning, so I am not going to knock him one bit. Tony has always believed in me. From the moment he met me he believed he saw in me something that I have never seen in myself. As most members would probably know, I am not the most confident person in this place. Life experiences have taught me not to put myself out there, but people in my electorate believed in me. They have elected me to represent them. Tony believed in me. He said, 'If you don't have a go, you will regret whatever it is you haven't had a go at.' He is right. You must challenge yourself in life, and so I do that for him and for the people of my electorate. They will get true and fair representation, not tainted by other loyalties or by anything else. My loyalty is 100 per cent to the people in my electorate.

Lastly, I would like to thank my staff, Kelly and Val. Val is my right arm. Without her I am not sure how my office would run, as I am so often on the road. She is Kelly's guidance, and Kelly fills in the gaps that Val cannot fill. To both of them, who have been with me for quite some time, I say thank you because I know you have a very hard job. I know what you put up with before I come out the door or meet with constituents. I know that there is not anything that you would not do for me either.

Mr Deputy Speaker, as you can see, I have a lot to be grateful for. The opportunity to be standing in this place for a fifth term—and, believe me, it is five more than I ever thought I would have when I first stood in 1998—and truly representing the will of the people of the Nanango electorate is a very humbling experience. There are many issues confronting the Nanango electorate. As in the past, I will continue to raise them in this House and with the ministers.

I would like to congratulate Mr Speaker on his election as Speaker. I trust that he will not lose his wit and his humour but enjoy it along with the positive running of this confrontational arena. I congratulate the ministers on being appointed to their ministries and look forward to a positive working relationship with each of you for the betterment of not only my electorate and community but also of the whole of Queensland. I ask that ministers remember there is more to Queensland than the south-east corner. I invite each of you to come to the Nanango electorate and soak up the wonders of it. Come and see for yourselves the needs that exist there so that they may be addressed in an appropriate and timely manner.

I thank previous Queensland governments for the multimillions of dollars which have flown into my electorate each and every year, and I hope that continues, though I would appreciate it if the government would not mind topping it up a little bit each year greater than CPI. The communities are thriving. You only have to come to my electorate to see the exceptional growth that is occurring. It is time that serious consideration be given to a greenfields hospital site in the South Burnett. Kingaroy is a regional centre, with the nearest hospital for any specialist services being Toowoomba, an hour and a half away. As I have listened to speeches up in my room and have heard of people having to go only four kilometres down the road to a hospital and having choices of hospitals, I have been green with envy. I cannot help that. I know that envy is a sin, but I have been green with envy. It would be wonderful to be able to offer those sorts of services to my community.

Most members would not realise that people travelling in my community to the city are elderly. They need the services of specialists. They are forced onto roads that they are totally unfamiliar with, are not comfortable with and find totally scary. They leave at an unreasonable hour in the morning, often at four and five in the morning hopefully to avoid the traffic only to realise they have not. They are totally stressed. The conditions are worse when they get there, and they have to come home in almost a state of panic because they are afraid.

I do not believe it is beneficial to our transport corridors to have people in that kind of condition travelling on the roads, possibly endangering the lives of others. They are good drivers in the country but they are not used to city driving. I think it is time that places like Kingaroy, which are growing at an exceptional rate, are considered for a new hospital, better facilities and perhaps specialists to accommodate all the people who have to spend hours travelling on our roads. It is a pretty scary thing for elderly people.

I would like to quickly raise a couple more issues. There will be lots of time over the next three years to raise them again and I will use every opportunity to do so. Fluoride is an issue very close to the hearts of people in the government. Although I will not say that I do not want fluoride in my water supply, a lot of people do think that. However, at this point in time Kingaroy, Nanango and other areas in the Nanango electorate cannot accommodate fluoride in their water supply. They need infrastructure upgrades that will cost millions of dollars which they do not have. Kingaroy's infrastructure needs upgrading. Nanango does not have any infrastructure at all. So it will be an impost on those councils which ratepayers will be forced to pay.

I want to raise amalgamation costs. I heard this morning that many people seem to be accommodating the cost quite well. There are many who are not and it is becoming a huge impost, again being picked up by the taxpayer. What I cannot understand, and what most people in council cannot understand, is how before amalgamation a combined audit fee for four councils—and I am referring to four councils which I know of at the moment—was \$99,000. Now that those councils have been amalgamated it is going up to \$200,000. Why is this the case when amalgamation was supposed to mean it would be cheaper? Now that councils have amalgamated they have to pay payroll tax—again, a cost that will have to be paid by the taxpayers. These added costs are virtually bringing some councils to their knees. I would ask that that be reviewed in the not-too-distant future or that government at least talk to the councils.

An ongoing issue which I hope this time will be addressed by the police minister is that of the Kingaroy Police Station, which has been known as the dump of the month since I was first elected. Nothing other than a bit of painting has been done which is holding the once termite infested walls together. It needs to be addressed. I have asked about this issue on several occasions and I am asking again.

I know most members are sick to death of me talking about the D'Aguilar Highway, but I will be on and on about that. We have had a lot of work done on it, and I acknowledge and thank the government for it, but the amount of traffic is breaking down the road. Roadworks cannot keep up with the amount of traffic. It needs to be addressed. I know Main Roads have been working with me and I thank them for it, but it is an ongoing problem and we have to continue to fix it.

Time is running out. There are a lot of issues in the South Burnett which I am very familiar with, but there are just as many issues in the new areas, on the Downs, out to Meringandan Dam and right through the area of Crows Nest which need to be addressed as well. I will become as familiar with those as I have over the last 11 years with the South Burnett and the Brisbane Valley. They are beautiful areas. They have a lot of attractions. Each and every member in this House is invited to come to my

electorate. Come and test our olives, our cheese, our wine. We, not Gatton, are the fruit and bread basket of Queensland. You will not starve. You will get great beef. You will get the best wines. You will get just about anything you want in the South Burnett and enjoy it.

A lot of the laws that this government has passed in previous years have affected rural electorates severely. When I stand up here and tell the House that someone is being affected, that the law is crippling people and putting them out of work, I am not grinding any axe. I am not a member of any political party. I am telling gospel. These people are hurting. They need their issues addressed. This may not be hurting members but it is affecting a chain of industries. No matter which industry the government picks on in the rural sector it has flow-on effects. The dominos fall. Just because members cannot see it does not mean that it does not exist. Please listen to the Independents. As Independents we do not have an axe to grind but we have constituents we care about greatly—they are real people. I congratulate the incoming members. I hope you enjoy your time. Do not get too cynical. Represent your communities and not a party.

Mr KNUTH (Dalrymple—LNP) (9.30 pm): It is with great honour that I make my first speech as a member of the 53rd Parliament of Queensland. I am a proud Australian and a proud Queenslander. As Anzac Day draws near, I would like to honour those who have fought and fallen to preserve our flag and our Constitution. By their sacrifices we have inherited freedom and prosperity to this day. These brave men and women are the true heroes of our nation. I would like to honour those who are, to this day, still fighting to safeguard the futures of people in some of most volatile nations.

I wish to acknowledge those who are most important to me. My wife, Heather, who has helped share the burden that all members and candidates endure before, during and after an election campaign. I also acknowledge my children, Anna, Joel, Daniel and Naomi, who have been a wonderful inspiration and whom I am so proud of and love dearly.

I would like to thank my electorate council chairman, Sue Bennetto, Pipi Knuth, Verna Webb and Jim Pritchard for their ongoing support year in, year out. Richard Hughes, I truly appreciate your personal support in the most southern part of the Dalrymple electorate, Moranbah. I would also like to mention the many booth workers in Charters Towers, Moranbah, Pentland, Greenvale and Ravenswood.

I would also like to acknowledge Jeff Brown, Kevin Ranke and Roy and Muriel Rankine. I make special mention of Lady Flo Bjelke-Petersen, who visited the Tablelands with her friend Lady Pearl Logan. Her influence on the Tablelands was invaluable. I would also like to thank my parliamentary colleagues who supported me during the campaign. I would also like to add my thanks to the booth workers on the Tablelands at Butcher's Creek, Dimbulah, Evelyn Central, Herberton, Innot Hot Springs, Kairi, Millaa Millaa, Mutchilba, Mount Garnet, Ravenshoe, Tolga, Walkamin and Yungaburra and all the others who helped throughout the electorate at other booths. Your support was greatly appreciated.

I am proud to represent a rural electorate. I am a rural and regional Queenslander through and through. It gives me great pleasure to get out and mix with the people who, despite great adversity, continue to work hard for their families and for this great state. The Dalrymple electorate stretches from Walkamin in the north to Moranbah in the south. The electorate is 1,000 kilometres long and covers an area of 105,000 square kilometres. It takes an average of 12 hours to travel from one end of the electorate to the other.

I have been travelling from one end of the electorate to the other for some time now and have raised in this House some of the issues that are affecting residents. In the north we face issues such as the closure of DPI research stations, the unwanted and impractical 2025 plan, the closure of the Upper Barron State School, the downgrading of our health services and the shocking state of our roads. These issues and many others are important to the residents of the north. The government must realise that it governs for all people, not just those who live in the south of the state.

There are a diverse number of industries in the electorate—the agriculture and dairy industry in the north to coalmining in the south. Each and every person has different issues and different opinions, but they are all united in their call for a separate state of North Queensland. They are tired of their hard earned tax dollars and the region's gross revenue being sunk into the south-east corner of the state and their issues ignored and their quality of life interfered with due to the decisions made by the southern majority. As a member representing a rural electorate I am passionate about a fair go for those who live and toil in the northern part of our state. Ordinary people, from bush battlers and miners to the townspeople, farmers and cockies, are united on this. I would be happy to work with a committee to help drive this push.

The Upper Barron State School did not open this year. It is a beautiful school with scenic surrounds, including a new outdoor arena that cost tens of thousands of dollars to erect. The school was fully supported by the P&C, and the residents could not believe that their school would be closed. They were planning to celebrate a milestone—the centenary of the school—but that was never going to happen under this government, which does not appreciate the value of small schools. This was an absolutely disgraceful decision which left many families devastated. Schoolchildren are now forced to spend up to two hours a day on a school bus travelling to and from school when they have a wonderful

school at their door. The LNP committed to reopen the school so that children could continue to learn in one of the most beautiful areas in Queensland. I call on the minister to visit this school and community. I believe the minister would be dismayed over the closing of this school.

Greater incentive packages need to be provided to encourage more nurses, doctors and dentists to work in regional, rural and remote areas. There is a continual high turnover of staff which puts pressure on other nursing and healthcare staff and patients. If we lose a doctor or a dentist it can take up to three to four months to find a replacement. Some people have no choice but to make an 800-kilometre round trip to get a tooth fixed.

The LNP had plans to introduce hospital boards, which would give local communities the option to prioritise services and have them returned to rural and regional hospitals. Common sense says that this would have relieved the increasing pressure on metropolitan hospitals.

Many communities in my electorate rely heavily on primary industries. It is no exaggeration to say that so many people who live in rural electorates are frustrated and angry at being gutted by a government that implements antirural policies such as the latest move to prevent the clearing of regrowth. This decision has nothing to do with science, nor has it anything to do with the environment. This decision is about a deal done with the Greens before the state election in a hope that the Labor Party would get Green preferences.

Regrowth is the rubbish that we battle to contain as it takes over good country. Regrowth is the build-up of rubbish and woody weeds that take the place of grass which holds the soil intact and stops erosion. The Victorian fire catastrophe was a result of regrowth build-up over the years that was not managed. Land management is about managing the land, sowing the good seed, producing the best crops and ensuring that the best food is on our tables.

The recently announced moratorium on clearing rubbish regrowth is another example of how little value this government places on our primary industries. These industries are predicted to be worth over \$10 billion in 2008-09. They employ in excess of 100,000 people. They have powerfully driven the economy through the downturn. It is a deep shame that the fate of rural electorates is decided by the majority of members who represent metropolitan electorates.

The Moranbah region produces billions of dollars a year in gross revenue coal. The residents of Moranbah, people who pay their fair share of tax, see all of that wealth siphoned out of their town and receive only peanuts in return. Moranbah should not be treated as just a mining town. It is a place where parents are raising their children. It is a place that people call home—a place where people are choosing to retire. Moranbah is a town that has expanded. The demand for housing far outweighs supply. I call on the government to prioritise in terms of providing the appropriate services which range from housing, aged care, medical and maternity services, support for disabilities and other essential services.

As members are aware, the city of Charters Towers has been plagued with flying foxes for the past seven years. I would like to know why the state government intervened in a Charters Towers Regional Council and CASA supported strategy to drive the flying foxes from the town using helicopters. The state government stood in and stopped the idea. Once again, the state government shows its contempt for the residents of Charters Towers who year after year have been living with the plague, the stench, the filth, the ticks, the parasites—

Mr Reeves interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wendt): Order! Minister for Child Safety!

Mr Lawlor interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Minister for Tourism!

Mr KNUTH: They have also lived with the risks associated with continual exposure to these filthy beasts. The only thing this state government has offered the residents of Charters Towers is the threat of a \$75,000 fine for disturbing a colony of flying foxes. If you were so good you would be up there and you would take action and have the flying foxes removed. It has lasted seven years. If you were such a good government you would have had these filthy things moved seven years ago.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Dalrymple! Please do not use the word 'you'. Refer your comments through the chair.

Mr KNUTH: Sorry, Mr Deputy Speaker. If there is a death from Hendra virus or lyssavirus because of these vile creatures, this government will be held accountable.

In 2006 the Australian Railroad Group was purchased by Queensland Rail. The state government's decision to allow this purchase is the greatest catastrophe and mistake that has ever been imposed on our state rail freight network. Since ARG has taken over the Townsville to Mount Isa rail line, we have seen the transportation of dangerous goods shifted from rail to road, the end of small rail freight services and now the increased pricing of the transportation of minerals from Thalanga to Townsville, forcing Kagara Zinc to transport 100,000 tonnes of copper concentrate 200 kilometres now by road when it used to be by train.

The offer made by Queensland Rail to Kagara Zinc was 20 per cent more than road transport. This is an absolute joke and the minister needs to come clean on how transport costs by rail can be more expensive than transport costs by road. At the same time, Queensland Rail negotiated with its employees a new pay structure. However, it has now reneged on this pay structure in its attempt to force employees to sign up with this bogus ARG. This is Queensland Rail's ploy and the state government's ploy to avoid the protection of wages. Also, ARG has not implemented Queensland Rail's former policy of no forced redundancies or no forced relocations. ARG agreements only last 12 months, putting job security in jeopardy.

I call on the minister to acknowledge that the purchase of ARG and the consequent action of ARG management is merely a cover-up to create a perception that Queensland Rail and the state government are completely innocent. Queensland Rail is the parent company, yet the state government is washing its hands of draconian decision making by the bogus company ARG. I call on the government to acknowledge that this experiment to purchase this phantom company to take over the western line is a lost cause. I call on the minister to get rid of this ridiculous company and admit that this is a failure and go back to the basics where Queensland Rail managed the operation between Townsville and Mount Isa. I call on the minister to give back the services which the businesses, small and large, between Townsville and Mount Isa rightfully deserve.

Today I bring to the health minister's attention the explosive issue of a dementia ward at Eventide. This issue is one of the most heated and passionate issues I have ever faced. The Charters Towers district is not likely to slink off into the sunset on this one. During the election campaign the LNP committed \$1.5 million to have a dementia-specific unit opened at Eventide within 12 months. This commitment caused much joy and a huge sense of relief through the local area. You can imagine the pain and disappointment—even anger—I now hear from constituents as I travel around. People are desperate. They will not allow their loved ones to be taken off like some object to a place hundreds of kilometres away far from their families and friends to spend the remainder of their lives in what would seem to be like a foreign land. This is an absolutely appalling situation.

Many of these patients have lived their lives in the Charters Towers district and contributed their whole working lives to the area to become key figureheads in the community, and now they are treated as outcasts. I ask the minister what his decision would be if one of his loved ones were to be hauled off into an unknown, far away and unfamiliar place hundreds, if not thousands, of kilometres away for a round trip. I specifically invite the new health minister, Paul Lucas, to visit Charters Towers to speak to the residents about his plans for a dementia unit in the city. He would be welcomed with true country hospitality and would meet a very determined dementia and aged-care action group and supporters.

There is a rising fury against the lack of dementia support in Charters Towers, especially in view of such units in other small towns. The Pandanus unit at Eventide is well suited to such a unit. It is fenced and can be easily converted to house a dementia-specific unit. People are no longer content to wait for something to happen in the distant future. They are determined to push this one through. There is a sense of loss in the area after the idea that the dementia unit was on the way after the LNP committed to have one up and running within 12 months. I will be tabling a petition of 2,000 signatures requesting a unit to be provided at Eventide.

To finish off, as the member for Dalrymple and a representative of the people of a large and diverse electorate, I feel it is my duty to bring these issues before this House and the parliament. Often the needs of those in the bush are overlooked. There are many other issues that need to be raised, but time prohibits me mentioning them all. I will be standing up for my electorate and my intention is to continue to make those views known to this parliament and to this government.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms SPENCE (Sunnybank—ALP) (Leader of the House) (9.44 pm): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

North Queensland Floods; Tully TAFE Campus

Mr CRIPPS (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (9.45 pm): In the two months since this parliament last met, the people of my electorate have been busy. Many of them have been recovering from the serious flood event that was associated with Tropical Cyclone Ellie in February. Many have lent their collective support to several petitions in relation to important issues in the Hinchinbrook electorate about which I would like to talk briefly tonight. Two conforming petitions will be tabled tomorrow in this place. One relates to the recent major flood event that occurred in the Hinchinbrook shire causing significant damage to public and private property and the role that the build-up of river sand and sediment in the Herbert River played in the extent and severity of that flood. The other relates to the need for flood-free access over Palm Creek and for a dedicated emergency accommodation centre to be built in the township of Ingham. Both of these issues were brought into sharp focus during the recent major flood

event in the Herbert River district in February this year. I endorsed these petitions in support of my constituents and look forward to the state government taking their concerns seriously and responding positively to them.

I seek leave to table a non-conforming petition on behalf of 463 residents in the communities of Cardwell, Mission Beach, El Arish, Feluga, Tully, Tully Heads, Euramo, Kennedy and Jumbun in my electorate of Hinchinbrook requesting that the Tully TAFE campus remain operational in Tully.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wendt): Leave is not required.

Mr CRIPPS: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Tabled paper: Non-conforming petition relating to the Tully TAFE Campus [95].

I was alarmed recently to learn that the TAFE campus at Tully had closed. It is clear that one of the most important things for Queensland job seekers in the current economic downturn is to ensure that they have the skills and qualifications to be competitive in the tightening jobs market. TAFE campuses are a very important asset and service in communities in regional and rural Queensland. In many cases, they offer the only technical and vocational education opportunities for individuals in those areas. As such, it is absolutely essential that TAFE campuses like the campus in Tully remain open and offering TAFE courses to the local community.

I have made inquiries with the Tropical North Queensland Institute of TAFE and it has indicated that the Tully TAFE campus has closed as a result of a lack of demand for courses. I have written to the director of the Tropical North Queensland Institute of TAFE requesting advice in relation to enrolments at the Tully campus in recent years and a comparison of those enrolments with other campuses that have remained open. I feel strongly that, as the current economic downturn continues, more and more workers, particularly those previously employed in the mining and minerals processing industries, will be returning to their home communities such as Tully where they will need to access training opportunities like those offered through TAFE and I am committed to working with the Tropical North Queensland Institute of TAFE to raise the profile of the courses offered at the Tully TAFE campus. Accordingly, I call on the Minister for Education and Training and the Tropical North Queensland Institute of TAFE to keep the Tully TAFE campus open so that local residents in the Tully district will have access to the technical and the vocational education opportunities that they need.

Ipswich Festival

Hon. RG NOLAN (Ipswich—ALP) (Minister for Transport) (9.47 pm): The Ipswich Festival is now on and, as you would know better than most, Mr Deputy Speaker Wendt, it is a fantastic event of which to be a part. Festivities started last Friday night with the Mayor's Ball, which other people might hold in some boring function room or convention centre but in Ipswich we hold in the more than 100-year-old paint shop at the old railway workshops. So it is a tremendous event to be a part of this glamorous occasion in the old historic railway workshops in the central part of town. The festivities continued on the Saturday with a street party in the CBD with some fantastic entertainers and the opening of the Ipswich Art Awards, which include a range of art from the most amateur to the most professional of artists. I always buy something at the Ipswich Art Awards because there is always this tremendous diversity of talent—from little pieces for 50 bucks to the highest standard of quality work from some really tremendous artists.

On the Sunday, the Ipswich Global Fiesta was held. This event celebrates Ipswich's multiculturalism. There are people from around 153 countries who live in Ipswich, and the Global Fiesta celebrates that diversity. There were morris dancers, and people from the Greek islands and some of Ipswich's South Sea Islander groups performed. There was tremendous cultural richness and diversity on display. The state government puts about \$10,000 each year into this celebration of Ipswich multiculturalism and I think that is money very well spent.

The Ipswich International Tattoo forms part of the Ipswich Art Awards. It is run by the Ipswich Thistle Pipe Band. This is a tremendous celebration of our Scottish heritage in the city of Ipswich. Events have continued through this week but, sadly, the member for Ipswich West and I have not been able to be a part of things. They will continue through to next weekend, when there will be jazz performances in central Ipswich in d'Arcy Doyle Place, including a performance from one of Australia's great jazz icons, Renee Geyer.

The Ipswich Festival is a tremendous celebration of the spirit of our city. Ipswich is a place that is growing rapidly but maintaining its strong sense of community and its strong sense of place. It is happening in the Ipswich CBD, which is a place that is changing. After being quite run down for a number of years, there is now a new vibrancy starting to happen in town, largely as a result of some work that the council and the state government are doing. I encourage members to be involved in the Ipswich Festival should they get a chance because it is a wonderful celebration of our community life.

Queensland Rail, Northern Missing Link Project

Mrs MENKENS (Burdekin—LNP) (9.51 pm): Bowen is devastated by the vital piece of infrastructure that has been sidelined by the state government—the \$1 billion northern missing rail link. The 69-kilometre northern missing rail link would link Goonyella in the south with the Newlands line in the north, enabling coal from mines south of Newlands to be taken to Abbot Point, near Bowen. The scrapping of this project has left hundreds without jobs and wasted the \$90 million already spent preparing for the project. This is a total disaster for those involved with the project and to the Bowen region, which was banking on this line to boost economic development.

The official start-up funding for the project of \$27 million has long since been exhausted, but people who have been working in preparation for this project to start have told me that closer to \$90 million has been spent. These people—the contractors and others involved with the project—cannot understand how the government can justify stopping the missing link when such a significant amount of money has already been spent. There have been 400 jobs lost, but the estimates are that this figure could blow out to 1,000 jobs.

Private contractors were engaged by this government and took on the project in good faith. Why did the government not lock in the mining companies to support the project before it hired these contractors? This is mismanagement to an appalling degree. These contractors have spent millions of dollars on preparations to start this vital link and they have been let down badly. Some will go to the wall as a result.

The government is pushing jobs and how it is going to create 100,000 jobs for Queenslanders. Here is a project that is ready to go—it is shovel ready—and that will provide a portion of those jobs. But is the government going ahead with it? No. Instead, we heard in parliament this morning the new minister, Rachel Nolan, still giving empty promises of the Labor government's commitment to this project. She refused to acknowledge that the government had encouraged contractors to start work on this project before the government had iron-clad contracts in place.

The Premier gave her word that her government would be maintaining Queensland's infrastructure schedule. Her word is worth nothing to those involved in this project. This vital structure should have been signed, sealed and delivered in the boom times. Instead, it was left to the last minute, when the mining companies were already reeling from the global financial crisis. The Treasurer said there would not be 30 million tonnes of spare capacity on existing infrastructure. What happens when this cycle of good times returns? Is there going to be any spare capacity then? I think not.

This government's short-sightedness will be to blame when the infrastructure is not in place to cope with increased capacity. It is time that this government started getting serious about creating jobs, started getting serious about creating jobs for North Queensland and put the northern missing rail link back on track.

Redcliffe Challenge—Find Your Mojo

Ms van LITSENBURG (Redcliffe—ALP) (9.53 pm): On Sunday, 29 March, Suttons Beach blossomed with promotional stands from a variety of Redcliffe peninsula sporting and community groups interspersed with food stands, creating a gala atmosphere for the launch of the Redcliffe Challenge—Find Your Mojo, Redcliffe's entry in the state government's Get Active challenge. A wide cross-section of the organisations came together with Jeremy Arato from the Redcliffe PCYC, who auspiced the challenge, supported by a steering committee including Margaret Millar from the Moreton Bay Regional Council, Trent Dickson and Kerry Sharpe from the Dolphins Leagues Club, Rhonda Collins from Genesis, Paul Lancaster from the *Redcliffe and Bayside Herald*, Bob Crudgington, Faye Jeppesen and me.

Many local businesses sponsored the challenge, including the PCYC, 99.7FM, Peninsula Fitness, Beads by the Beach, the ANZ, Bendigo Bank, Whats Your Team, JT Press, Sails, Bali Fashion Hut, Personal Computer Solutions, Genesis, the *Redcliffe and Bayside Herald*, Yvette D'Ath, the member for Petrie, and me.

Surf Life Saving, the Moreton Bay Road Runners and Redcliffe Beach Tennis ran free activities on the beach throughout the day. These included nippers displays and fun activities for children, adult surf-lifesaving competitions, beach tennis and a fun run. Locals flocked to register for the challenge and to pick up their passports for the eight weeks of activities. Since then, the Moreton Bay Boat Club has held a sailing morning, the Seaside Traders has run a treasure hunt at the Festival of Sails and last weekend the PCYC held an activity day for children and adults. Tai Chi, walking and gym programs operate during the week.

The groups involved in the eight-week program of activities offered are the Moreton Bay Road Runners, the Moreton Bay Boat Club, Seaside Traders, PCYC, the Eildon Croquet Club, the Bramble Bay Bowls Club, Genesis, the Redcliffe Outrigger Canoe Club, Friends of Redcliffe Botanic Gardens, the Dolphins Leagues Club and the Dolphins Aquatic Centre, Surf Life Saving, Beach Tennis, Redcliffe Healthy Ageing Partnership, the cardiac support group, Redcliffe indoor bowls and the Fernwood Women's Health Club.

The Redcliffe Challenge is providing many fun activities for hundreds of families and residents, meeting our aim to get the people of Redcliffe more active and continuing to be active after the challenge. The success of the challenge is reflected in many sporting groups already planning to hold this event annually. Redcliffe is leading the way in achieving the Bligh government's ambition to make a healthier Queensland. This government is working towards a better Queensland, and I am proud to be part of it.

Commercial Recreation and Charter Tourism Industries

Mrs CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone—Ind) (9.56 pm): I rise to bring to the attention of the House the concerns of the commercial recreation and charter tourism industries in this state. They are expecting a very difficult couple of years ahead because of the financial situation and they are facing an extra challenge because of decisions that have to be made about spawning closures for this coming year.

In October last year consideration for the forthcoming spawning closures was given, but the decision had not been finalised. At a MAC meeting in October, a representative of AustAsia Seafood presented a proposal—and it was unanimously supported, obviously, by the commercial recreation and charter tourism representatives—to have a two-year moratorium on the spawning closures. This proposal was resisted by DPIF and GBRMPA and the Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol on the basis of the precautionary principle.

The concern within that industry, however, is all the financial challenges they are facing as a result of the turmoil in the world financial markets. The industry employs thousands of Queenslanders and supports regional Queensland economies and communities. Indeed, in my own electorate 11 boats operate out of Gladstone. There is one boat operating out of Rosslyn Bay and two boats operating out of Mackay. A constituent cc'd a copy of an email to me that he sent to a person at one of the departments. In that email he stated—

Once again, I have contacted you to inform you the offshore charter sector needs some of the finalisation to the proposed closures in 2009.

There is a need for the finalisation of that closure as bookings that should be made now for the end of the year and the second half of this year are not being made simply because of the unknown closure period. My constituent is asking for some certainty to be brought into the industry and for a moratorium on the spawning closures to be agreed to. It is expected that that would be resolved by the end of May, but my constituent claims that that will be too late for him and many others in the industry.

They need to be able to make bookings now, not forgo bookings. I ask the minister to give attention to this proposal to have a moratorium on the spawning closure. They do not believe it will affect the fishery in the long term, or indeed the short term. However, it will give some certainty to the industry if they are allowed to take bookings to ensure, in this difficult financial period, that they can as an industry survive.

Q150 Steam Train

Mr HOOLIHAN (Keppel—ALP) (9.59 pm): It is no secret to anyone in this House and most Queenslanders that this year we celebrate our 150th anniversary. Our sesquicentenary is a celebration of what Queensland has become. As part of that celebration I would like to encourage everyone to follow the journey and, where possible, fully support the Q150 train. The Q150 train arrived in Rockhampton on Sunday, 19 April. For those members who are not aware, this train is fully crewed by the Railway Historical Society and volunteers. As a matter of fact, next weekend one of our own parliamentary staffers, Jason Gardiner, will be in charge of the train on its trip from Rockhampton to Winton.

This train really highlights Queensland's reliance on steam. The golden age of steam really opened up Queensland. Most of the railway networks provided work and income for many far-flung communities, although some of those rail networks did not go far enough and, as a result, were really lines to nowhere. As an aside, in the 1800s in Queensland a lot of the railways were built and supported by Sir Thomas McLlwraith. Sir Thomas McLlwraith's sister Elizabeth was my great-great-grandmother. He was brought to Australia by the Victorian government to build railways.

Until now the Q150 train has travelled from station to station, but it is spending a week in Rockhampton and is carrying out short journeys to Bajool, the caves and out to Westwood in Central Queensland. I think that is fitting because the Rockhampton railway has provided a massive amount of employment and income to Queensland. It was a major railway town. It was the place where the

western rail joined the north-south railway line. As a child I travelled extensively on it because it was the only way that we could travel for holidays. To see the steam train the other day brought back memories of trips with mum, who had a white hankie to take the little bits of coal dust out of my eyes. This is a way to allow Queenslanders to celebrate their sesquicentenary. I congratulate the government and thank QR for the work put in to running this very special train to celebrate our 150 years.

Akuna Oval

Dr FLEGG (Moggill—LNP) (10.02 pm): Yesterday the Governor spoke of this government's commitment to sporting fields and activities for the young. Let us judge this government in relation to these things, not by what it says but by what it does. Not far from this place is an oval that spans a couple of state electorates called Akuna Oval. It comprises three sporting fields and supplies two codes of football, Australian rules and rugby. Two thousand children play on those grounds every weekend, but that is at risk because the lighting for the ground is no longer safe and the use of the ground has to be significantly curtailed, affecting 2,000 young players.

You know it is a serious issue when you can get the codes of AFL and rugby union to agree on something. The AFL club and the rugby union club have worked together for two years to put in place detailed plans that are ready to go. They have raised money. They have a \$150,000 grant from the Brisbane City Council. Sadly, despite all that work, their application for major facility funding was rejected.

Sally Johannsen, who prepared this application, has done a magnificent job on behalf of thousands of young people in the western suburbs of Brisbane. I pay tribute to her work. Most of all what Sally would like to see, and what I and the member for Indooroopilly would like to see, is the government acknowledging the importance of young people and their sporting activities by revisiting the decision not to support improving the lighting on Akuna Oval.

Previously I have written to the Treasurer and the minister for sport in the former government. After the election this year one of my first acts was to write to the new Minister for Sport, who I see is present in the chamber with us tonight. After this evening, in a spirit of cooperation, because I hope we can work together on this, I will write again to the minister and enclose an extract from *Hansard* of this speech, because this is a very important project and there is no way it can be achieved without some support from the government.

Mr Reeves: I always read your speeches.

Dr FLEGG: I take that interjection from the minister. I will send him a copy of this speech and I encourage him to seriously consider this project. It is a very important one. I extend to him an invitation to visit Akuna Oval—it is just up the road off the Western Freeway—to look at how important this work is and reconsider support for it.

Sunrise Way

Mr SHINE (Toowoomba North—ALP) (10.05 pm): Works at the renovated Sunrise Way Therapeutic Commune Centre in Toowoomba were declared completed on 27 March 2009 by former Toowoomba resident and Governor of Queensland, Her Excellency Penelope Wensley. Sunrise Way is a non-government community organisation that plans to use a model of treatment encompassing short-term assessment, referral and rehabilitation for individuals committed to recovery from alcohol and other drug dependency. By seeking to establish a warm, home-like environment of learning for the individual, Sunrise Way aims to provide opportunities and nourishment for those in their care to find the inner strength to achieve a healthier lifestyle.

The therapeutic community model will be comprised of diverse individuals who, on a voluntary basis, choose to make the change. The program is long term and residents will progress through the various phases of treatment and responsibility at their own pace and according to individual needs and abilities. The therapeutic community model of treatment develops a sense of belonging within a warm family environment. It establishes the structure, support and continuity necessary for the healthy growth, change, development and recovery of each individual resident. Sunrise Way residents will be assigned daily tasks within the facility, engage in vocational projects and structured recreational activities. The organisation will target people who are 18 years of age or over, have a history of substance abuse and are medically suited to the program, willing to accept an abstinence treatment program and agree voluntarily to the rules and regulations of Sunrise Way.

The Sunrise Way vision is for the community to actively take responsibility for the provision of quality resources to assist individuals with drug and alcohol abuse and associated addiction behaviours to become healthy, active community members. These works are the result of countless hours of hard work and planning by the volunteers and donors who support Sunrise Way. I have great admiration for the aims of this organisation and extend my support and gratitude for the commitment they have made to the Toowoomba community. It is my sincere wish that this worthy endeavour in drug treatment accomplishes its goal.

There are many who should be acknowledged for what has been achieved to date, but I will just mention three. First of all, the Hon. Wendy Edmond who, as the then minister for health, arranged for a building to be used by the centre at peppercorn rent; former Mayor of Toowoomba Di Thorley, whose leadership and dogged determination saw much achieved; and, lastly, Doug Harland, the current chair of the committee, for the enormous hard work that he has done, his know-how and his sheer grit. Doug is a true Toowoomba citizen, a man of great integrity and of high repute.

Traveston Dam

Mr GIBSON (Gympie—LNP) (10.08 pm): It has been almost three years since at a public meeting in Gympie the then Premier, Peter Beattie, uttered those now infamous words that the proposed Traveston Crossing Dam was going ahead, feasible or not. That is an example of Labor's idea of consultation. Since that time my community has gone through the tragic events of a botched job by a Labor government struggling and scrambling to try to shore up votes before the 2006 election.

This Sunday we will commemorate the third anniversary of the announcement of the proposed Traveston Crossing Dam. The then Premier flew into the Mary Valley like some water messiah and came out and declared that he was building a megadam. In two weeks more water has been released from the Somerset Dam than the Traveston Crossing Dam could provide in two years. In two weeks more water has been released from the Somerset Dam than could be taken from Traveston Crossing Dam in two years. That is the legacy that this government is trying to impose upon the people of Queensland: a failed dam, something that has no place in our society today as part of water security. Everybody is very clear in this House, and the new members will learn very quickly, that I am passionate about fighting against the Traveston Crossing Dam. It is a stupid idea. It is an idea that is flawed. It is an idea that was put together by a government scrambling for votes before an election. It is a clear example of overpromise and underdeliver; something that is clearly in Labor's DNA. We have heard it so many times and I am sure we will continue to hear it. Labor overpromises and underdelivers time and time again in this state.

We have a case now where all sides of the dam argument, those for and those against, want a decision. It is clear that we need to do something. A local bank manager in refusing a loan to a business operator in the Mary Valley made the comment, 'I will not loan to a living ghost town.' That is what has happened under this Labor government. We have a living ghost town in the Mary Valley. The community has been stripped. It is as if it has been put on life support and we are now waiting for either the surgeon to appear so that we can save the life of the Mary Valley or for the decision to be made to switch off the life support machine. That is what it has come to under this Labor government. We must get a decision. The dillydallying that has occurred has taken too long and we need to ensure that there is certainty for the people in the Mary Valley. This Sunday we will commemorate a very sad day in Queensland's history.

Mirikai

Mrs SMITH (Burleigh—ALP) (10.11 pm): The Gold Coast Drug Council's residential facility, Mirikai, is based in the Burleigh electorate. Members in this place have heard me speak before about Mirikai and its success with young people affected by drug and alcohol abuse. Eighty per cent of the vulnerable, complex young people admitted to Mirikai have both mental health and drug and alcohol problems. They enter a facility far ahead of other rehabilitation centres; it has specialised in co-morbidity for the past 10 years. The Queensland Health Policy released in September 2008 states—

Individuals experiencing dual diagnosis or co-occurring mental health and alcohol and other drug problems, and their families, have multiple and complex needs that require a high level of responsiveness across all services, levels of care, and throughout all phases of recovery.

Mirikai has been accredited three times by the Quality Improvement Council, an independent body set up to promote continuous quality improvement in health and community services. Mirikai is the first specific drug and alcohol organisation in Australia dealing with mental health. It has recently undergone a review and been nationally accredited with a commendation for its co-morbidity program.

Why am I telling you this, Mr Deputy Speaker? Because Mirikai is in trouble. Over the past few years a top-up of funding has been necessary to balance the books. This year the funding is not available. Mirikai has taken drastic action. It has put staff off, curtailed some programs and even looked at reducing the food costs. But it is still in the red. Bed closure is the only option, and that must not happen. The problem is that the 32 residential beds, the heart of the operation, do not fit under mental health or drug and alcohol structures. Queensland Health funding of \$15,000 per bed is only half of what is needed to adequately support residents. This is an anomaly that needs to be addressed.

I am asking the Minister for Health—no, I am pleading with the Minister for Health—to review the funding of Mirikai residential beds and I need members to assist me in supporting this. We need to value creative and innovative community services that operate on best practice. The Gold Coast Drug Council has treated thousands of young people and supported their families through difficult and stressful times.

Each year hundreds of people who desperately need help are turned away from the Gold Coast Drug Council as a result of limited funding and resources. The Gold Coast community cannot and will not see Mirikai fail. The *Gold Coast Bulletin* has already reported on the difficulties being experienced at this facility and I have taken many calls from concerned parents whose children are resident or have been resident in Mirikai. I ask the Minister for Health to visit Mirikai and see the wonderful work done and the number of young people whose lives are changed, not to mention the impact on their families.

Question put—That the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 10.15 pm.

ATTENDANCE

Attwood, Bates, Bleijie, Bligh, Boyle, Choi, Crandon, Cripps, Croft, Cunningham, Darling, Davis, Dempsey, Dick, Dickson, Douglas, Dowling, Elmes, Emerson, Farmer, Finn, 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, Palaszczuk, 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