

WEDNESDAY, 2 JULY 2008

Mr Speaker (Hon. MF Reynolds, Townsville) read prayers and took the chair at 9.08 am in the former Legislative Council chamber.

PROCLAMATION CONVENING THE THIRTEENTH QUEENSLAND YOUTH PARLIAMENT

"WHEREAS the State Council of YMCAs of Queensland wish to develop a Youth Parliament program that—

- Educates young people by being as true to the parliamentary system as possible: adheres to its rules, presents ideas in its format and places young people in the role of leaders; and
- Equips young people with the skills and strategies necessary to impact their community; and
- Unites young people by having as few as possible social, economic or geographic barriers to participation and developing a recreation and training program to support young people to grow in body, mind and spirit; and
- Links and supports young people across Queensland to use their skills practically to bring about change on a local and State level;

AND WHEREAS the Honourable Speaker of the Queensland Parliament has graciously consented to the use of the Chambers of Parliament for this purpose;

AND WHEREAS the Speaker has agreed to attend in the Legislative Council Chamber to receive the Youth Bills passed by this Youth Parliament;

NOW THEREFORE I, Christopher Piggott-McKellar, Youth Governor, command the selected Members of the thirteenth YMCA Queensland Youth Parliament to attend at the Legislative Assembly Chamber in Parliament House, situated on Alice Street, Brisbane for the carrying out of business that the YMCA Queensland Youth Parliament shall deem appropriate.

Given under my hand, on this 2nd day of July 2008—

His Excellency, Mr Christopher Piggott- McKellar

Youth Governor of Queensland."

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

Mr SPEAKER: I recognise His Excellency the Youth Governor and Ms Grace Grace MP, representing the Hon. Lindy Nelson-Carr, Minister for Communities, Minister for Disability Services, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Seniors and Youth. I also recognise Mr Robert Schwarten, Minister for Public Works, Housing and Information and Communication Technology, and Mrs Rosemary Menkens MP, shadow minister for communities, disability services, multicultural affairs, seniors and youth and the secretary of the official opposition. I also welcome the many honourable members of the state parliament we have here today from the governing party and also from the opposition parties. I recognise Mr Michael Ries, Deputy Clerk of the Queensland Parliamentary Service, and Ms Glenda Emmerson, Manager of Community Engagement with the Queensland Parliamentary Service. It is always great to welcome Dr Joe Goodall, the President of the State Council of YMCAs of Queensland, members of the YMCA Youth Parliament executive, honourable youth members of the parliament and ladies and gentlemen.

As Speaker of the 52nd Parliament of Queensland, I have great pleasure in welcoming all participants for today's opening ceremony of the 13th YMCA Youth Parliament of Queensland. Honourable youth members, you have a busy two-day sitting program here and I wish you all the very best in your deliberations. A number of significant pieces of legislation will go before the youth parliament today and tomorrow: the Health Bill; the Sustainability and Climate Change Bill; the Indigenous, Multicultural Affairs and Communities Bill; the Transport, Infrastructure and Planning Bill; the Education Training and the Arts Bill; the State Development and Innovation Bill; and the Justice and Attorney-General Bill. I am sure the Leader of the House, the Hon. Robert Schwarten, and the Leader of Opposition Business in the House, the member for Cunningham, would agree that that is a very good series of bills that is before the youth members today.

As well as the important debates that will surround the passage of these bills, through the Youth Parliament the essential parliamentary accountability mechanism of question time will be held at the commencement of each sitting day. As honourable youth members will understand from the training and education they have received, the role of a Westminster parliament is essentially twofold: it provides the forum that is required for representatives of the community to make laws and the personnel of both the government of the day and Her Majesty's loyal opposition, but it also importantly establishes an accountability regime to which the executive, that is the ministers of the Crown, must report.

These two particular features of governance are indeed central tenets of the Westminster system. Ministers, being drawn from the ranks of members of the parliament, must be accountable to the body that establishes their legitimacy. The effectiveness of the Westminster parliamentary system, therefore, depends largely on the robustness of parliamentary scrutiny in holding ministers to account. To achieve robust scrutiny an appreciation of the importance of executive government accountability must exist across the political divide. All members of parliament, whether part of the governing party, the opposition party or an Independent should consider the accountability of the ministry to be fundamental to democracy.

As Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, shortly I will be presiding over your first question time, the first statements made by ministers and, indeed, by other members of parliament. I will be watching with great interest the approach that you all bring to this important parliamentary function. Honourable youth members, I wish you the very best. I wish you a productive and fruitful outcome for the 2008 Youth Parliament and I wish you the very best in undertaking your legislative duties over the next two days. I encourage you to make the very most of this tremendous opportunity to contribute to public debate and of course to do so in the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Queensland.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is now my very great pleasure to introduce Ms Grace Grace, member of parliament for Brisbane Central, who is here representing the Hon. Lindy Nelson-Carr, Minister for Communities, Minister for Disability Services, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Seniors and Youth. Please welcome Ms Grace Grace.

Ms GRACE: Thank you and good morning everyone. I start by respectfully acknowledging the traditional owners of the land on which we meet. Obviously, I acknowledge the Hon. Mike Reynolds, Speaker of the Queensland Legislative Assembly; all my parliamentary colleagues, including Minister Schwarten who is here today; all who have made the trip into my electorate to be here this morning, welcome; Mr Michael Ries, the Deputy Clerk of the parliament; Mr Christopher Piggott-McKellar, Queensland Youth Governor, and what a great Youth Governor it seems that we have, which is good to see; Dr Joe Goodall, President of the State Council of YMCAs of Queensland; members of the YMCA Board; and, of course, the youth parliamentarians who are here today and friends and family.

It gives me great pleasure to be here this morning representing communities and youth minister Lindy Nelson-Carr. The minister has a very keen interest in the YMCA Youth Parliament and sends her best wishes to all of you for the parliamentary program this week and for the rest of your term, of course. Thirteen years of Youth Parliament obviously seems to have gone quickly for one member of our audience here today, the member for Ashgrove, Kate Jones, who was the first Youth Premier. Kate, stand up and let yourself be known. Kate lets anybody who is willing to listen know that she was the first Youth Premier back in 1996 and, for the information of all youth parliamentarians, I can say that she is now the member for Ashgrove. Congratulations, Kate. It is great to have you here. Since its inception, numerous young Queenslanders have taken on the challenge of learning how the systems of government work in Queensland. I would have loved the opportunity when I became the member for Brisbane Central.

I would like to congratulate each of the young parliamentarians here today for your determination, commitment and enthusiasm to participate in such an important youth program. I trust you have enjoyed a busy term so far. No doubt you have learned a lot about Queensland's political scene. I am impressed with the thought-provoking and diverse range of youth bills that you have developed, and I know that the Speaker went through those. I picked out a couple that are close to my heart and probably close to a lot of your hearts. I believe there is a bill to cover the recruitment, retention and quality of teachers in Queensland. That touches on industrial relations which is very close to my heart. I know that you have also looked at climate change issues through a bill about sustainable development, authority to regulate and use sustainable energy sources and coastal and urban development. I believe that those are two really great issues. It is fantastic that you are taking the time to research and debate those social and environmental issues. I am sure my parliamentary colleagues are looking forward to hearing the results of the debate on all seven bills. I believe young people have a great deal to offer not only on those bills but on a lot of social issues. I think the evidence shows that if we listen to young people we get a good balance. We get policies that reflect all of the community and it is fantastic to see that you are all here very enthusiastically making your mark in regards to that social policy.

Minister Nelson-Carr is keen to support initiatives that encourage young people to get involved, initiatives such as this Youth Parliament. She is very proud of the programs her department has developed to ensure young people have those opportunities. Those initiatives include the Queensland Youth Council, National Youth Week, regional youth engagement projects and the Young Indigenous Leaders Forum. These activities help young people to enhance their personal skills, have their say, learn about leadership, network with other young people, which I think is very important, and gain knowledge of business in the public, private and community sectors.

Looking around, I am heartened to see so many people who are actively interested in discussing important issues and challenges and making a difference in the lives of other young Queenslanders. I would like to thank the YMCA Queensland for providing young people with the opportunity to develop

their public speaking, debating and leadership skills, and have a say about the issues that are important to them and their peers. Once again, congratulations to all of you for being chosen to participate in this year's Youth Parliament. I am told it is the first year we actually have representatives from all the electorates of Queensland, which is fantastic to see. I hope you gain a lot from this learning experience, bearing in mind that you can keep this for the rest of your lives. My parliamentary colleagues and I together congratulate you and look forward to hearing the outcomes of the debates. We wish you all the best for the rest of the program and in your future endeavours. Thank you very much.

Mr SPEAKER: Ladies and gentlemen, today I would like to acknowledge in the public gallery of the Legislative Council chamber a number of family members, teachers and friends who are here to witness this opening. It is always great to be able to look up in the public gallery and see the interest that you are taking in the youth members and the Youth Parliament.

It is now my very great pleasure to introduce Mrs Rosemary Menkens, member of parliament, the shadow minister for communities, disability services, multicultural affairs, seniors and youth and secretary of the official opposition. Please welcome Mrs Menkens.

Mrs MENKENS: Thank you, Mr Speaker. His Excellency the Youth Governor; Ms Grace Grace, representing Minister Nelson-Carr; my parliamentary colleagues; Dr Joe Goodall; members of the Youth Parliament; ladies and gentlemen; friends all: may I congratulate you all on your enthusiasm and your commitment to being part of this Youth Parliament. That is why I am particularly pleased to speak to a group today who are actively seeking to contribute and to make a difference. You are possibly our future leaders and I wish you all very well in your endeavours.

So, what is a leader? A leader is someone who can influence the behaviour of others for the purpose of achieving a goal. Leadership is about building a team much more than just individual endeavours. However, it is the qualities behind our leaders that are the most important factor. Stephen Covey in his book *Principle Centred Leadership* believes that a person's principles are the basis of power development within us. He describes correct principles as the primary source of our life support system which becomes like the hub of a wheel, and the spokes of the wheel are security, guidance, wisdom and power. Principle centred leadership and living cultivates those four internal sources of strength.

With respect, I would recommend to you all of those principles as an excellent base to work from. We often take for granted the work that our leaders undertake and we can be remarkably easy with criticisms and jibes regarding their performance until we find ourselves in that same position. We can be passionate about electing new leaders who will really make a difference but then as soon as they show the slightest inclination to move away from the status quo themselves we condemn them from the rooftops and we accuse them of deserting their constituencies.

Queensland and Australian leaders are facing an increasingly competitive and hostile trading and economic environment, as well as greater expectations from the social sector. The demands on our future leaders will multiply, and it is going to demand a whole set of new skills—skills and attributes that our past leaders probably did not need to have and certainly did not even know about. Perceptions are shaped by attitudes, by personal beliefs, by preferences and of course by society. An attempt to give a one-size-fits-all answer is to attempt the impossible.

A politician's perceptions are also necessarily shaped by their political beliefs and values as well as the attitudes and wishes of their constituents. There is no doubt that the key political drivers are ideologically based. A politician's role is to strike a balance—to strike a balance between economic rationalism and social responsibility. Where it starts to get difficult is when we realise that while working to achieve the best results for the electorate as a whole you may inevitably alienate part of it. Politicians, regardless of their political affiliations, try to strike a balance between competing interests and lobby groups.

No one of us is born into a position in this world, but any one of us can work really hard to attain a position we strive for. Good management and leadership skills involve a principle centred approach and total commitment towards the ultimate goal. It involves hard work. It also involves working at the values, qualities and skills of management. Learning to listen and having an open mind can be your greatest talents and cynicism and ego your greatest faults. Much of how you will succeed is dependent on your personal philosophy and work ethic. You will need a strong sense of self and the confidence to pursue your goals, which I am sure you have. You will need the courage of your convictions to see you through and the passion and ability to articulate those convictions to lead others along that path. I wish you all the very best for your future in employing the skills that you will gain from this Youth Parliament. It is because of the dedication and enthusiasm from those like yourselves that the next generation will have a future to look forward to.

May I leave you with the words of Kahlil Gibran: 'You give but little when you give of your possessions. It is when you give of yourself that you truly give.'

Mr SPEAKER: It is now my very great pleasure to invite Dr Joseph Goodall to make an address on behalf of the State Council of YMCAs of Queensland.

Dr GOODALL: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Honourable Youth Governor; Grace Grace, representing the minister; Rosemary Menkens, shadow minister; parliamentarians; and the VIPs here—the youth parliamentarians—not to mention my colleagues from the YMCA and the very proud parents and relations in the gallery: this is the 13th Youth Parliament. I hope you notice the mace there. It is the Queensland Youth Parliament mace designed for the occasion. There are 89 electorates represented. That is a tremendous achievement. I believe we are a little light on this morning due to illness. But we have 89 electorates represented. I have been waiting for that for a long time, so I will die a happy boy now. That is great.

Thank you on behalf of the YMCA. Thank you to the Speaker for making parliament available and making the staff available and for putting the time in and for the personal enthusiasm that he and his staff have for this project. Thank you also to the department for the provision of funding for the program. It is a tall order to fund a program like this. It is a tall order to get people from all over a state the size of Queensland. It is a tall order to use these facilities and get the people in that we have to. Without that funding support it is not possible. This is a partnership. This is a partnership between the YMCA advocating for young people and the parliament looking for input.

What a learning experience. What a tremendous learning experience you will have in doing this—the things you are going to gain. But the eyes are upon you, youth parliamentarians. The department and the politicians are watching you because they are not just putting the money in to teach you something; they have an honest belief that they can get something out of this. We heard before about the idea of inclusiveness, of difference. Here is a section of society that can articulate ideas and feed in to our governmental process and they are looking for the ideas. Make it work.

I do want to reflect on an experience I had a couple of days ago. I will share it with you, and I want to give you a challenge to go with it. It was Sunday afternoon fairly late. I was over on the northside of Brisbane sitting on a bus bench next to a young man 22 years of age. He had not been in a bed in three nights. He had not eaten for at least a day and a half. He actually comes from Hobart. How I got to be there is another story and it does not matter, but the experience was the experience of trying to find help for him.

Have you ever tried that? Think for a moment that you are in the eastern suburbs of Sydney with \$2 and a phone card, wearing a T-shirt and shorts and you have not eaten in a couple of days with no friends. Just think what you would do next and how you would cope with this. We started making some phone calls and checking around. Have you ever tried to get help for someone like that? It is like a secret society: knock twice and ask for Louis and have the right handshake and find a bed.

We tried to get through to different organisations and agencies to get help for someone who was desperate and in need, and the responses were: 'Sorry, you're too late; all the beds are full.' 'I'm sorry, you're too overweight, you can't take our beds.' 'No, that's not our field. You'll have to try somewhere else.' 'The office is unattended. Please phone between nine and five Monday to Friday.' Oh, that is good; you are only allowed to starve between nine and five Monday to Friday!

It is a mark of a society how it handles its helpless, its disempowered and its weak, and I do not think our society fared very well. That is not new. I would remind youth parliamentarians that government is for the weak, not the strong. Strong people can look after themselves. It is a matter of looking after the people who cannot, and we are not good at it. We have never been good at it. Under Elizabethan Poor Law in the 1500s they were rooting out what they called 'sturdy beggars'. They would find them, take them to the parish boundaries, whip them and kick them on to the next people—not our responsibility.

In 1893 here in Queensland there was a great outcry looking for people who were eating up public money by living off public charity. Everyone knew all about these people. They could not find them, but they knew about them and they had investigations. They could not find them. Does this sound like dole bludgers to you—the modern term for these sturdy beggars? In the 1830s when the workhouses came in they discovered in one, in Andover, England, that the old men who had been given bones to grind up to make fertiliser were so hungry that they were eating the bones. The scandal was huge and they determined that this could not happen, so they replaced the bones with rock so they could grind gravel instead. You cannot eat gravel!

In Queensland at the turn of the century a member of parliament visited our benevolent asylum, a form of workhouse. He came back and in this parliament, in the Legislative Assembly next door, he said, 'It almost made me cry to see these poor old people in the state they are in. I never, never want to see anyone like that again. I'm not going back!'

Some of the people who live around Brisbane will know the story of the guy called Ziggy who lived in Toowong with his plastic bags and how he was moved on, and all the efforts to remove homeless people out of various parks so you cannot see them. We are not going very far, are we? We are not progressing very much, are we? It is still cold charity. It is still dribbled out bit by bit. We are still not looking after people, just like the young man I dealt with on Sunday. But we forget that at times we all need help because we are not always healthy. We are not always flush with money. We could be standing by the side of the Warrego Highway with a wrecked car. There are times when we all will need

assistance. There is not a line of the haves and the have-nots. We will cross it. But we do not do a good job with the people on the bottom side of that line. That is not to do with government; that is us. We elect the government. The religious groups, the community groups and the organisations are all part of our society. All these groups which are failing to act at times are part of the society we are in, and we must act.

So here is your challenge. When you go into the chamber and you are debating your bills, ask yourself: who will this benefit? Will this benefit anybody? If it does, who? Will it make the healthy healthier, the rich richer and the poor poorer, or will it turn someone's life around? Will it make a change? Use your skill, use the ability you have, the things you have learnt in the last couple of days, the abilities you have in your 16, 18, 20 or 25 years of life and make this opportunity one that will change your life. Do it with passion. Do it with commitment. Do it with enthusiasm. Have a great time. I challenge you, though: make a difference.

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable youth members, I call His Excellency the Youth Governor.

YOUTH GOVERNOR: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would also like to acknowledge Mrs Grace Grace, representing the Minister for Communities; Mrs Menkens, who is here on behalf of the opposition; other members of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland; Dr Joe Goodall and his colleagues from the State Council of YMCAs in Brisbane; ladies and gentlemen and, of course, the company of those whom we desire most in the chamber today, undoubtedly, the youth members.

I have had the privilege of listening to Dr Joe Goodall for the past four years and would like to acknowledge his contribution for forever dishing out some pleasant surprises. I would like to share here in this burgeoning chamber today an anecdote. Many moons ago when I was a youth member of parliament, back in 2006—a year I would say was one of distinction for this program—I was coming into parliament on a bus and we went past a sign at one of the various schools on the way here. The sign said, 'Have you hugged your children today?' I made an anecdote about this in the chamber.

It is wise to reflect upon that this week when our youth members are at a week-long residential camp in North Pine, Petrie. There are pressures of the incredibly human process that is life—and that is the ultimate process I think we all experience, where try as we might we are never able to encounter that human error. So in these new experiences, new relationships and new activities our youth members are undertaking over the next week and over the next couple of days in our parliamentary sitting schedule, I would like to remind people that we are undergoing this incredibly human process and sometimes these new experiences can be overwhelming. Therefore, what I would like to do is extend a most honourable welcome to our ladies and gentlemen, to the parents, friends, teachers and care givers in our chamber today. If you care to join us for morning tea afterwards, come down and see your children, your youth members, and give them a nice big hug. I assure you that I myself would like to do it on your behalf. However, a little thing called duty of care complicates things just a little bit.

What I would like to do now is look to the ability of our youth members and, in particular, on behalf of the executive and on behalf of everybody here, congratulate Ms Yassmin Abdel-Magied, the youth member for Stretton, who is our Youth Premier. For the second year in a row we have a woman Youth Premier. Congratulations also to Taylor Bunnag, representing the seat of Nicklin, who is our youth opposition leader, and to our other elected leaders in the parliament.

What will happen next is we will invite everybody to come to the Legislative Assembly, where we will begin the period of accountability Mr Speaker talked about. Our youth members will begin their legislative journey and legislative processes with question time. We wish them all the best and we hope that the debate is fiery and that the wit can come through. I do not think that I need to impress upon you how important a viable youth discourse is in our society and how important programs such as this are. We can never estimate the power of impetus and the fact that these rolling stones, who are our youth members, may not be able to make the immediate tangible outcomes that some may desire. But never underestimate the capacity that they have to do so.

I now take great honour, as we all do in this chamber, holding our youth members high in our various palms, to officially declare the 13th YMCA Queensland Youth Parliament open.

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable youth members, we have heard a number of speakers today enunciate those important principles of being a youth member in the parliament over the next couple of days. I reiterate to some extent what the Youth Governor has said and say that one of the most important principles that I will be looking for is in terms of the parliamentary language you use, because there are a number of areas that are unparliamentary, but I also hope that you get out of the next few days some humour and wit. I think all of the parliamentarians who are here today sometimes take out of the chamber that very good wit, that very good humour. It can be very much a robust opportunity to debate, but I think in terms of how we treat one another we should treat people in a parliamentary way, and humour can quite often be one of the best ways in which you can send a message.

Mr Speaker announced that the sitting would be continued in the Legislative Assembly chamber, where he took the chair at 10.03 am.

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable youth members, once again welcome to the Legislative Assembly of Queensland. Of course, this is where parliament sits. Where you were this morning for the official opening of the parliament is our old Legislative Council chamber which, as I am sure has been explained to you or you would know from your studies, was abolished in 1922 as a sitting house of the Queensland parliament. Honourable youth members, I now call the Youth Premier.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

YOUTH PREMIER: Firstly, I acknowledge the Indigenous owners of this land. With a 17-year gap in the life expectancies between races and a mortality rate that rivals that of countries in Africa, we live in a nation of extremes and it seems that the Indigenous people of our land really do get the short end of the stick. You have heard the issues time and time again in the media: a health situation that is truly deplorable, an education system that lacks understanding and an employment crisis all contributing to the perilous Indigenous situation. Those issues have been discussed and so-called solutions have been implemented, but have they really been successful or have they been solutions that do not adequately address the issues at hand?

Unfortunately, I think that we must really reassess our approach to the handling of Indigenous affairs. We cannot possibly believe that we have the answers to all of the problems of a community without asking them and working with them to improve their situation. We must acknowledge this fact and also note that we must deal with the Indigenous community and give them the respect that they truly deserve. They are a unique community, they are the true owners of this land and they must be treated as such.

Brief discussions with individuals from this community have suggested a few possible ways to work with this society to achieve maximum results. Firstly, we must really acknowledge the importance of elders in dealing with the Indigenous community. The elders are the highest authority and must be treated with the utmost respect, which they are entitled to. Nothing will happen in these communities without their approval. Their advice is essential and they have wisdom beyond their years. Through consulting with them we also gain benefits and ensure that the solution will really be tailored to their needs.

However, this can only occur effectively if the Indigenous are truly placed in a role of ownership of what they are doing. Unfortunately, due to numerous past blunders of the system, the Indigenous community highly distrusts the government and intervening parties, and understandably so. To receive trust or to at least gain some sort of compromise and sufficient involvement from them, we must wholeheartedly involve members of the community and of the society. An example of this includes involving members of the Indigenous community in what is known as the Indigenous Knowledge Centres that have been built by the State Library. Those knowledge centres have been built in rural Indigenous communities throughout Queensland and employ Indigenous librarians, which has increased the number of people who use these centres exponentially. It proves that if you really give the Indigenous people ownership of what they are doing they will truly appreciate the opportunity and will truly begin to work with the government and the intervening forces to improve their situation. They are not asking for much—just simple respect and acknowledgement of their opinions.

It is no secret that Indigenous people in Queensland live in Third World standard conditions. This is unacceptable. We have tried time and time again yet failed at almost every turn. It is time that we look at different ways of approaching this issue. We must take a different tack and give the Indigenous the respect that they deserve. They have the exact same rights as the rest of us, so we cannot go back on our word as the government and not truly respect them. We must serve all the people, regardless.

YOUTH MINISTER FOR STATE DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATION: Queensland's energy needs continue to increase each day as our population continues to grow, particularly here in the south-east corner. Too often in summer households lose power, whether due to summer storms or airconditioning units draining power due to extreme heat. With climate change and global warming continuing to have a significant effect on the Queensland environment and as the demand for electricity continues to grow as electric cooling becomes more prominent, the need for energy will continue to rise. Unfortunately, this is just one of the consequences associated with the constant migration of people from southern states such as New South Wales and Victoria to Queensland. However, the government is determined to deal with this issue strongly and effectively.

Currently, due to the energy shortage often faced in summer there are numerous forms of energy production being looked at instead of coal-fired power stations. These options include wind, solar and nuclear. All of these options have numerous positives and negatives and will involve large amounts of money. A more sustainable and reliable source of electricity during heatwaves is sourcing energy from interstate. Currently, the Queensland government is negotiating with our neighbour state New South Wales and the Northern Territory an energy-sharing agreement between the states and the Northern Territory, with the intention of taking this scheme national in the near future.

Essentially this means that we will be ensuring the electricity and energy needs for all Queenslanders. So if next summer south-east Queensland has a heatwave and we get short of energy we will be able to source energy from New South Wales or the Northern Territory. The same will be the case if New South Wales or the Northern Territory face a power shortage. Obviously the energy requirements of Queenslanders will come before all other states. This is a proactive step by the government to ensure that the energy needs of all Queenslanders are met. The government is committed to ensuring that Queensland will never be in the situation that Western Australia was in only a few weeks ago when a gas explosion saw the state desperately short of power and electricity. An energy-sharing agreement is the only logical solution.

YOUTH MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND PLANNING: Every week now for the past five years or so we have heard of the dreaded water crisis and how Australian residents are using too much water. We hear how Queensland councils squabble over water restrictions and to top it off we hear about people who rat out their neighbours for washing their dog or watering their petunias. By then if you have not already switched to the *Simpsons* you will hear them rabbit on about congestion, urban sprawl, hoons, greedy developers, climate change et cetera, et cetera. It seems that these stories have an underlying theme: lack of planning for the future.

Australia is a dry country. We have a dry climate. More than half of this country is desert. In the 1940s the population of Australia was seven million. By the year 2000 the population had reached near 20 million. In 1940 there were roughly one million people living in Queensland. By 2001 that number was roughly 3½ million. There was a need to upgrade the infrastructure of Queensland to meet a growing population but instead we sat back and watched the tumbleweed float by.

Congestion has become considerably worse in recent decades with roads being neglected, and after years of squandering water we are now quickly running out of it. We are building dams in rivers that have no water. We are now so desperate for water that we are looking at cloud seeding—an option we needed to look at years ago. Roads such as the Ipswich Motorway needed to be upgraded earlier. It was not until the federal government intervened that some action was actually taken. And then there is the Tugun bypass. Congestion on the southern Gold Coast progressively worsened until it reached a crisis point. It was then that action was taken, but it was not until years after the planning that the bypass was built due to bureaucracy.

What tends to happen is that we try to find a short-term solution to pacify the public and not look towards a long-term solution. Dams needed to be built and upgraded back in the seventies, eighties and nineties, as well as investigations into cloud seeding and desalination. It was essential to have looked at upgrading Queensland infrastructure in the south-east when the population skyrocketed in the seventies and eighties.

Hinze Dam on the Gold Coast has been at 100 per cent capacity for almost four months now, with water overflowing. That water could be piped into other Brisbane dams instead of flowing back into the ocean. If such a pipeline existed it may reduce some of the pressure on Brisbane citizens. A pipeline could also be built from the north to transport the water from up there down here to the south-east. There is a variety of options to ease the strain. We cannot eliminate the problem but we can do something to make it more bearable.

In terms of congestion, the Gold Coast City Council in cooperation with TransLink are planning a public transport corridor to increase the number of people using public transport. You must look at upgrading the public transport system to cover more area as well as being more efficient and reliable.

Curitiba in Brazil, which has a population size roughly that of Brisbane, has such an efficient—

Time expired.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR ALBERT: Whilst the current Queensland education system is generally and inherently good, it is imperative that we support and develop programs that encompass training and the arts, civics education, HPE programs and community service. As cliched as it may sound, education is not only what is dictated to you by your teachers in a classroom or written on the blackboard in front of you at school. We as the governmental leaders of this state should aim to develop students as a whole, not just in an academic sense.

There should be more support and opportunity for students who excel or wish to pursue careers in all areas of the arts such as music or dance, as well as those students who need training—for example, those who need to participate in traineeships in order to work in their chosen career. These opportunities and programs need to be developed and improved. As the young minds of today will in turn be our future potential political leaders, or at the very least the future voters of tomorrow, we need to include more civics education as well so that students can better understand the voting process and the government by which they are governed—the government of their country.

I believe a compulsory and better health and physical education program also needs to be implemented in order to develop students in a sporting sense as well as an academic sense. With Australia recently surpassing America as the country with the greatest obesity rates in the world, it is vital that we introduce such a program in order to educate young students about health, diet and

exercise and in order to give them an opportunity to exercise and to stay fit and healthy. We also need to introduce a form of compulsory community service in order to further develop the morals, values, attitudes and beliefs of students today. Students need to learn the value of giving back to the community through charity.

It is through the implementation and development of programs such as these that we can develop and improve students in a holistic sense and in an all-rounded sense. We already generally have an efficient and effective education system, but we need to improve and educate students not just in an academic sense. We cannot only focus on improving the academic curriculum. We also need to focus on improving sporting, artistic, community, political and cultural aspects of this program.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE: Today I would like to address an issue that is currently affecting many Queenslanders. This is the issue of the attainment of water. Currently, the government is taking two approaches to solve this issue neither of which are working effectively. Of course what I am talking about here is the proposed Traveston Dam and the Queensland water pipeline. To begin with, the Traveston Dam is affecting people in that area. They are losing their homes for a dam that is not going to work effectively. It will not be deep enough and will take too long to fill. Even if it does eventually fill, it will be infested with blue-green algae and the water quality will be too poor. What is worse is that land was already purchased in another area years ago for a proposed dam which was rejected when the governments changed over.

The water pipeline is also an idea that is not popular with the people. People's land value is being lost and some people are losing houses and it is completely unfair. Obviously people are very unhappy about this, but one thing that can help is to have a dual switch. In this way people in northern Queensland can gain access to the water in south-east Queensland and people in south-east Queensland can also gain access to water in north Queensland.

However, what really must be done on top of this is to place water tanks in every home. This must be made mandatory. This does not have to be used for drinking water in the house, but it does have to be used for things like gardens because this is the only way that people will be aware of how much water they are consuming. What is really happening here is that the government is trying to find a quick fix and this quick fix really is not working.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

YOUTH LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION: My question is to the Youth Premier. For many years now we have heard about the widening gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. Indigenous Australians have been placed in a subservient position for far too long. They have a shorter life expectancy due to their lack of access to social services, such as education and health. They make up just two per cent of this nation's population, yet they are vastly overrepresented in our prisons. It is required by state legislation that 10 per cent of all department workers and council workers are to be Indigenous, but I am sad to report that this is definitely not the case. Therefore, what action will this government take to address Queensland's Indigenous population—our fellow Queensland citizens? Or will it continue to sit on its hands?

YOUTH PREMIER: I thank the Youth Leader of the Opposition for his question. As I have clearly stated before, we acknowledge the fact that there is a widening gap between Indigenous people and the rest of Australia. This is something that must be rectified. The Youth Leader of the Opposition has pointed out a few of the reasons for that, including education and health. These are issues. However, we have to really address the cause—the root—of the entire problem. We the government believe that there are a couple of things that must be solved before we can really start addressing the issues.

A few of those things include the fact that the rest of Australia does not respect the Indigenous for who they are. We talk about racism in the community against different groups such as Muslims, Asians, Greeks and Italians. However, the racism and prejudice against Indigenous society is unbelievable and it is not given the same emphasis. People do not talk about it as much as they talk about racism towards other cultures. Why is that? Why do we put down Indigenous people? Why do we lower them? They really deserve so much more. We must work with the wider community to teach them about Indigenous people—to show them the respect they deserve so that Indigenous people truly feel appreciated, because once Indigenous people feel appreciated they will feel more inclined to work with the rest of community, they will feel more inclined to become involved. Why are they not involved in the community? Because they do not trust the rest of the community, and understandably so.

Other reasons that things are not working include the fact that Indigenous people have their own unique way of life. This is something that we must appreciate. They are an extremely old culture—one of the oldest in the world—and we must appreciate that and embrace that while we are working with them.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR CLAYFIELD: My question is to the Youth Minister for Education, Training and the Arts. Would the youth minister please advise the Assembly of the steps that the government has taken, and can take, to protect children in our schools, particularly given the recent highly publicised child pornography police investigations in which several Queensland teachers were implicated?

YOUTH MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING AND THE ARTS: I would like to thank the honourable youth member for Clayfield for his question. This is a topical and controversial issue and the government is treating the situation with the utmost care. Queensland children deserve to maintain their innocence and freedom without the physical and psychological trauma sustained as a result of these despicable acts of child pornography. This government takes the firm stance of zero tolerance on this issue. We are taking progressive action to staunch the flow of criminal activity.

It must be remembered that these cases are isolated. Therefore, it is appropriate for the government to reprimand these individuals on a case-by-case basis rather than approach the issue with generalised disciplinary action towards all teachers. We will remain diligent and informed during the continuing police investigations. We will take further action when decisions are made and verdicts are reached. Our children are the innocent victims of these crimes and this government is taking the necessary action to provide help and support to both children and their parents.

The query was to the release of the names of the schools from which these offenders came. My department has made the decision, in consultation with the government members, to release the names of the schools involved only to the parents of the children from those particular schools. It is unfair for these few offenders to stain the reputation of our Queensland schools, whether public, Catholic or independent.

The government and the Department of Education, Training and the Arts value the need for the protection of our schoolchildren. The Abdel-Magied government is making a stand to keep other children's innocence intact.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR BURDEKIN: My question is to the honourable Youth Minister for Justice and Attorney-General. My question is in relation to the amount of crime that is being committed in north Queensland. In particular, I would like the minister to inform the House in relation to the amount of policing, staffing and the crime rate that is happening in relation to youth.

YOUTH MINISTER FOR JUSTICE AND ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I would like to start by thanking the youth member for Burdekin for his question. The Abdel-Magied government recognises that youth crime is a problem, especially in areas like north Queensland. We also must remember, though, that our department has set up juvenile detention centres to deal with this issue once it has happened. But it is the causes of this that are more important.

Many factors contribute to youth crime, including boredom and low socioeconomic background, as well as poor and negative relationships between communities, youth and authority figures, including police. Boredom is one of the foundation problems. It is often the fact that there are an inadequate number of events and activities that are aimed at uniting youth and forming a close, positive bond between youth. Thus the youth feel disconnected and isolated within their exclusive groups of friends or small areas, which leads to animosity towards other groups, authority figures, parents and the wider community.

Because there is not a lot to do in these areas, these groups turn to violence and crime to keep themselves busy, or offer a stand against what they see as neglect of youth. Because the youth are not engaged with the community, these are just nameless people—they are no-one who they know and they do not see the full impact of their actions.

Also in the areas affected the people are mostly in the lower socioeconomic bracket. Often when parents are away all day working or otherwise absent, their children have little guidance in appropriate social behaviours. They often tend to have a more primal response, which is violence or crime, to threatening or otherwise unsatisfactory situations. This leads to clashes with authority figures and police.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR SANDGATE: My question is directed to the Youth Minister for State Development and Innovation. In light of the recent decision made by Qantas to not fly to north Queensland from Japan and other Asian countries, what action is currently being taken by the government to ensure the future of Queensland tourism?

YOUTH MINISTER FOR STATE DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATION: I thank the honourable youth member for Sandgate for her question and I note her particular interest in the tourism industry. Of course, the youth member for Sandgate has always been a strong advocate in ensuring this great state's booming tourist industry.

This government is moving Queensland's tourism industry forward. This government will not rest until the Queensland tourism industry is the largest in the world. As for Qantas, the loss of flight paths between Asia and north Queensland is regrettable. However, we do not believe it will significantly affect the north Queensland tourism industry. The government is working to secure low-cost flights to the north Queensland region. This government believes that consumers and the people of Queensland deserve cheaper flights. Virgin Blue and Jetstar are becoming the community's airlines of choice and this government supports these consumers.

However, let me remind the House of the pain that north Queensland has been subjected to over recent years. Cyclone Larry caused immense damage and pain to north Queensland and it was this government that stood up for the people of north Queensland. This government worked with the federal government to ensure rapid redevelopment of north Queensland. This government ensured an agreement with the federal government to match our redevelopment effort dollar for dollar. This shows how the government understands how Cyclone Larry damaged north Queensland's tourism industry. This government will never forget north Queensland. This government will always stand up for the people of north Queensland and will continue to fight for the tourism industry in north Queensland.

Mr SPEAKER: It is great to be a north Queenslander as the member for Townsville today after hearing that passionate address. I call the member for Southport.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR SOUTHPORT: My question is to the Minister for Transport, Infrastructure and Planning. Given the huge public concern over desalination plants in regard to their environmental ramifications, questionable efficiency and detrimental impact on tourism, why has the government constructed one in the environmentally sensitive Gold Coast tourism hotspot that is the electorate of Currumbin, the minister's electorate of residence, and why is the government planning to build two more in Peregian and Kawana, which is another government minister's electorate? Why must those plants be located inside a national park and busy residential and retail precinct?

YOUTH MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND PLANNING: I thank the youth member for Southport for his question. This government supports desalination as an option to get more water. We have put it on the Gold Coast and we are looking into other areas to ensure that there is a steady supply of water for every single citizen in this state who is suffering from a lack of water. We are aware of the environmental impacts. We are hesitant to do this, but we are looking into other options to ensure that we get enough water as well.

The opposition might not be aware but we are: we are looking into cloud seeding, we are doing investigations into it. We are looking for other options before desalination to ensure that there are no environmental impacts or that they are minimal, because we cannot live without our environment. We cannot live without the environment and, vice versa, the environment cannot live without us.

We all know that desalination plants produce less greenhouse gases, which is a positive for the environment. We know that there is a high cost to maintain them, but it is worth it because the desalination plants will mean more jobs for engineers. We know that the water is cleaner than normal water because the reverse osmosis filtration system makes the water so pure.

Before I sit down I would remind the opposition to look into more viable questions to ask and to get all their facts before they ask them, because we are looking at other options. If they are too narrow-minded to think that, that is their problem because this government supports every citizen and their need for water.

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable youth members, the time for questions has expired. Before breaking for our morning tea session, I remark from the chair that this has been an outstanding start. I commend all of you for the start that you have had over the last half an hour.

As the member for Townsville my electorate takes in Palm Island, the largest Indigenous Aboriginal community in Australia. The very presence of the Aboriginal flag and the Torres Strait Islander flag, which I commenced here on 22 May last year, signifies the importance given to the issues that you have raised today. I particularly congratulate the Youth Premier and the Youth Opposition Leader for their statements and questions on these areas. To all of you who have contributed, this has been an outstanding start. The Youth Parliament will commence again at 11 am sharp.

Sitting suspended from 10.35 am to 11.11 am.

MOTION

Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders

YOUTH MEMBER FOR CALLIDE, by leave, without notice: I move—

That so much of the standing and sessional orders be suspended to allow the immediate presentation to the House of a youth bill for a youth act to implement a changed standard for public consumption of alcohol in licensed premises in the state of Queensland.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

PUBLIC SERVICE OF ALCOHOL YOUTH BILL

First Reading

YOUTH MEMBER FOR CALLIDE: I present the bill and 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.

Second Reading

YOUTH MEMBER FOR CALLIDE: I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

The government have been drunk at the wheel for too long. They have continued to push aside the issues of alcohol and how it is affecting the young people of today because they themselves are drunken fools. Alcohol is the most commonly used and abused drug, especially by young people. It is widely accepted and is a part of our culture, unfortunately. Binge drinking specifically is the major issue stemming from alcohol consumption. Our generation is seeing young people starting to drink earlier and heavier. This government is setting a bar for generations to come of how to be raging alcoholics. It is because of this increase in alcohol consumption that we are yet to really see the effects of this binge drinking, but we the opposition, unlike the government, do not want to wait and see what happens. We want to take action now. That is what this bill is about: taking an issue so prevalent in our society and trying to fix it now rather than waiting for it to get worse.

We the opposition do not want to wait and see the effects drinking could have on each and every one of us and our fellow Queenslanders. The bill is proactive rather than reactive and aims to stop the destructive binge-drinking cycle in our society by helping young people to be more aware of the dangers of excessive consumption and, in turn, hopefully reducing alcohol related injuries and death.

Unlike the government's approach to this issue, we believe it is not going to be easy. It is not going to be as simple as raising the prices of popular drinks, the effects of which, as we have seen, are that people are turning to harder liquor. It is going to be a challenge, but we the opposition are willing to put in the time and effort to help our fellow young people. This bill encourages the involvement of parents in a young person's education on alcohol. A parent is a young person's most influential role model and the responsibility of their education when it comes to alcohol should be placed back in the parents' hands.

Currently, apart from seeing parents having a few beers on the weekend, parents do not necessarily have, or always play, a major role in a young person's decisions about drinking, but they should. This bill, by lowering the legal drinking age to 16, ensures that young people are not being let out from their parents' care and responsibility at the same age that they can start purchasing and consuming alcohol legally. It places too much importance on turning 18 as the epitome of an age when everything happens, you can leave your parents and drink as much booze as you want. This is their initiation into the drinking world. The forbidden fruit is suddenly available, and all too often I have seen young people at the mercy of alcohol because they suddenly had parental and legal consent to consume.

This bill gives young people legal consent to consume while they are still under the responsibility and care of their parents. Therefore, it allows for a gradual introduction into the drinking world. The classes we have put in place ensure this. Parents are not allowed to purchase more than one standard drink of beer or wine for 16- to 18-year-olds at a time. Those between 18 and 21 can still only purchase one standard drink of alcohol. They cannot go buying jugs of beer and rounds for people. It is only one drink at a time for them. People over the age of 21 are allowed to purchase any serving of alcohol but it is one standard drink for those who are 16. It is a gradual introduction into the drinking world, unlike the current situation where young people are pushed into a society which prioritises drinking as the epitome of what happens at the age of 18.

Binge drinking is unfortunately a part of our culture. It is an issue that needs to be addressed now for the people of tomorrow, and the sooner the government recognises that the sooner we can move on and pass this amazing bill. The government may want to encourage the so-called Australian culture, as they are all drunk on power and have been for the last 10 years, but we the opposition do not. This bill is the kind of initiative and example of forward thinking which the government should take their lead from. This bill is what is needed to finally bring the issue out of the shadows and force the eyes of the public onto it.

The government for too long have tried to blame young people for this problem and have enforced control and restriction, but this bill offers education and freedom. Haven't we seen in the past how badly people respond to more restrictions and regulations, especially—

An honourable youth member interjected.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR CALLIDE: No, they're not. They are freeing up the regulations that already occur. If you give people the opportunity to respond to choice and freedom, they will amaze you in what they do.

An honourable youth member interjected.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR CALLIDE: It is nice to see that you think of young people as being so credible.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Please direct your comments through the chair.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR CALLIDE: Binge drinking needs to be brought out of the shadows so that it is not seen—

Time expired.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR EVERTON: Mr Deputy Speaker, I am not exactly sure what it is about this bill that I find more insulting. Perhaps it is the fact that the opposition would just throw the health of our youth to the winds, or perhaps it is the fact that they are willingly allowing the exploitation of our youth, or perhaps it is the irony that the opposition would turn this chamber into an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting for a bill that is not even going to work. Firstly, I invite the House to look at the facts and to look at the devastating effects that drinking can have. I am not necessarily talking about binge drinking. I am talking about one drink for a fully grown female or two or three drinks for a fully grown male. That is what is considered to be the safe limit for adults; it is not the veritable children that the opposition would have drinking alcohol.

The fact is that even for moderate drinking for every year earlier that a person starts drinking they are seven per cent more likely to get an alcohol related disease. Unlike the opposition, I am not willing to sacrifice the health of our youth simply so that they can have a few beers.

Then we have the problem of exploitation that can occur when we put young people in the situation that the opposition wants them in. I would invite the House to step away from the specifics of this bill and envisage the situation that it allows. For a moment think of any boarding school across the state. Let us think of a group of young girls who have gone out on a Friday night and who walk past a pub. At the moment, they just keep walking. The opposition would like them to stop, walk in and have an older guy who is possibly predatory buy them a drink. I would like to join the opposition in thinking that that situation is completely innocent and nothing bad could ever go wrong, but let us be a little pragmatic about it. That is not a situation that we want our youth to be in. We do not want to open them up to exploitation. The opposition can do that if they want, but I do not want to allow it. Then we get to the real crux of the matter. This bill is simply not going to work.

An honourable youth member: In your opinion.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR EVERTON: No, not in my opinion. I do not think it is a matter of opinion; I think it is a considered fact. The fact is that the reasons young people drink are far more complex than simply because they saw their parents drinking. A whole range of issues are at play—peer pressure, escapism and, yes, parents can play a role. But the opposition has said that when teenagers do not drink with their parents, what and how parents teach their teenagers about alcohol consumption plays a major role in a young person's decisions about drinking. Because we have this huge issue with binge drinking I do not think that parents are doing a very good job and I do not think that we should give them a chance to do an even worse one.

The opposition even acknowledged that putting the power in the hands of the parents would not work, because at the end of the bill it tacked on the completely unrelated subject of advertising. The opposition said it really wanted an education campaign. We think that is the only bit of the bill that would have any effect, because it allows for people to get the facts about drinking. Instead of what their parents may or may not do, instead of watching their parents who could be binge drinking or who could not be binge drinking, they are going to have the facts and they will be able to make decisions for themselves.

So it comes down to the youth opposition members really needing to get themselves off the juice. They need to wake up from their hangover. They need to look at what they are doing to young people with this bill. They need to consider options that are actually going to help reduce binge drinking instead of just causing a riot.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR WATERFORD: Most youth members would say that their parents were the biggest influence on them as they were growing up. Anything that parents do, their children will do. Some may argue that we owe them and, by that, create a new generation—and a safe one.

The legal age of drinking is 18. Hitting the age of 18 and then being able to drink legally is like a dangerous epidemic—to start drinking straightaway, bam, you have the legal consent to be able to touch that alcohol and consume it. That is what is dangerous. You are taking it out to parties and you are giving it out straightaway at the age of 18.

If I was introduced to alcohol at the age of, say, 16, it would be a gradual introduction. It is one stepping stone of many. This bill is a gradual introduction to alcoholic beverages at the age of 16. If it is a weak, light drink that the 16-year-old is consuming, it will not be as effective as it is now. If I was under 16 years old and I was allowed to take a really strong alcoholic beverage, obviously I would not be very healthy as I am growing up. But as you are growing up and, say, at 16 years old drinking a light beverage, your body is becoming accustomed to the light beverage. As you get older you can go up a level to the next class of alcohol. As stated in the bill, we have classes of alcohol as in the one, the two, and the three. The three is the liquor that is brought in, take out—

Time expired.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR REDCLIFFE: It appears as though the entire opposition is intoxicated—thinking that this bill is even worth mentioning. In fact, if it were not for the chairs supporting them, they would probably pass out on the floor!

In relation to this legislation, the opposition has forgotten the key responsibility: the health of the youth of Queensland. Let us be realistic here and take a step back and look at the facts. The statistics show that over 3,000 deaths occur annually due to injury or disease caused by alcohol consumption. Furthermore, high-risk drinking is annually responsible for over 400,000 hospital bed days. The impact that this has on resources in the health system is immeasurable. Parental consent for adolescent drinking behaviours will not solve this.

Alcoholism can cause numerous health problems and disorders. In the short term, binge drinking can cause anxiety, depression and, of course, the obvious addiction to the drug. In the long term, the physical effects can be irreversible. Even moderate alcohol consumption can lead to pancreatic disorders and liver malfunction. The consumption of alcohol, even as little as one drink, can have devastating effects on the human brain, let alone the effect that it can have on the adolescent brain, which is 16 times more susceptible to neurological damage because it is still growing and developing. The health of this state is most important. If this ludicrous bill is passed, the health of all innocent adolescents is in jeopardy.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR GYMPIE: I am sure we can all agree on one thing: there is the far too common occurrence of binge drinking leading to our youth ending up in hospital with alcohol poisoning or other alcohol related illnesses and injuries. Today is the time to act and make a difference in Queensland. Over the past 10 years Queensland youth have been excessively engaging in binge drinking. By passing this bill the people of our state will better understand safe alcohol consumption.

While we are aware of many of the long-term effects of alcohol, we are yet to see the full consequences of binge drinking and under-age drinking. People drink alcohol, and that is inevitable. That is not likely to stop any time soon. Although the government may say that lowering the legal age to drink will only increase the ever-growing problem we have already in Queensland, we strongly believe that by teaching youth about the importance of responsible alcohol consumption and reinforcing not only the risks of alcohol consumption but what it can actually do to our bodies at such a young age, the incidence of medical illness and injuries related to alcohol consumption will be significantly minimised.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR MUDGEERABA: Obviously, the opposition is living a fairytale and is completely out of touch with reality. This bill places teenagers in dangerous situations. Despite the documented effect of alcohol abuse, the opposition has clearly neglected that fact. Around 40 per cent of young people report alcohol related violence and around 30 per cent report alcohol related sexual risk taking. Those are incredibly concerning statistics. The current data indicates widespread regular binge drinking, which is putting our youth in dangerous and harmful situations.

Perhaps if this bill were to pass some members of society would take advantage of these young, naive children, because this bill is essentially placing young adults in the situation where they are not only exposed to alcohol but also reliant on older people to purchase it for them. We would like to join the opposition in its fantasy where the whole of society is trustworthy, but the fact is that it is not.

We are talking about people whose frontal cortex—and for the youth opposition I point out that that is the decision-making part of your brain—physically cannot determine when they have had enough to drink or whether someone is trustworthy. Therefore, this bill should not be passed, because it is irresponsible and reckless. It is outside the criteria this House prides itself on when debating important issues such as under-age drinking.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR WHITSUNDAY: Government members are as dull as a drunken dingo. They stand there non-responsive, unaccountable and clueless when it comes to the youth of Queensland and binge drinking. In order for the government to deal with this prevalent issue it needs to first identify it. The issue before us involves youth and binge drinking. The government has been ignorant and should deal with this issue head on before serious consequences occur. The narrow-

minded government needs to deal with this issue now—not tomorrow; now. So why hasn't it? What will it take before this government takes action and makes changes? It would be irresponsible for this House not to take this brilliant opportunity to implement cultural change in the state of Queensland.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR SOUTHERN DOWNS: The opposition's spiel is a cheap sham and a populist load of rubbish. In placing the responsibility back into the hands of parents, the opposition has assumed that only parents have an influence on their children. This notion is completely ridiculous. To be honest, I am a little surprised at the opposition's utter blindness. The youth of our society are influenced by many things other than parents. Peers, TV, radio and the media in general all have an impact on the youth of our society. These factors may even influence the actions of youth more immensely than parents do.

If this is so, how can the bill possibly stop binge drinking? The answer is simple. It will not. However, as the government is reasonable we have considered the opposition's notion of parents, but we continue to discover flaws. Even if parents were the only influence on youth who is to say that parents themselves are responsible? I suggest to you, Mr Deputy Speaker, that perhaps the opposition has not thought this through, which we as the government believe is a little irresponsible.

From the moment a child is born they are exposed to their parent's habits—perhaps their parent's dirty habits such as binge drinking. What if parents are not adequate role models? What if they teach their children bad habits instead of deterring them? What will the opposition suggest then, may I ask? Will they suggest that we lower the drinking age to 10? With irresponsibility—

Time expired.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR KAWANA: Firstly, I want to say that this bill is a great opportunity to put power back into the parents' hands. Drinking is prevalent in the community. Young people drink today. It is a fact. I would like to put to the government of the day how many members had a drink before the age of 16? How many are drinking before the age of 18? Honestly, how can they sit there and deny this bill?

This bill creates an opportunity to give power back to parents. It gives them the respect and the ability to show their children how to consume alcohol responsibly. I believe that the government would like to tell parliament here today that parenting skills are leaving kids up the creek without a paddle. In fact, the government would like to say that parents are not doing a good enough job out there teaching their kids how to drink. I would like to know how many parents are sitting over there today? How many in the government would actually like to say that their parents have not given them a drink and therefore were not left up the creek without a paddle themselves?

What we are trying to create with this bill is cultural change, generational change, that makes drinking alcohol not something that is prevalent when you become 18—when you start drinking straightaway, you start voting straightaway, you start going wild straightaway. We want to create a long-lasting change. Look at countries such as the Netherlands, Germany, Greece, Switzerland—countries where alcohol is available at an earlier age. Sure, they have a weird accent saying, 'Ya,' but I do not think that is because they drink at an early age.

This is an opportunity for generational change. I think this is something that as a parliament we should really consider and put forward. This is an opportunity for growth and change for Queensland and for the youth. Sure, there are health problems related to binge drinking, but by restricting alcohol to young people they are going to go out there and find other ways and means to drink in unsafe and unpredictable circumstances. They need to be able to drink in safe circumstances and in a safe area.

Time expired.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR MOUNT ISA: The opposition is considered by many in this government to simply be intoxicated and currently on vacation in Neverland. In fact, if it were not for the government supporting them, they would probably be passed out on the floor. This generation of drinkers are starting younger due to the opposition letting Queenslanders throw away their own health. How can the opposition sit there and put forward that young people can be exploited because they are not mature enough to know what is going on and to determine what is right and wrong? The opposition has simply forgotten the health effects of alcohol on children. It is simple.

By supporting a bill like this, one may end up with cataclysmic epidemics and the state being considered as the drunk state. Is this how we want to be seen by the rest of Australia? We want to be setting the example, do we not? The health of this state is simply in our hands. No-one can change it except us. With passing this bill we can say goodbye to adolescent health—simply goodbye, out the door, see you later. This is not only dire but ludicrous.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR FITZROY: We may be in Neverland, as the member says, but at least we are not a bunch of hypocrites. We have heard from the youth members for Mudgeeraba, Redcliffe, Southern Downs and Mount Isa. They have all told us the facts of the current binge drinking problems under the current legislation. What is the government doing about it?

A youth opposition member: Nothing.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR FITZROY: Exactly, nothing. The current proposals we are putting forward are resolutions to this problem. We have heard about the influences. Influences are a chain of events. One parent influences their 16-year-old who then talks to their friends who have also been influenced by their parents. It is not just one parent influencing one child; it is a number of parents of a number of friends who all have the same idea.

This is going to work. By doing this we are introducing gradual tolerance. This is not just saying, 'You can have a glass of vodka at 16.' There are classes. From 16 to 18 you can have light alcohol. It is a tolerance thing. You cannot just get to 18 and be given any type of alcohol. That causes binge drinking. When you get to 18 you can have the next type of alcohol. That is when you will be more tolerant. Your body will be getting used to it. There are health problems that you all know about but will not do anything about.

Time expired.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Langbroek): Before calling the final speaker in the second reading debate, I congratulate you all on the debate so far and I just want to have a little word about interjections. In the words of our current Speaker and other Speakers, interjections are welcomed when they are witty, tolerated when they are relevant and frowned upon when they are persistent and annoying. But, remember, it is not a lecture theatre; it is a house of debate, so we do welcome interjections.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR CURRUMBIN: Firstly, I would like to remind the opposition that the only problem here is this bill. I would like to bring the opposition members back to reality and take them out of their little dreamy land.

A youth opposition member interjected.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR CURRUMBIN: Yes, and I am about to explain it. Parents are no longer the dominant influence on this generation.

This bill is aimed at curbing binge drinking but where is their bill for binge drinking on private property? Most binge drinking occurs on private property. Who said that? It was the Australian Bureau of Statistics. I know the opposition does not like statistics because they have not been able to name any. The opposition keeps arguing about the risks of binge drinking, but I would like to know where in their bill is there mention of binge drinking on private property? I would put my name to it now.

The opposition lives in a fantasy world. The age of 16 is not a stepping stone for alcohol. It is a stepping stone towards teenage growth, particularly mental growth. It is not to be tested by the opposition's bill with regard to alcohol.

We have heard the opposition say that somehow this will assist people with education with regard to binge drinking. On this side of the House we believe it will not because it is teaching that it is okay to drink at 16 as long as you have a supervisor. It does not have to be a parent or a guardian but somebody who acts in that role. Has the opposition read that part of the bill?

Opposition members interjected.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR CURRUMBIN: I am glad it is your bill and I cannot understand why you are even voting for it. Overall, the bill does not prove to be an effective instrument to combat binge drinking. Yet again the opposition has failed to produce any evidence.

Time expired.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! That concludes the second reading debate. I now call the youth member for Callide to respond.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR CALLIDE, in reply: If parents cannot be trusted to educate their children, who can? The government wants you to believe that we know what is better for each individual young person and their parents. No-one here really believes that we or any other government body really knows what each individual young person needs to really understand alcohol and the effects on their bodies, so why not put the responsibility in the parents' hands, the people who know us best?

We acknowledge that parents are not the only influence on a young person, but they are a major influence. Yes, young people are influenced by outside resources and other people and, yes, sometimes parents do not always have a negative impact on their children. However, I think the government will find that people thrive on responsibility and freedom and choice, and if you place this responsibility in the parents' hands they will rise to the occasion. Let us have some trust in the people who work in this country, the people who vote for the people who run this country. The government is repeating itself. They can argue this as much as they want, but something needs to be done about this problem and this bill initiates that. The government needs to get rid of its beer goggles before it wakes up one morning with an ugly mistake and lots of regrets.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 to 6, as read, agreed to.

Clause 7—

YOUTH MEMBER FOR CURRUMBIN: I move the following amendment—

1 Clause 7 (Penalties)—

At page 7, lines 11, 16, 22, 26 and page 8, lines 1 and 10, 'mandatory'—

insert—

'maximum'.

Clause 7, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 8 to 10, as read, agreed to.

Clause 11—

YOUTH MEMBER FOR SOUTHERN DOWNS: I move the following amendment—

1 After clause 11 (Advertising)

At page 9, after line 17—

insert—

'Part 5 Licensing

'12 Responsible Consumption of Alcohol Permit

'In order to consume alcohol on licensed premises individuals must—

- (a) be aged at least 16 years; and
- (b) obtain a Responsible Consumption of Alcohol Permit (a **RCAP**).

'13 Persons must produce RCAP

'Staff employed to serve alcohol in licensed premises are authorised to request persons to produce a RCAP before supplying them with alcohol.

'14 Requirement to carry RCAP

- '(1) Persons issued with a RCAP must carry it at all times.
- '(2) It is an offence to consume alcohol in licensed venues without being the holder of a RCAP.
Maximum penalty—\$500 and additional penalties with a maximum penalty of \$1500 for the use of a fake RCAP.
- '(3) It is an offence to fail to produce a RCAP when requested by staff employed in licensed premises.
Maximum penalty—\$300 and the suspension of the person's RCAP.

'15 RCAP regulations

- '(1) Applicants must successfully complete the RCAP course conducted by the authority to obtain a permit.
- '(2) Successful completion of the course is dependent on passing a written examination held at the end of the course.
- '(3) The course must include information about—
 - (a) the long and short term effects of alcohol use; and
 - (b) standard drink size; and
 - (c) current Queensland alcohol laws; and
 - (d) responsible drinking.
- '(4) Permits are valid for 5 years and may be renewed for a further 5 years subject to successful completion of a renewal course that ensures that permittees are—
 - (a) aware of updates in Queensland alcohol laws; and
 - (b) reminded of the negative effects of binge drinking.

'16 Information on RCAP

'A RCAP must contain the following information—

- (a) name;
- (b) date of birth;
- (c) photo identification;
- (d) residential address;
- (e) individual RCAP number;
- (f) any other information as decided by the authority.'

The opposition continues to stand in this House and oppose our logic and, therefore, the opposition must be deemed irresponsible. As the government, we are very concerned about the alcohol education of our Queenslanders. The opposition has been counterproductive in producing this bill as it has provided education for the public but has given us no proof of this education. The education the opposition is proposing to provide will be similar to high school sex education classes: ineffective. It is very easy for teenagers to sit in the back of a classroom, ignore the facts of alcohol and then go and get smashed as soon as they turn 16. However, by imposing a test on this information there is suddenly a huge incentive to learn it. We cannot force people to drink responsibly, but we can sure as hell make sure that they are not allowed to drink unless they are adequately educated.

By inserting this amendment, the government will provide Queenslanders with licences, which will be evidence that they have undertaken a responsible consumption of alcohol course. This licensing is imperative to the bill. Queenslanders need a licence to drive and Queenslanders need a licence to serve alcohol, so why should Queenslanders not have a licence to drink? This licensing will also require parents to obtain a responsible consumption of alcohol permit ensuring a more educated, more responsible Queensland. Through this bill, the opposition is placing the responsibility back into the hands of parents and hence those parents must also be educated so that they can set a better example for their children.

Time expired.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR FITZROY: The government has been complaining about the way 16-year-olds can walk up to anyone and ask them to buy them alcohol. The licence states nothing about any permits for the people to actually buy it. The permits would show the signatures of the only people who are able to buy alcohol for the 16- or 17-year-old. The teenagers cannot ask just anyone. It could be a maximum of three people. That is not going over the top. As well as this, if the 16-year-old does not obtain a RCA permit, they will be unable to drink until they are 18. What is the problem with that? You have nothing about that in your amendments.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member will address her comments through the chair.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR MOUNT ISA: The stance of the almost irrational opposition for not once considering the amendment shows the reason they are sitting where they are. In relation to a safe and secure state, this amendment is paramount to the bill and it should become law. Without the merits of the licensing amendment, this will be axiomatically abused by the people and responsibility will not be taken by this government for the incompetence of the anti-Queensland opposition.

Once again, the opposition has been counterproductive in proposing that there is an education scheme, yet where is the evidence? The opposition is clearly against our responsible governing, thus their opposition to this amendment makes them irresponsible. How can Queensland have faith in an irresponsible opposition?

Licensing is needed with almost anything. We need licences to drive and licences to serve alcohol, so why not have a licence for drinking? It makes sense. The government has effectively supported a more intelligent approach than those sitting opposite me today. Would Queensland want a state of responsible governors rather than a counterproductive opposition? In conclusion, we find the opposition reckless and irresponsible and we find that this amendment balances the bill. We call upon the members of the opposition to vote in support of our amendment.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR KAWANA: Firstly, I would like to say as the opposition that we actually think your amendment is amazing and adds to an excellent written proposal and bill by the opposition, and we would like to thank you for putting it forward. But the problem we have with it is that there is not enough clarity within the amendment that makes it a plausible and great option for this bill. We do like the idea of having a RCAP for people who can responsibly drink, but the problem is there are too many ifs and maybes within this amendment. For instance, who would be able to enforce such a policy? Who would be able to monitor whether someone has a RCAP or not? I think you are creating an unrealistic expectation on the licensees which is unfair and unjust and should not happen to them. They do not deserve it.

In addition, the minimum age limit you have put on the RCAP is 16. You have not put a maximum age limit on it. What you are saying is that anybody from the age of 16 to 80 or 90 or 100 should have a RCAP and that they should have it on them at all times. How can you justify this? Honestly, if somebody is walking down the street and a police officer pulls them up and they do not have a RCAP—it does not actually state that they are not meant to; it says that they must have it on them at all times. If they are in a licensed venue they must also have it on them at all times. What if they are only there to play bingo or play the pokies and they do not want to drink alcohol? You are saying that they have to get a licence in order to enter that building or else they could be fined \$500. Where is the justice in that? Honestly. I think your amendment needs further clarification in order for it to be—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member will address her comments through the chair.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR KAWANA: I am sorry, Mr Deputy Speaker. I believe that the licence has great value, but there is also another issue within the amendment that I think needs to be justified. The amendment states that a person must pass a written examination. What if somebody has a disability that does not allow them to pass a written examination? You are disadvantaging those who cannot speak English, those who cannot—

Time expired.

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

Ayes—60

Noes—25

Resolved in the affirmative.

Motion agreed to.

Clause 11, as amended, agreed to.

Third Reading

YOUTH MEMBER FOR CALLIDE: I move—

That the youth bill, as amended, be now read a third time.

Division: Question put—That the youth bill, as amended, be now read a third time.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Langbroek): I want to make a point of clarification, youth members. You are now voting on the bill itself, not on the amendment. Before the bars close I just want to remind you of that in case you are not aware.

Ayes—33

Noes—48

Resolved in the negative.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Youth members, can I just advise on a procedural matter. For those of you who were confused about what you were actually voting on there, that is why it is obviously very important to be aware of what you are voting on. That is why I made that clarification before we moved to the final vote. When you have an amendment or when we move, as we did, to adopt the bill, then you have to be aware of your position. Usually you have a whip who guides you on your side to make sure that you end up on the right side. That was a fairly decisive result at 48 to 33. Whilst there may have been some of you who thought you were on the wrong side, based on the decision that you made clearly it was a pretty decisive vote. But it does show that when you go to vote it is important to know exactly what your position is so that when a division is called you know where to go. That is something you learn about in the process of parliament.

MATTERS OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Before calling the Youth Premier on matters of public importance, I draw to the attention of youth members standing order 244 'Conduct in the Chamber'. Standing order 244(2) says, 'A member must acknowledge the Speaker on entering and leaving the Chamber.' I know that many youth members are doing that. But subsection (6), a little known rule says, 'Members shall acknowledge the Chair in passing to or from their seats when crossing the Chamber.' So when members move from one side to the other it is also a standing order that the chair should be acknowledged.

YOUTH PREMIER, by leave, without notice: I move—

That this House supports compulsory chemical castration to repeat sex offenders who have been deemed beyond rehabilitation.

Before I begin an explanation as to why we support this motion I would like to make a few clarifying points. Firstly, I will look into what we define as a sex offender, the people who will really be affected by this motion. Next I will clarify the process of chemical castration and then move on to the reasons why the government supports this motion.

Firstly, the people who will be affected by this motion are serious repeat sex offenders who are deemed beyond rehabilitation. These include repeat offences of paedophilia, child molestation and rape. We are not restricting the motion to these charges but declaring that the severity must be on a similar level to these crimes. To determine what we deem 'beyond rehabilitation' we would advocate analysis by a medical professional who specialises in mental health because we recognise that people who continuously abuse the rights and freedom of another are mentally unstable and in the majority of cases have been abused as children. We believe that those people who have repeatedly been reported and rehabilitated through the system and continuously reoffend obviously need more thorough and affirmative action to be taken to secure the wellbeing of potential victims from one of the most traumatic experiences a person can go through. It is a life-changing experience and something that I hope will never happen.

I would like to quickly go through the process of chemical castration just so the House understands what it involves. It is essentially a biochemical process in which the primary gonads are deactivated. This involves what is called the interior pituitary gland and gonads and the physical or chemical destruction of these gonad tissues. The result is the suppression of primary and secondary sexual characteristics of a person—this includes their sex drive, their appearance, their masculinity and so forth. The theory is that the removal of sexual characteristics, especially the sex drive, removes the unreasonable and damaging sex urges that cause these individuals to offend. However, this is not infallible and this is something we recognise. The desire for sex is accompanied by a power complex, and once chemical castration occurs and the sex drive is removed it does lead to other forms of physical harm to themselves or others, psychological destruction and other notable behavioural modifications.

However, obviously such a process that stops a serial sex offender from committing such a seriously disturbing crime is a good thing. Chemical castration of these individuals not only protects the rights of those people who could have been victims but also gives affirmative reassurance to those

people who have had such acts committed on them. To see somebody who has committed such a crime be repaid for what they have done to you really does help the healing process. It is an added foresight of this government.

Chemical castration may seem like a dramatic, drastic solution or perhaps a bandaid solution. We do acknowledge that we must look to the source and tackle the root of the problem, but for some it is simply too late. Some may argue about the rights of the perpetrators, but I say to them: what about the rights of the victims? Our job is to protect the rights of these people and we will not stand for anyone who takes these rights away no matter what they are.

YOUTH DEPUTY PREMIER: Sex offenders would have to be the worst of the worst amongst our criminal system.

Youth member for Mackay interjected.

YOUTH LEADER OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The Youth Deputy Premier finds the youth member for Mackay's comments highly offensive. I would like to call a point of order on the point of misrepresentation.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is no point of order. If the member finds a personal reflection under the standing orders then he might call a point of order. There is no point of order. I call the Youth Deputy Premier.

YOUTH DEPUTY PREMIER: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I think you are correct; it is not a misrepresentation at all. Each year the Queensland government spends millions of dollars to incarcerate such offenders when more often than not those foul creatures will simply reoffend and end up back in corrective services. For many sex offenders sex is a psychotic condition which cannot be effectively treated. Although these offenders may feel remorse, they cannot control their urges. This bill will help repeat offenders treat their condition without any drawn out counselling and further risk. With today's modern medicine, the procedure can be easily reversed if needed. For members of the opposition, if they feel it necessary to argue the costs of this procedure, I put it to them that the costs of the procedure far outweigh the costs of treating victims of sex related crimes. If that is still a problem, then I suggest that the opposition starts up a voluntary counselling service.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Before calling the Youth Leader of the Opposition, can I just admit that I did not understand the standing orders that are relevant to the Youth Parliament and I want to apologise to the Youth Leader of Government Business. She attempted to apply standing order 3, misrepresentation or insult, and it may well have been a point of order but I did not realise. So I apologise to the Youth Leader of Government Business. I will now hand over to the next Deputy Speaker, who is the member for Lockyer.

YOUTH LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION: This matter of public importance that has been presented to the House by this government is so ridiculous that they should be locked up behind bars with the sexual offenders. The chemical castration of sexual offenders is an absolute joke because it does not address the fundamental issue, which is that this involves a psychological issue that needs to be evaluated. Chemical castration may be effective in preventing some sexual offences, but it will not stop these criminals from reoffending through violence and other forms of sexual assault.

The government may like to know that currently Queensland has appropriate and proactive laws such as the Dangerous Prisoners (Sexual Offenders) Act which protects this state in a humane and just fashion and that keeps people such as sexual offenders behind bars. This motion goes too far. What will we do next? Will they hack off the fingers of thieves? If people—

An honourable member interjected.

YOUTH LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION: If you want to hack their hands off, go ahead. If there are people like government members who talk constantly, will we hack their tongues off? If people sexually reoffend, will we simply whop their crown jewels off? If this motion goes ahead, heads and balls will truly roll.

YOUTH MINISTER FOR HEALTH: The opposition has completely failed to even look at the idea of chemical castration and I put it to the House that perhaps it is because the idea just makes them wince. They have not really looked at the benefits of chemical castration; they have simply said that it is inhumane. I point out to the opposition that not only are we protecting the rights of the potential victims of these people—because they are reoffenders there is every reason to believe that they will reoffend again and that is something that we have to stop—but also by committing a crime in the first place you are giving up a certain number of rights that you have under law. For example, imprisoning people with no indefinite term is not exactly what you would call humane either.

The fact is that the opposition has simply looked at this on a very shallow level. They have not looked at the fact that chemical castration can be a huge deterrent to sex crimes in the first place, because it is clearly shown that these people are not deterred by going to jail because they have gone there before and it has not stopped them from reoffending, so perhaps we need to do something to offer

a worse penalty so that we can keep the innocent citizens of Queensland safe. In that way, we are not burdened with people in our society who are chronic reoffenders so that we do always have that fear in our minds and that knowledge that the person is likely to reoffend.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR SOUTHPORT: It is very clear that members from both sides of this House are deeply concerned about this important issue. While the government most likely has the best of intentions, it is clear that it has gone too far and is being disgustingly cavalier with the lives of their fellow human beings. These sex offenders have committed their crimes for a variety of complex reasons, mostly due to their own psychological suffering. Chemical castration is a harsh, knee-jerk reaction to this problem, and the offenders' already turbulent lives will be turned upside-down and there is no guarantee that they will not turn to violence to vent their frustration at being treated like animals.

An honourable member: They are animals.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR SOUTHPORT: Thank you. These people are in some ways extremely violent, and castrating them does not stop their ability to molest their victims or keep them from causing physical harm to those in contact with them. Would the government cut the arms and legs off murderers? What the government is proposing with this motion is akin to archaic stonings of adulterers. In the words of Mahatma Ghandi, an eye for an eye just makes the whole world blind—blind as the government.

The government will castrate people on the basis of advice from a psychologist as to whether or not the person is a serious sex offender and will reoffend. Why does the government not seek the advice of a psychologist to assess the impact that such a harsh action will have on the mental wellbeing of the people involved? Furthermore, in defining 'castration', the Youth Premier insinuated that removing all masculine traits will stop people from committing a sexual crime. As a male and a sensible member of the opposition, I find this extremely offensive. I repeat: castrating sex offenders does not stop them from potentially harming others. If the government is serious, it should lock them up. I move that this motion be scrapped immediately.

YOUTH MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: Can the opposition please think properly for once! This is for repeat offenders. We are not going to do it to a first-time offender.

A government member: More than once.

YOUTH MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: More than once, definitely. Come on! People, get your heads screwed on. The dangerous criminals act does not go far enough. It is time to get tough on crime. We need to look at the best interests of the victims. It might be an eye for an eye, but it will bring some justice to this.

How many times must we charge a person and then give them a slap on the wrist? How many times must a person's life be wrecked before we take some serious action? They can have their goolies taken off or be chemically castrated, but they can still go to rehabilitation with no sex drive. There is no reason they cannot. It can be mandatory that they do so.

As we all know, we can only do so much before it is time to take action. It can be successful or it cannot. It cannot be a middle ground like the opposition across from us. This motion acknowledges that not everyone can be rehabilitated. Therefore, this government has decided that this motion must be passed not only as a suitable punishment but also as a suitable deterrent to prevent others from committing the same crime and preventing people's lives from being wrecked. I cannot understand why the opposition would not want that. Are they too lenient or do they just get some sick pleasure out of people committing sexual offences?

DEPUTY LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION: It is clear from listening to the government that they have no idea about their own motion. The reason they have no idea about their own motion is that they have no idea about the victims. Some of the victims clearly do want to have these people charged, but some of the victims find it a social humiliation to have them charged. I refer honourable members to the current affairs program *60 Minutes* which was aired on Channel 9 last year. On the *60 Minutes* program they asked people who had been molested and raped by these criminals. Over half of the people interviewed said that they did not support these people being charged. The reason they did not was that they believed that it was too much of a tedious process and, really, the victims would be better placed in rehabilitation centres. On the question of chemical castration, we need to recognise the social humiliation for the victim and for the person who has committed the offence. I thank you, one and all.

YOUTH LEADER OF THE HOUSE: What the opposition fails to realise is that this motion applies to reoffenders—that is, people for whom rehabilitation has not worked before. These people continue to commit the same crimes again and again.

An honourable youth member interjected.

YOUTH LEADER OF THE HOUSE: They are reoffenders; that is why we are proposing using chemical castration processes upon them. Their only real point against it is that they should have rights to have sex whenever they want. They are allowed to have their balls, but quite frankly they would quite happily lock them up in prison. For some reason their right to freedom is not very important if they reoffend, but their right to sex is. I think they are a little bit confused on the other side.

Quite frankly, if rehabilitation has not worked before, then chemical castration can help on a number of levels. Firstly, they will not be committing the same crimes again. Those people who have been victims before will be victims no longer. Secondly, chemical castration reduces the amount of testosterone in a person's body. The opposition has mentioned that because chemical castration does not reduce the urge for power and control, and those are the reasons for these crimes, testosterone is reduced in the body and testosterone is one the reasons why people have these urges to commit crimes of power over people. Therefore, chemical castration will actually aid in the rehabilitation process and could be helpful in that respect also. Not only that, but it looks to the future in that people who have had offences committed against them before are the kind of people who might offend later. It is breaking the cycle of perpetrators and for that reason is looking to the future, as our government is.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR CALOUNDRA: I would like to ask the government to clarify whether a monitoring system will be put in place after these dangerous sexual offenders are released into our community. Frankly, I and any other member of the public who requires self-security would not feel comfortable living in an apartment or house next door to a repeat sexual offender. These people crave freedom and this government is giving it to them. No-one in their right mind would give these sexual offenders free rein. I request that the government proposes some sort of postrelease monitoring system, otherwise that lot is in no better mental state than the lot they are releasing from prison. It is about time that members of the government took responsibility for the safety of the people for whom they stand and not hastily create a public safety nightmare.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR CURRUMBIN: This is an extremely important issue affecting our society and I believe all sides of the House agree with that. We on this side of the House, however, believe that governments have an obligation to ensure the safety of all citizens and recognise the need to come down hard on crime. If the opposition opposes chemical castration, they are standing up and stating that they are soft on crime and weak on punishment. These criminals who commit sexual assault for a two-minute thrill of total dominance over another must reassure society that they will not reoffend.

Their word means nothing. Someone as brutal, despicable and uncouth who would commit such acts loses all legitimacy in their character. I cannot come close to imagining the plight of a sexual assault victim, but I know that their struggle is often for life. If a criminal can sap the life from someone, we have a duty to ensure by any means possible that they cannot reoffend. Chemical castration is the humane, chemically induced removal of sexual drive and it is our protection from these despicable people. It is our obligation and I fully support this motion, as does the government.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Before I call the member for Beaudesert, I would say that there are about four or five speaking spaces left. If anyone wants to comment on this, they are quite welcome. The floor will be thrown open after the member for Beaudesert has spoken. I will give you a little advice: when you start off, you all address the chair. If you start to get a few interjections and you find them a bit distracting, just talk to the chair. You can then shut out the interjections and leave them where they are. Thank you.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR BEAUDESERT: The act of rape as defined by the Criminal Code in Queensland involves a person being penetrated by another. The act of chemical castration in most cases—I think it is about three out of four, so 75 per cent of cases—removes the urge for sex and the ability to penetrate another. However, this covers only the tiniest aspect of the problem which is rape and creates large problems in other areas of harm. I doubt anyone from the government or in this room would claim to have an understanding of what motivates rapists. While those who study psychology are broadening their understanding of those who are compelled to commit such vile acts, the community's understanding of these criminal minds is very minimal. Still, what we do understand is that these people have psychological issues. Their need to hurt, manipulate and take control of others is not something that can be fixed by the removal of their sexual urges.

I assume that these rapists will, once castrated, walk free for surely there would be no need to castrate those who might remain locked up. Surely the idea of locking them up and then, after they have completed their set time, castrating them would be a gross violation of human rights. Therefore, those who commit such horrendous crimes of rape will be allowed to walk free as long as they agree to never have sex again. They will be able to live their lives if they agree to this. It seems that perhaps the government has its priority wrong. Perhaps they prize sex over freedom. Perhaps they should spend less time in the bedroom and more time coming up with better ideas. The idea of chemical castration—

Time expired.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I was curious, youth member for Beaudesert: is there any mention about women's chemical castration? Has that been brought up?

YOUTH MEMBER FOR MOGGILL: We do not need anything defined, although maybe the opposition does. The opposition misses the point completely. Chemical castration is reversible; chopping off the arms and legs of murderers, such as the opposition stated, is not. It is not a valid comparison. The perpetrators of rape, molestation and paedophilia are not people who should be free to

go on with their lives. Counselling will not help these people. They are repeat offenders, even after counselling. These people forfeit their rights when they offend. They can no longer go on harming and tormenting the people of Queensland. We must stop them.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR CALLIDE: I think the opposition understands what the government is trying to achieve here, but I think what the government has really failed to address is what the reaction is going to be afterwards. How will these individuals who are going to be socially humiliated react after this act? I do not think any male here would honestly say that after being chemically castrated he would not be a little bit angry, maybe a little bit upset. Maybe they deserve that but what are they going to do in response to that emotion? Are you not just creating a more angry criminal and putting him back out on the streets? Who is to say that they will not go to efforts to offend more as a reaction to their castration?

An honourable youth member: I hope we are not electing sexual offenders into the House, so it should not be a worry.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR CALLIDE: I did not say that. What about female sex offenders? The government has presented this idea that there is an assumption that they are all going to be male. How does this process apply to females? You say it decreases testosterone. What does it do to the female? I do not know the terms. I do not know how this all works. While the idea you are presenting is great in its intent, we are yet to see the aftereffects.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR MARYBOROUGH: Right now in prisons across Queensland sex offenders are locked away after their sentences have been served due to the dangerous criminals act. In our system of law, these people are caught in limbo. They have the right to be released, yet they are locked away because they quite simply cannot control themselves.

But the government is proposing a solution. We will prevent these people who have been imprisoned from ever reoffending. The government is aiming to remove the very thing that seems to drive these people and which will prevent more innocent victims. These people have a right to be released. They have been tried by the courts and have served their sentences. We are depriving these people of their ability to reoffend, to create more victims, and to stop them from shattering more lives.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR LYTTON: The opposition is missing the point of this motion entirely. Many sexual offenders often have a compulsion based on defective sexual decisions. This means that for many compulsive sex offenders, chemical castration would be a relief from their sexual urges. Some of these people cannot control their urges, although they want to. Chemical castration would mean they would have the ability to have a life outside of their urges—

An honourable youth member: A life of humiliation.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR LYTTON: From what? These people can go on living a life without having to try to stop these urges that they have dealt with for their whole lives. This is humane on both sides. A lot of these people are making the decision to have the chemical castration because it will lead to their ability to lead a normal life, as do the rest of us, without having these problems.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR BURDEKIN: The government has gone completely nuts with this motion. A paedophile is born a paedophile as a gay is born a gay. Research has shown that gay people are born gay; paedophiles are born paedophiles. A person cannot turn into a paedophile.

The motion clearly violates the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Criminal Code. Trespass of the person is defined in the Criminal Code. Quite clearly, chemical castration is trespass of the person. Does the government want to reject the Criminal Code altogether and create a new set of laws for criminals and, as a result, deal with paedophiles?

The government needs to consider that community rehabilitation, which is currently in place, is working. If a paedophile is released from jail into the community, there is supervision. Does the government's motion contain anything in relation to supervision? The government's motion has nothing to do with supervision. Where in the motion does it show that any organisation will supervise the paedophiles once they are castrated? It does not. These people who will supervise are professionals. They are either police or Corrective Services people. They know what they are doing. They are able to supervise people professionally.

The government has failed to show in the motion that it actually cares about paedophiles and the community. You could castrate a paedophile and release them into the community. But how will you know if he has offended again or not? How will you know if he has done anything bad?

YOUTH MEMBER FOR WHITSUNDAY: Unfortunately, the government is shielded by its version of what is the right thing to do. We have not heard the female perspective. I would like to ask a rhetorical question: what happens to the people who have been sexually assaulted? For them, humiliation and guilt is taken to a whole new level. The sexual assault victim may wish to get closure to the fact that they got raped. If this motion goes ahead, that may be their way of getting closure and that may be their way of getting justice.

Also, if a male has been chemically castrated, his life span will be reduced. That is a known fact. Chemical castration is taking punishment to a whole new level for men. There are other ways, such as rehabilitation, charges, jail—lock them away. Who decides whether these people are able to be rehabilitated?

To charge a person with paedophilia, rape or sexual assault is dragging their name in the dirt. That causes them humiliation. But nobody suffers more than the victim.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR DARLING DOWNS: In order to exist in society people give up some of their freedoms. They are subject to laws. That is just natural. It seems like a simple concept. However, the irrational hot air from the youth members opposite that is polluting this chamber indicates their complete lack of understanding of this concept. The result is that this debate is a waste of time. It is blatant stupidity.

The simple fact is that these irredeemable multiple offenders have taken away another person's freedom. Because of that, they automatically give up their own rights. That is the law of society.

An honourable youth member interjected.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR DARLING DOWNS: They have forfeited their freedom. That is a simple fact of society. These individuals who have repeatedly committed such heinous crimes have forfeited their right to sexual pleasure. Can we let these criminals continue to feed their sexual desires? Let me answer that in this way: can we allow the innocent to be exposed to such a threat? If these youth members to my left have any remnants of a conscience, they will recognise the superior duty of sacrificing the sexually perverted for the absolute right to sexual safety. The convicted return to prison, the abused become abusers and the abuse cycle continues. This government has put forward a solution to halt this destructive cycle. If the opposition is not willing to support this solution, it, too, makes itself part of the problem.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR WOODRIDGE: Some may say that a natural reduction of testosterone in later life already may shorten a man's life span and seriously endanger his health. So I ask the question of the government today: are we sentencing these people to a lifetime of lethargy, inaction and poor health, constantly imprisoned in their own lives long after their sentences have been served?

YOUTH MEMBER FOR IPSWICH WEST: As the opposition has said, paedophiles are born paedophiles. So what is wrong with chemical castration if they are only going to reoffend? I would like to pose one question or one thought: chemical castration is protecting only one thing, and that is innocent victims.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR PUMICESTONE: I want to point out that sexual assault does not only involve rape. It involves touching and pretty much any unwanted sexual contact. The opposition today has talked of deprivation of human rights. However, it would rather keep protagonists locked up for the rest of their life. We as the government are giving offenders a third more regulated chance. This proposed motion is to be used only as a final resort for those deemed completely beyond rehabilitation. This is not a one-offence punishment. I think the opposition today have disregarded that fact.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR NUDGE: This is radical legislation put forward by an increasingly authoritarian government. If we are to agree with the key principles of democracy such as liberty and freedom of the individual, I think we have to recognise that there is a line between the government and the people—a line between the individual and the government—and it is a line that the government should not cross.

It is very concerning that my paper has fallen down, but it is also very concerning that the government is trying to propose legislation that has never been tested before and provides no clear evidence to prove that the legislation and this action will actually work. I understand completely the government's concern with sexual abuse. I understand also that there are psychological issues concerned with this and that we cannot rely solely on this barbaric mechanism to counter the problem. We need to realise that there are other ways to deal with this problem and better ways.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR HERVEY BAY: In front of me we have a government that would be better at running Zimbabwe. Even Robert Mugabe does not go this far with legislation and abuse. I would like to take the government back to school with a biology lesson. Attraction is not a choice. For men, if they see an attractive female their urges are not their choice. It is the same for gays. Research has proven that gays were born gay. There is a part of their brain that is bigger than the equivalent straight male. It is the same for paedophiles with young children. Similar research has been undertaken there to show that it is not a choice. Let us go down the road of a whole lot of other biological disorders. Shall we go and shun those people? Shall we go and punish them for something that ultimately was not their choice? It is genetic. Why are we punishing people who are born a certain way when they cannot help it?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

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

Ayes—44

Noes—39

Resolved in the affirmative.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders

YOUTH LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION, by leave, without notice: I move—

That so much of the standing and sessional orders be suspended to allow the immediate presentation to the House of a youth bill for a youth act to introduce a statewide sustainable development authority to regulate the use of sustainable energy sources and coastal and urban development.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT YOUTH BILL

First Reading

YOUTH LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION: I present the bill and 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.

Second Reading

YOUTH LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION: I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

The great climate change issue has been on the political agenda for many years now right around the world. Governments which promise firm and decisive action against excessive development have promised to introduce and encourage the use of renewable energies and they have promised to take firm and decisive action on climate change. Today I am pleased to say that the opposition have stepped forward in the fight against climate change and the destruction of the environment by introducing the state Sustainable Development Youth Bill.

Queensland is a naturally diverse state. From our shimmering beaches, our barren desert to our moist tropical rainforests, we are truly lucky to live in such magnificent surroundings that give us such an incredible lifestyle. It is not just Queenslanders who love our natural wonders. In the year 2004, tourism contributed \$8.4 billion to Queensland's economy, while last year alone 2.2 million international visitors to Australia came through our state. As you can see, Mr Deputy Speaker, it is not just Queenslanders who love this state, and we really depend on our environmental diversity. But what if this were all to change? What if this state were to be ruined for future generations by this government's inaction, arrogance and development?

Many social, environmental and economic consequences await this great state and nation unless we embrace and act on this new environmental revolution. The state Sustainable Development Youth Bill will protect this state's environment by introducing legislation that will limit coastal development by imposing tough regulations and restrictions, and increase the use of sustainable and renewable energies in Queensland homes, businesses and industries; therefore, protecting the state's diverse environment. This legislation will also introduce a statewide sustainable development authority that will oversee and administer actions from this youth bill.

The aim of this new authority will be to decrease Queensland's environmental impact. Another innovative and proactive measure to stop climate change and to promote sustainable development in this youth bill is this opposition's plan to encourage the use of renewable energy throughout this great state. Although currently the Queensland government offers some subsidies for the purchasing of renewable energy technologies, this youth bill will encourage energy providers to invest in renewable technologies other than nuclear power, which this opposition considers to be dangerous and inequitable until further research has been carried out. These are just a small number of positive initiatives in the state's Sustainable Development Youth Bill.

The government will argue against this bill for various reasons, but it would be obvious to any individual that this youth bill is essential for the protection of this state's unique environment. If we do not act appropriately then in the near future our beautiful environment will be destroyed and our population will face disaster. Therefore, it is obvious that the state's Sustainable Development Youth Bill 2008 must be put into action immediately to maintain the sustainability of Queensland's unique environment.

YOUTH MINISTER FOR SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE: As the Youth Minister for Sustainability and Climate Change, it is my job—no, duty—to this Youth Parliament and to the great state of Queensland to fix these silly and useless bills that are proposed by this weak youth opposition. This bill as proposed by the opposition is riddled with flaws. Firstly, the opposition seems hell-bent on overbureaucratising everything involved in this bill, with the setting up of the State Sustainable Development Authority—or SSDA. This SSDA and its members will be a useless waste of time, money and energy that could be better spent elsewhere, such as on health and education. The responsibilities of the SSDA in part 2, clause 5 are all duties that are performed by local councils and the EPA. This bill is simply creating another board that will just create more paperwork.

The bill proposes that we ban completely any option of nuclear power. The benefits of nuclear power, above all other sustainable energies, is that the supply of electricity can be easily and efficiently increased to match the demand for electricity, similar to what occurs currently with our coal-fired plants. Currently, nuclear power is the only renewable energy source that is able to supply a secure and constant supply of electricity to Queensland. It is implausible to think that solar, wind, hydro-electric and other renewable sources of energy could supply Queensland with power. Other power sources are not currently technologically capable of providing power for our great state.

Nuclear power must be considered, purely because our other renewable sources are currently inefficient. Implementing selective nuclear power plants in approved zones will help decrease our foreign debt and our current account balance. Also, our dependency on oil and coal will decrease, thereby allowing us to inject more money into our economy, which will allow for more spending on health and education, which as we all know are important to our state. Those who oppose nuclear power oppose the economy. Therefore, this backward opposition is opposed to the economy of Queensland. The benefits of nuclear power far outweigh its disadvantages.

I believe the opposition and the honourable opposition leader have not fully considered the benefits of nuclear power or the implications that this bill will have on our state development. Population wise, Queensland is the fastest growing state in Australia. This Sustainable Development Youth Bill will be a severe deterrent to the growth of our state. The laws contained in this bill will hinder the urban development of Queensland, therefore slowing down growth, which will ultimately hurt our economy. The opposition clearly does not want the development of the greatest state in Australia to continue. It is sacrificing our development for stupid, implausible renewable energy and limits on the growth of Queensland. The Abdel-Magied government is looking towards the future of the Smart State through smart bills for the benefit of all.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR KALLANGUR: Our environment is in decay because of the effects of greenhouse gases. These effects are destroying our natural landscape. A classic example is the Great Barrier Reef—a \$40 million tourist attraction. At present, there is already evidence of coral bleaching and a lack in the fish species that live in and around the reef system. Greenhouse gases are also causing rising temperatures and an increase in ultraviolet rays, which therefore increases people's chance of developing sun cancer.

We need to correct this ever-worsening problem, and this bill will do exactly that. Renewable and sustainable energies will be implemented through this bill as well as enforced targets that range from 10 to 30 per cent. In addition to further energies, this bill will also implement regulations on urban and coastal developments. To ensure that those regulations and future energy requirements are upheld and/or followed, the State Sustainable Development Authority will be established, in consultation with the Youth Minister for Sustainability and Climate Change. This authority will be responsible for determining suitable renewable sources of energy, setting staggered targets and overseeing the distribution of subsidies as well as monitoring coastal and development restrictions, approving local government rezoning along with vegetation management, monitoring urban vegetation limitations, establishing coastal and urban development guidelines for local government authorities, and, finally, penalising local government authorities that do not enforce the specified development regulations.

The authority will comprise the Youth Minister for Sustainability and Climate Change, one representative from each local government area, two representatives from the Environmental Protection Agency, one representative from the collective energy providers and one development industry professional.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR HINCHINBROOK: In the Middle Ages a very smart man once said—

The bureaucracy is expanding to meet the needs of the expanding bureaucracy.

This remains true today for the youth opposition. Not only does this youth bill replace government services that are already provided by the EPA; it also forms the basis of the bad governance of the opposition. Part of the bill is dedicated to setting up a Sustainable Development Authority. All that seems to do is aggravate coastal residents, steal power from local governments and form a group of statewide banners who have nothing better to do with their time than to go around banning everything.

It is good to see that the youth opposition has actually started to recognise how the climate is changing, but yet again it has tried and been found wanting. Nowhere in this youth bill are there targets for individual renewable energies. How is industry supposed to act in response to this bill when there is a complete failure of guidance or leadership?

Wind, geothermal, solar, hydro-electricity and biofuels have all been earmarked as renewable energies, but how is anybody supposed to know what percentages make up the total renewable energy targets? Why is the youth opposition trying to undermine Queensland's industry at the expense of the environment? This youth bill will not reduce the cost of living of any Queenslanders. This youth bill appears to have too many vested interests—too many greenies gaining far too much local council power. This bill is anti economy. It will slow the growth of small and large business through its ineffective, inefficient electricity supply. The opposition has failed Queensland. It has failed to properly protect the environment and it has failed on renewable energy.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE: In recent years the earth's vast supply of energy has lessened dramatically due to the excessive use of non-renewable energy sources used in the common Australian lifestyle. This loss of resources poses significant environmental threats to the world's ecosystem, consequently creating the need for a future which utilises sustainable and renewable energy. Both sources of energy include solar, wind, hydro, biofuel and geothermal power which all emit close to no greenhouse gasses and are all classified as clean technologies. The sponsoring team of the Sustainability and Climate Change Committee is in strong opposition to classifying nuclear power as a renewable energy. In contrast, the refuting team believes that this form of energy is a complete and utter godsend.

Nuclear energy is solely appraised for its lack of greenhouse gas emissions. With the fossil fuels involved with construction, the risks posed to human health and the unsustainable mining of uranium, it is hardly considered sustainable and should rightly be defamed across the nation.

Queensland as a state needs to invest in sustainable energies as they provide the foundation of a more environmentally sound future. This Sustainable Development Youth Bill aims to encourage the use of renewable energies through setting structured targets and subsidies. The cost of renewable energies may be higher than conventional energies, but with these government assisted cost reductions the output of greenhouse gasses can be significantly reduced. If this bill is passed, the environment and its custodians can take a leap into a cleaner, more sustainable future and never look back at the ancient, resource ravenous lifestyle that ashamedly dominates our nation.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR TOOWOOMBA SOUTH: Mr Deputy Speaker, the State Sustainable Development Authority or the SSDA is s-a-d. For the opposition, which cannot spell, that spells sad. The SSDA will be an immense waste of time, money and resources. Apart from having the already mentioned responsibilities taken care of by local governments and other organisations such as the EPA, the SSDA will only increase bureaucracy and delay the development of Queensland.

Although the intention in implementing this bill may appear good, the bill is clearly flawed. There are many things that could be improved—for example, the membership of the board. We have the developer, the energy providers, the representatives from each government area, EPA representatives and ministers, but where are the scientists to assist with the research—those people who have a thorough knowledge and understanding of the environment? Where are those who are qualified to achieve their responsibilities?

An honourable youth member interjected.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR TOOWOOMBA SOUTH: Please do not do that.

Not having the right members on the board defeats the purpose of the SSDA altogether. How do those opposite propose that the board will be run? The members have other jobs as well. How will they find the time? If the board is implemented, will it be open to corruption? All of these factors the opposition has not taken into account.

The system of operation of the board is ambiguous. While it is fine to put figureheads in, will they have a justified role upon implementation of the bill?

YOUTH MEMBER FOR BARRON RIVER: As I am the only youth member who lives in Cape Tribulation, I can share with you quite gladly on a personal level how it is to live an alternative energy lifestyle. Mr Deputy Speaker, I am not sure how much you know about my neighbours and where we live but there is not a conforming energy source.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have actually been to the Daintree. I do know where you live.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR BARRON RIVER: That is good. I am glad to hear that. Instead, my small, close-knit community uses a mixture of solar panels and generators to power our lights and other necessary electrical appliances.

Please excuse my repeated word of the use 'neighbours' because I have nothing else to call the people who live within a 60-kilometre range of me. My neighbours and I and most of the community who are living in Trib live in tree-like houses with a minimum number of walls to decrease the use of fans and lights. My community and I are now used to living an alternative lifestyle and I can say that on a whole

because every one of my neighbours now, even after years of living in the Daintree forest, are comfortable with our midnight dashes to the generator shed during the wet season when the weather is so humid that living in a house with minimal protection is the greatest thing we have ever seen. But you do have to be careful of tripping over the kangaroos that like to sleep on my patio.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: What about the crocodiles?

YOUTH MEMBER FOR BARRON RIVER: Mr Deputy Speaker, I have been living in the rainforest for a little over two years now and every day I catch a bus that is run on natural gas because the kids from my local primary school did not like their brothers and sisters having to catch a diesel fuelled bus to the high school. When I leave I can turn off my generator because I use a kerosene fridge. When I bathe I use copper heated pipes—

Time expired.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR MOUNT COOT-THA: The concept behind the bill is good but some of its content, like the opposition, leaves much to be desired. The coastal development regulations are quite preposterous. The height of buildings on the coast should be left to the local authorities to decide. The local authorities have the best knowledge of their area to make the best decisions regarding the height of buildings. If a coastal region has no area to expand into, then the only option is to go up. Is it not better to build up rather than to expand out and possibly take land that could otherwise be used for revegetation and the like?

The idea behind this bill is to help our environment. That idea will be destroyed if developers are allowed to expand rather than build up due to the 30-metre height restriction. To get the most out of this bill, the authority to make decisions on height restrictions must be handed down to local governments. Give the authority to people who, unlike the opposition, know what they are doing.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR COOK: Climate change is such a debated and contentious issue but undoubtedly changes need to be made and at all levels of government. For real improvements to be made and for this bill to work, old rivalries between local and state governments need to be set aside. The state and local governments of Queensland need to work together to ensure the future of all Queenslanders. In this bill we propose the establishment of a body which encompasses not only multiple state government departments but local government representatives as well: the State Sustainable Development Authority.

Creation of the SSDA will help to ensure climate change is being fought on as many fronts as possible. This bill will mean that local governments will enforce and monitor the regulations in their areas. Local councils will oversee coastal and urban development guidelines, implement renewable energy sources in their shire and basically manage the on-the-ground legislation with the public. The SSDA will oversee and enforce the legislation in general. It will determine suitable renewable sources, monitor subsidies and police local governments to ensure rulings are fair and equal for all Queenslanders. This bill goes a way to ensure that climate change is an issue to all and that Queenslanders think globally but are acting locally.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR CAPALABA: There is a ridiculous amount of obvious flaws in the opposition's bill. These flaws totally undermine the bill's credibility. We have discovered a loophole within the legislation. The opposition's bill has stated that a minimum of 10 per cent of new housing estates must be left for parkland or natural vegetation but nowhere have they stated how and where this 10 per cent must be used. Theoretically, you could split up the 10 per cent with one per cent here and another per cent there. There is yet another flaw within the urban development of the opposition's bill. It is completely impractical for housing estates to have 10 per cent left to natural vegetation or parkland.

The youth opposition members have their heads in the clouds if they think that having more bushland will decrease housing estates. It just means that more housing estates will be built to make up for the extra parks and bushland. The government believes that we should be leaving housing estates and bushland separate. Not only is having these extra parks and bushland impractical but it is also a major health hazard. Excess bushland among houses increases the risk of fire, which would damage homes and endanger lives. That is totally unacceptable. If an old Melbourne grandma cannot have an overgrown garden because she is told by the council that it is a risk to public health, how can the opposition possibly justify placing a fire hazard among the people? The opposition has a great idea; it is just a shame it could not implement it properly.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR MANSFIELD: Currently Queensland has a booming population which by 2026 is estimated to increase by 1.5 million. This already is causing a massive increase in development, which at present is increasing the current greenhouse problem. This bill will help to correct each problem the government has created. It aims to enforce regulations on coastal and urban development by placing limitations on height and distances from sand dunes in regard to coastal development while also setting aside land in new developments and housing estates for parkland.

In addition to the regulations on the development, this youth bill proposes to enforce the use of renewable and sustainable energies, including but not limited to solar, wind and hydro-electricity. Targets will also be enforced, ranging from reductions of 10 per cent to 30 per cent, and an additional reduction of five per cent every five years.

To ensure that these targets are met, an authority will be created to determine suitable renewable sources of energy, monitor restrictions on development, and establish urban and coastal guidelines. This youth bill will be beneficial to the future of Queensland by developing new and sustainable ways to live by using renewable energy and not non-renewable and unstable sources of energy, such as oil, coal and nuclear energy. It will also develop sustainable infrastructure that will not only benefit us but also our children and our children's children.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR MARYBOROUGH: This bill is about power—what will power our houses and machines in the future. To this end, the opposition has in place many regulations. Then, who knows what it has done? The opposition has put forward a bill full of loopholes. It has blindly raced forward, ignoring all reason, and pushed forward its single-minded idea. The opposition has introduced ridiculous measures, such as having no scientific representative on the SSDA. It is pushing measures such as hydro-electricity, which will deplete our water supply, and it is not even considering nuclear power as an option. The opposition has also blatantly sought to end the coal industry and put working families out of jobs. This bill demeans the Youth Parliament with its callousness.

Nuclear power produces no greenhouse gases and due to the high uranium content in Australian coal, it produces less radioactive material. Nuclear power is the way of producing energy in the future. This material can be stored safely and its power will help us for many years to come.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR GAVEN: This bill is the best thing ever, because it is innovative in its ideas and champions sustainability, which is arguably one of the world's biggest issues. We submit that all new residential estates retain a minimum of 10 per cent of the total area to be used for parkland and natural vegetation. I strongly believe that this clause is imperative for future property development, as land is being cleared at an alarming rate. As a result, our animals—and indeed the people of Queensland—are suffering from lower-quality air and habitat because of development.

The SSDA needs to hold the power to decide what it thinks is the suitable amount of parkland and natural vegetation to be acquired. Furthermore, we submit that all property development applications be decided in compliance with subclause (2), thus placing absolute power regarding property development in the SSDA. This is necessary, because developers are helping to destroy our environment. In conclusion, this bill is integral to the sustainability of Queensland. Action needs to be taken now before it is too late.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR LOCKYER: The opposition has rowed its rickety policy boat into muddy water with this bill. This sinking ship has sprung leaks in every way. The opposition has dug a hole of bureaucracy and has willingly jumped in. It is burying itself under a narrow-minded pile of bureaucratic paperwork.

I would like to remind the opposition that this portfolio is called Sustainability and Climate Change. Perhaps the opposition had forgotten that sustainability comes with efficiency and clean energy when it excluded nuclear power from its bill. Nuclear power exhibits this efficiency. It is a clean, emissions-free energy source. 'Waste issues,' I hear youth members ask. Nuclear power will act as an Anna Coren segue to a sustainable future and, just like *Today Tonight*, this process will be long and arduous. But that is inevitable in this complex issue of sustainability and climate change.

Nuclear power can help ease the economic pressures of climate change and assist in the transition and refocusing of energy needs in Queensland. The opposition has taken leave of their senses with this bill. This titanic mess is heading for a disastrous iceberg on its maiden voyage.

UNIDENTIFIED YOUTH MEMBER: Before I start, I would like to make one point clear: as a result of the Nuclear Facilities Prohibition Act 2007, all nuclear power in Queensland is banned. So is the government going to introduce new legislation to overturn the legislation that the people of Queensland support? The former federal government tried to introduce nuclear power. It failed. It lost the last election. Do the youth members opposite want to lose the next election as well and put us into power? We do not support nuclear power. We are against it. We are for clean energy—solar power, wind power, pedal power. Maybe we should get all youth members on bikes to start pedalling and creating power.

YOUTH DEPUTY PREMIER: This side of the House firmly cares for Queensland's environment. Where is the shame in that? More importantly, the government appreciates the importance of our coastal areas. For that reason, we can understand the purpose of the opposition's bill and we can affirm that change is needed.

However, I can also affirm that the smack of jellyfish sitting opposite are mere newbies when it comes to the green alternative, whereas we, the government, are the gurus of green, the commanders of climate change and the emperors of the environment. Also, unlike the opposition, the government is hip and with it and we are New Age and, yes, Mr Deputy Speaker, I am going to say it: we are just awesome.

We know that nuclear energy is the way of the future. Queensland needs to adopt nuclear energy to get greener. The State Sustainable Development Authority, as detailed in this bill, refused to acknowledge this fact and, unless amended, the government will refuse this bill. It is also no secret that Queensland is running out of space. So we need to build up, not out. We do not want any more urban sprawl. This bill clearly ignores this fact.

As I said before, the government is more than happy to adopt greener legislation, but as the Smart State we must tweak this bill in order for it to be more like the government—perfect.

YOUTH LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION: To take a famous quote from 2007 and the then youth member for Burnett, an esteemed member of the YMCA executive, the government is sweatier than an ecstasy dancer on a Saturday night. They have tried so hard to discredit this youth bill.

YOUTH LEADER OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS: Point of order.

A youth government member: Relevance.

YOUTH LEADER OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS: I don't think that's irrelevant. It is just an insult.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Rickuss): I will let that comment pass as an introduction more so than a point of relevance.

YOUTH LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION: Thanks, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Do you actually know how sweaty exotic dancers are on a Saturday night?

YOUTH LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION: We will make an appointment.

The government has attacked the opposition for not taking appropriate action in regard to climate change and has stated that this bill will not do anything to stop climate change. My response to these claims is that this bill and the amendments proposed by the government actually exclude the main initiatives of this youth bill. They are happy to sit back and let coastal development continue. They are happy to encourage the use of nuclear power throughout this state. If there were ever a nuclear meltdown, like the government is having at the moment in this great state, then it would lie squarely on its shoulders. The opposition has tried valiantly to ridicule this bill yet it has actually supported this bill from the very start. The government literally had to drag the poor youth member for Maryborough across to the side just to make up the numbers.

The government has talked so much about climate change that it has increased Youth Parliament's word count but lowered the average IQ. The Youth Minister for Sustainability and Climate Change said that we were anti-economic. If we do not protect this planet, whether it comes to the economy or lifestyle it does not matter because we will not have another planet.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Consideration in Detail

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you very much for letting me be the Deputy Speaker. I have enjoyed it. The debate has been very good actually. I have been to a few youth parliaments and this has probably been a bit more interactive than most of them, so thank you very much.

Clauses 1 to 7, as read, agreed to.

Clause 8—

YOUTH MEMBER FOR HINCHINBROOK: I move the following amendment—

1 Clause 8 (Exceptions)

At page 7, lines 14 to 19—

omit.

There are over 430 reactors worldwide providing electricity needs for over one billion people. One kilogram of uranium creates as much energy as 64 litres of oil, 481 cubic metres of natural gas or over four tonnes of coal. So we need to ask ourselves: what is holding us back? Nuclear power provides 70 per cent of France's energy and 20 per cent of US power, yet there are no active nuclear power generators in Australia.

The unstable reactors at Chernobyl have since been outdated and are now more secure than ever. The RBKM models, like the opposition, evolved in the Soviet Union, were prone to power surges and had absolutely no containment structure. Wind, solar, jet thermal energies do not provide continual electricity like coal, oil and uranium. Thirty per cent renewable energy for industry could lead to its demise as inconstant energy flow can lead to refinery shutdowns. A shutdown lasting on average one hour costs approximately \$100,000. We cannot rely on wind or solar due to their inefficiency and inability to provide constant, secure, guaranteed supply.

In the government we have signalled a new era of common sense. Nuclear has a great future and we cannot keep looking the other way and continue to live in denial. We need to start signalling nuclear power engagement as a means of sustainable energy and we need to start as of yesterday.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR COOK: I am not going to make witty cracks. I am not going to rattle off statistics. I am not even going to try for eloquence because, frankly, it is not necessary. This matter is simple. Nuclear energy is dangerous, unreliable and the technology is not what one would call viable, nor sustainable. Nuclear reactors produce radioactive waste with a ridiculously long half life. Costs are astronomical. The effects of a reactor meltdown would be catastrophic. I hate to be predictable but just ask the people of Chernobyl or the descendants of the people from Chernobyl. Our bill moves that the SSDA will not consider nuclear power as a source of renewable and sustainable energy and the reasons for this are simple: It is not renewable. Nuclear power is most certainly not renewable, nor sustainable.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I am sure you would agree that if the government had taken the time to read the bill's definitions we possibly would not be wasting our time discussing nuclear power. Fusion uranium based nuclear power is the only type considered, because it is the only type that does not cost billions. The half life of refined uranium is beyond human comprehension—something like four million years.

I personally cannot believe that the government is suggesting that we take safe unrefined uranium from the ground, where it belongs, and turn it into highly volatile radioactive waste that is going to last an incredibly long time. It has the gall to term it renewable and sustainable. We should not be falling back on old technologies but looking to viable and truly sustainable sources for a clean green future. To reiterate what was said earlier, the government may want to have a read of the Queensland Nuclear Facilities Prohibition Act 2006. Interestingly—

Time expired.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR TOOWOOMBA SOUTH: A ban on nuclear power as a renewable source of energy will have detrimental effects on the Queensland economy. Nuclear power, unlike the opposition, is clean, safe and useful. It will not destroy the economy, and chances of a meltdown like what happened at Chernobyl are the same as the opposition's chances of forming government in the next century. Implementing selective nuclear power plants in approved zones will help decrease our foreign debt—

A youth opposition member: Where are the approved zones?

YOUTH MEMBER FOR TOOWOOMBA SOUTH: What? Shush! I am trying to read. It is a long speech!

Our dependency on oil and coal will decrease, injecting more money into the economy and allowing for more spending on the health and education sectors which, as we know, are very important. Nuclear power will make the polluting emissions of the coal industry obsolete. Such obsolescence the opposition is accustomed to. The eradication of coal-fired power stations will allow for Queensland to sell the coal and expand the mining boom, possibly saving the state from global recession. This is a point that the opposition has not considered.

By ignoring obvious benefits of nuclear power, we are selling Queensland short. The benefits of nuclear power above all sustainable energy are that the supply can be increased to match the demand, similar to its coal-fired counterparts. Nuclear power is the only renewable energy source that is able to supply a constant and secure supply of electricity.

An honourable youth member interjected.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR TOOWOOMBA SOUTH: Yes, I just figured that out, all right!

Insufficient electricity flow to factories and refineries over a period of eight hours can shut down those factories for over three weeks. Those who oppose nuclear power oppose the economy. We cannot be ignorant like the opposition in continually ignoring nuclear power in Queensland. Like the government, the benefits of nuclear power far outweigh the disadvantages.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR KALLANGUR: Before I begin I would like to say that in regard to this bill the government is as productive as a dead fish, but we on the opposing side obviously know this. I turn now to my arguments.

Queensland is a state abundant in unique land forms and has islands up and down its coastline. If nuclear power is allowed in Queensland, these land forms and islands may be destroyed due to the fact that power plants are more likely to be built in these areas due to their suitability. Those who live on islands such as Bribie or Hinchinbrook might have a nuclear power plant built just around the corner from their houses. In addition to the location, nuclear power plants produce radioactive waste that is highly dangerous and takes upwards of 1,000 years to break down. This waste is produced by the tonne. This leads me to my next point, which is: where is all this radioactive waste going to be stored? Personally I think the homes of those on the government side are the ideal place. It is not in Queensland's best interests to have nuclear power, nor should it ever be. Through you, Madam Deputy Speaker, I ask each youth member: do you want health-damaging radioactive waste and nuclear power plants near you? It is nuclear one day and death the next, and the hypocritical guru greens obviously want this.

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

Ayes—61

Noes—25

Resolved in the affirmative.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 8, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 9 and 10, as read, agreed to.

Clause 11—

YOUTH MEMBER FOR MOUNT COOT-THA: I move the following amendment—

1 **Clause 11 (Coastal development regulations)—**

At page 8, lines 20 to 23—

omit, insert—

'following restrictions—a minimum distance of 50m from sand dunes to prevent erosion.'

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 11, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 12 and 13, as read, agreed to.

Third Reading

YOUTH LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION: I move—

That the youth bill, as amended, be now read a third time.

Division: Question put—That the youth bill, as amended, be now read a third time.

Ayes—73

Noes—10

Resolved in the affirmative.

Youth bill read a third time.

Long Title

YOUTH LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION: I move—

That the long title of the youth bill be agreed to.

Question put—That the long title of the youth bill be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Sitting suspended from 1.42 pm to 2.43 pm.

MOTION

Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders

YOUTH PREMIER, by leave, without notice: I move—

That so much of the standing and sessional orders be suspended to allow the immediate presentation to the House of a youth bill for a youth act to provide a statewide framework and shared space to existing support services for newly settled immigrants and refugees.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

NEW SETTLEMENT SERVICES YOUTH BILL

First Reading

YOUTH PREMIER: I present the bill and 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.

Second Reading

YOUTH PREMIER: I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

Coming to Australia 15 years ago, my father, mother and I slept on mattresses for the first two years of our life here. Being one of the first Muslim Sudanese families in Brisbane, my mum tells me she cried every day for months—lonely, desperate and separated from her family and homeland. With no-one to turn to and no support, she found it extremely difficult to make a new life although she does enjoy it today.

Madam Deputy Speaker, you may not be interested in another sob story of how a small African family made it in society, but the fact of the matter is that it does affect the wider community. The recent influx of African refugees, in particular, has created ghetto-like communities in many suburbs. When I go to Moorooka in Brisbane, I feel like I am at home, or maybe the Bronx. Unfortunately, due to the cultural baggage that these groups bring with them, they also bring their cultural problems and issues and this causes a wide array of societal problems. This is through no fault of their own but it is an unfortunate consequence of their circumstances and it is our responsibility as a government, therefore, to make their settlement into Australia as painless and as supported as possible. This is what the bill is trying to achieve.

The bill's core idea is to bring together all the non-government organisations or NGOs to strengthen their effectiveness. What you must understand is that although times have changed since my family arrived in Brisbane 15 years ago there are still massive gaps in the system. There are existing structures and services to aid refugees or migrants but it is obviously not working. It is not working as well as it should. Why? There is duplication of services, lack of funding and resources, and lack of effectiveness of the actual service provided. These all contribute to the system's underachievement. To fix this, a method which focuses on collaboration rather than competition will be presented.

By encouraging this collaboration within NGOs, duplication will be replaced by an improved single service, and those new to the nation will have the opportunity to settle and build a life in this brilliant state. This will occur through the implementation of a framework. Starting from the foundation, each local government area and the state will have its own area board—essentially, the local council of the respective NGOs. The area boards will be the largely operational arm of the framework, running the centres that are established in each area.

The centres are the crux of this entire bill. They exist in two forms—mobile and fixed, depending on the needs of the community. The centres will be the hub for NGOs to go and the go-to destination for our newly arrived. Not only will they provide essential services such as English classes, a help desk and support for workers; they will have facilities that we will set up such as a local registry of NGOs to point immigrants and refugees in the right direction. There will be a family mentoring system so that when people come here they have someone to go to to ask questions if they do not want to actually access a service. Most importantly, it will have mechanisms to involve the wider community, because if we do not involve the wider community we will create a barrier or a separation between the community and everyone else who comes in. It is essential that the wider community becomes involved to avoid segregation in the state of Queensland.

To continue with the framework, the area boards are accountable to the relevant district board. Each area board will have one representative that will go into the district board and there will be 11 district boards in total. From this, 11 district representatives will serve on the regional board for two years. The regional board is the top tier of the operational arm of the framework and will liaise with the state board comprised of the minister and five relevant stakeholders. The state board controls the policy side of the framework.

This bill is the opportunity to really tackle the conflict that ensues from the difficult and improper settlement of immigrants and refugees in Queensland. By encouraging collaboration within NGOs we will enable the effective and supported settlement of immigrants and refugees in this state. We owe it to them. They have come to Australia to seek refuge, to gain education or just to start a new life. Their wellbeing is our responsibility. Anything less and we have failed them.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR NANANGO: Queensland is ever evolving and we are constantly welcoming new people to our state, some of whom are immigrants and refugees. We agree that this can be a stressful time for these people, and in theory the underlying framework proposed in this bill is a positive step towards easing the strenuous settlement process. However, all that has been proven today by this government putting forward this shoddy excuse for a bill is that it is a government so lacking in foresight it truly cannot see the forest for the trees.

Not only is this a bill laden with bureaucracy and useless, resource-wasting middlemen in the form of a useless, resource-wasting regional board; it also has a facade of appearing to make community organisations work together yet in actual fact it pits them against one another in a first-to-the-post race style for the sake of a superficial incentive award scheme. Most importantly, this government has lacked the foresight to include accountability measures within this bill, which we all

know is the cornerstone of responsible government. To establish this framework across the whole of Queensland for immigrants and refugees and to subsequently fail to put any standards or checks and balances in place to monitor these centres is simply an outrage. It further proves that this government is out of touch and has put little or no thought into this bill.

It has been said that approximately 1,500 people move to south-east Queensland each week and the ignorance of the government has been aptly displayed by the brash and obvious establishment of a fixed centre in each local government area with no assessment of the needs of the refugees and immigrants in Queensland areas or contemplation of where services to help these people already exist. It is a ridiculous proclamation to establish a fixed centre in each local government area with no regard to the density of population. What this means is that a small local area with a population of only 50,000 people but which is spread over hundreds of kilometres would get one centre. The local government area of Brisbane, which has over one million people, would also receive only one centre. That is right; one centre for the whole of Brisbane. This is a gross underestimation by the government of the needs of the people of Brisbane, where an undeniably high number of refugees and immigrants are.

I would like to remind the government that Brisbane residents are Queenslanders, too, and certainly deserve the support of their government. I am embarrassed to say that the people of Queensland are being led blindly by this government to a bill shadowed by bureaucracy. It is not enough that there is an area director, an area board and a state board. No, the government once again has gone too far and implemented a useless middleman go-between in the form of a regional board which does little more than sit and attempt to look pretty. What is more, this board is completely unrepresentative of the community. The people of Queensland do not need another piece of legislation smothered in red tape with various levels of bureaucratic initiatives which essentially do all the same thing. What they need is a clear bill which establishes a framework for supporting newly settled immigrants and refugees, not another vague policy driven process full of delays and a need to jump through hoops to get anything done.

This bill is essentially a good idea and Queensland is in need of support services as more and more people do move to our state each week, some of whom are refugees and immigrants and are in dire need of our support. The bill that the government has presented to us is absolutely flawed and lacks the most important features of our system of government. While the bill aims to establish centres and rewarding support services for registering or moving to the fixed centres, it has not been achieved and instead support services are pitted against one another for rewards and there is a useless gold, silver or bronze classification system.

The bill is a bureaucratic nightmare for the people of Queensland, but most importantly it lacks any accountability whatsoever. Just this morning the members of this Youth Parliament heard from the Hon. Mike Reynolds that accountability is fundamental to democracy, and it is for this reason that this bill is quite simply a joke.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR DARLING DOWNS: Immigrant and refugee integration has been left untouched for far too long. The result has been festering, gangs and racial hatred, leaving many disoriented and outcast. The red tape of bureaucracy has hindered progression for too long. The bill establishes a minimalist framework providing a means to put an end to the ostracisation of new citizens. It would not by any means be out of sorts to say that the racial integration problems Queensland and the greater nation faces are directly related to any action plan previously taken which has drowned in an endless sea of red tape.

It is no longer sufficient for various NGOs to scrape at the bottom of the barrel for sufficient resources while immigrants become outcasts. This bill effectively implements a strategy to ensure government and NGO cooperation, limit bureaucracy to a single overruling authority from the state and, most importantly, create a local level establishment allowing ease and freedom to customise each action strategy. This bill is about efficiency. It is about freeing NGOs and eliminating bureaucracy. Refugees and immigrants have long been the backbone of our nation, without whom Australia would be as weak and irrelevant as the opposition's policy. The issue is no longer excusable. Immigrants are still indispensable. The opposition naturally opposes the government, but the opposition can no longer hide what they know is right for the sake of opposition.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR WOODRIDGE: South-east Queensland is an ever-growing populace which is expanding at record numbers, a percentage of which will always be newly-settled residents whose needs cannot be overlooked. We feel the government needs to create a new collaborative and robust program to provide a framework and shared spaces for establishing NGOs, allowing for both scope and local collaboration between organisations and the community.

I turn your attention, Madam Deputy Speaker, to proposed section 6, whereby the board will establish a fixed centre in each of the local government areas. This policy takes little account of the opinions and individual needs of the community. This also poses many transitional issues such as relocating local and familiar services, or in the case of huge urban areas such as Brisbane centralised yet distant locations. This will cause a loss of faith in the organisations and defamiliarity. By relocating it can also cause huge logistical and transport issues faced by a centralised city branch.

Time expired.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR MUNDINGBURRA: Have you ever found yourself in an unfamiliar situation, culture or environment where you were unsure about social etiquette, values or religious ideologies? A Sudanese immigrant known through a mutual acquaintance of mine experienced these feelings of confusion and vulnerability. She emigrated to Australia with her family with the assistance of a Christian group. The group provided her with suitable housing and residency. The house was equipped with all the First World appliances that we take for granted. The family, however, did not know or understand how to use these seemingly simple devices such as a microwave and dishwasher.

This bill needs to be passed because it establishes unity between NGOs, reallocates funding effectively and, most importantly, helps provide immigrants with the necessary skills that we take for granted. It is paramount that all Australian citizens, not just those who were born here, receive equal opportunities with regard to the basic life skills that we take for granted. We need to put ourselves in the shoes of the people who have emigrated to Australia. We need to start thinking with our empathetic hearts. We need to give up our individual selfish notions.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR BUNDABERG: Once again this government has filled this bill with bureaucracy and red tape. We agree that these fixed and mobile centres are vital for integrating newly-settled refugees and immigrants into our Queensland way of life. However, what the government has proposed is a bill riddled with bureaucracy in the form of the middleman and buck-passers. For example, in the bill the government has proposed that there be an area director, an area board, a regional board and a state board. That is four different levels of fat cats and unnecessary red tape.

It is becoming all too common that the government provides funds because they are available without little idea about sustainability. We have proposed to remove the area board and regional board, which would mean removing fat cats, freeing up dragged-on processes and paperwork. It means getting outcomes in a timely fashion but, most importantly, serving the needs of the refugees and immigrants that this bill is intended for without the unnecessary red tape.

Why does the government not give more ownership to immigrants and refugees who are using these services? This will create a more positive relationship between immigrants and refugees and the broader society, as refugees and immigrants can feel that they have some sort of ownership of their lives in their newly adopted country. The last thing that is needed is for immigrants and refugees to take a xenophobic approach, as we all know the government does.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR MOUNT GRAVATT: The youth members of the opposition are a bunch of nitwits, especially the youth member for Nanango. I will not even want to argue with those guys. I will just go with what I have here—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! You will direct your comments through the chair.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR MOUNT GRAVATT: Sorry. This morning, Dr Joe Goodall used the example of a gentleman without money, food or housing. That example of his situation is prevalent within the refugee population. Dr Goodall continued by suggesting that the strong should help the weak. Unfortunately, this is not always the case. But if we are indeed Australian, if we toil with our hearts and hands, if we did come from across the seas, then it is our duty to support the immigrants who wish to start a new and better life in the sunburnt country of Australia on which we stand. For if we do not, then our national anthem is a sham and that will become evident as we build relationships with other countries. Obviously, the opposition is singing a different song. This will become evident as we build relationships with other countries—the same countries these immigrants arrived from.

These worries will be eradicated with the introduction of these new centres. The formulation of these programs will be designed for persons who have not yet developed the Australian skills that we take for granted.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR CAIRNS: The government has dressed up this bill to look so pretty. However, if I can draw youth members' attention to the bill, I point out that it does not have any accountability. I believe that for something to be strong in our country, it has to have accountability. For example, we have seen so many organisations having no accountability, because they do not know where they are going. If we put in place accountability, that will be a strong foundation. I believe this is a good bill, but without that accountability it will fail.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR NOOSA: It is imperative that this bill is passed if Queensland is to continue on the path to becoming a truly harmonious multicultural state. As youth members have heard, this youth bill, once implemented, will establish centres that will assist immigrants and refugees to adapt to a new culture, possibly a new language and most definitely a new way of life. Each of the centres will be responsible for implementing the syllabus set by the state board and forming new programs in response to the specific needs of the local area. In addition, every centre will provide a registry of local NGOs, support services and a help desk. With the approval of the board, mobile centres may be established in areas with a low population. These mobile centres will have the same responsibility as fixed centres.

The benefits of this bill will be truly phenomenal. NGOs will be more effective as they work with instead of compete against each other. Immigrants and refugees will be facilitated in what is often a strenuous and stressful settlement process and the wider community will also benefit as racial violence

will diminish as a result of greater understanding. I ask the honourable youth members of the opposition from across the room to put aside any contempt they have for the government and for just a moment to honestly consider just how beneficial this bill will be for the entire Queensland society.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR SOUTH BRISBANE: I feel the government is slightly confused. The opposition never indicated that we want anything other than this youth bill to succeed. However, we have a few issues with some clauses of the youth bill. For example, part 4 of this bill, the incentive and awards scheme, is a complete disgrace and is contrary to all the moral and ethical values upon which this bill is based. The preposterous and demeaning proposal that the board should accredit centres with gold, silver or bronze status is quite simply outrageous. This proposal would mean that, rather than sharing ideas and working together to create the best possible centres, initiatives and community involvement, the centres will be pitted against other, creating an environment of competition rather than support.

The initiatives that are offered for the different status, which include increased resources, grants, extra training and staff, are a simply appalling way to reward these centres, particularly when the criteria for such levels is so vague. It is disgusting that the government even thinks that such a ridiculous scheme is appropriate. Each and every centre should be fully equipped with the resources they require in order for them to succeed. The government needs to think very carefully before implementing such a scheme and to fully understand the consequences its action will have on the fundamental basis of this bill.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR CHATSWORTH: Obviously, the youth opposition members never grew up in an encouraging family. Therefore, they would not understand an awards system like we are proposing. Let us be frank for a moment: unrewarded work is about as appreciated as telemarketers in our society. Therefore, our government is cleverly offering incentives and awards schemes to encourage non-government organisations to register with our fixed centres. The government acknowledges that some NGOs may be hesitant to register with fixed centres. Therefore, our incentives will include increased resources, various grants and beneficial staffing opportunities et cetera.

As well as worthwhile incentives, this government will apply an awards scheme based on the progress made by each centre. Yes, there will be bronze, gold and silver, but anybody who has ever worked in a workplace where this system is used would find that it is very encouraging and everybody benefits from it. The board will accredit each centre with bronze, silver or gold awards according to each centre's individual achievement in community involvement, their ability to create an encouraging environment and the overall success of smoothing the transition, which is the main idea of the whole bill. The opposition fails to understand the importance of these incentives.

An honourable youth member: And you fail to understand the issues.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR CHATSWORTH: Okay. Furthermore, the opposition is refusing to improve cultural understanding by refusing these incentives. The point of the bill is to improve cultural understanding and by ignoring that these incentives are going to work, they are all refusing what we are setting out to do. The opposition must acknowledge that the bill is wholly dependent on NGOs and if we want NGOs to become a part of this bill, we need to offer incentives.

Time expired.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR SPRINGWOOD: Once again the government has put before us another mediocre bill. This bill is lacking in so many ways that to fix it we will have to make up to 10 amendments. This is unacceptable from this government. It is time it moved out and let us in. This bill has got so many deficiencies that it embarrasses us. One of them is this incentives scheme. This is not a game of sport. We have to recognise standards. We have to meet standards so that people who go to these service centres appreciate it and come out with the proper qualifications. It is not about giving them lollies or gold and silver medals. Also, there are too many levels of bureaucracy—they have a state board, a regional board, an area board. You know what? You guys make me bored. It is time that the government started to meet expectations and did a better job.

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

Motion agreed to.

Youth bill read a second time.

Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 and 2, as read, agreed to.

Clause 3—

YOUTH MEMBER FOR WOODRIDGE: I move the following amendment—

1 Clause 3 (Definitions)

At page 4, after line 24—

insert—

'**SRA**, see section 9(1).'

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 3, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 4 and 5, as read, agreed to.

Clause 6—

YOUTH MEMBER FOR NANANGO: I move the following amendment—

1 Clause 6 (Fixed centres)

At page 6, lines 3 and 4, 'in each local government area.'—

omit, insert—

'throughout Queensland on a needs assessment basis.'

(1A) Factors to be considered by the board in the needs assessment include—

(a) distribution and density of population; and

(b) representation of refugees and immigrants throughout Queensland.'

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 6, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 7, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 8 to 10—

YOUTH MEMBER FOR SPRINGWOOD: I move the following amendments—

2 Clause 8 (Leadership)

At page 6, lines 21 to 24—

omit, insert—

'8 Area board

'(1) Area boards will be established to manage fixed centres.

'(2) There must be allocated 1 area board to 3 fixed centres in South-East Queensland and 1 area board to each fixed centre in areas outside South-East Queensland.

'(3) An area board will consist of 7 representatives, 4 to be members of the community assessing the service, and 3 to include social workers, community leaders, members of NGOs and other support services.

'(4) Area boards will meet monthly to discuss the progress of fixed centres and report any issues or local strategies to the State board.

'(5) Area boards will meet regularly with the State board.'

3 Clause 9 (Regional board)

At page 7, lines 3 to 16—

omit, insert—

'9 Implementation of shared responsibility agreements

'(1) Shared Responsibility Agreements (SRAs) are to be entered into between the Commonwealth and the State and the community to provide funding in return for community obligations.

'(2) Area boards will encourage NGOs to enter into SRAs.

'(3) SRAs do not affect communities' access to other benefits or services provided by the board.'

4 Clause 10 (Regional board members)

At page 7, lines 17 and 21—

omit, insert—

'10 Monitoring of fixed centres

'(1) Area boards will be responsible for monitoring the standards of fixed centres.

'(2) Fixed centres will enter into standards agreements that will be reviewed by area boards.'

The purpose of our amendments is about integrating the local people of the community. It is about sharing responsibility. It is about involving the public. What we want to do is build up trust within the community. We want to involve people in the bureaucracy. We want people who are experienced in the culture of the people who are using the services to be involved in the bureaucracy of these services. Also, we want there to be some accountability for the bureaucracy of these services. We say that there should be standards that should be met. The area boards will have to meet with the state boards so that standards can be met, otherwise there will be no standards and people will just do as they wish. People will meet with the state board and the state board will ask questions and will try to see whether standards have been met.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR DARLING DOWNS: I am completely amazed that the whole IMAC refuting team has managed to do a complete backflip when it comes to their amendments. Clearly the opposition has missed one of the most basic points of the bill—decreasing bureaucracy. Time and time again the government has blatantly described the need to rid immigrants of red tape. I fail to understand how the opposition can then go on to propose amendments which will render the bill utterly ineffective, counterproductive and contradictory. But then again what should I expect from the opposition?

To suggest that the bill should allocate centres by numbers proves a fundamental lack of understanding by the opposition. Imposing numbers makes the framework itself impersonal and detracts from the intent to have each centre, area et cetera established on tailor-made terms, on a needs-by-needs basis. It is this point which exactly contradicts the bill and has seen the destruction of so many past attempts.

On the issue of the south-east Queensland concentration, the opposition displays yet another blatant misunderstanding of the bill. Areas such as Mount Isa and Townsville, for example, are decentralised areas yet have high immigrant population density. Yet they want to have the bulk of the centres in the south-east region. It does not seem logical to me.

An honourable youth member interjected.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR DARLING DOWNS: This is exactly what the bill has proposed and we are going to stick by it. If the opposition knew the community as we did, it would know that the most effective strategy to aid as many people as possible is to allow each area to dictate their needs by appealing to the appropriate authorities. Again, I repeat: to become efficient, to become effective, as the government often is, establishment on a needs basis and not on a regulated bureaucratic basis allows the perfection the bill provides.

Time expired.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR SOUTH BRISBANE: The very idea of having these fixed centres managed by an area director as well as having a regional board, an area board and a state board is an appalling bureaucratic mess. I fail to understand how the government can even say that having four levels is less bureaucratic. That is ridiculous. This can only result in a situation where problems are not resolved and the voices of the community are simply not heard. Why should the members of the regional board be able to decide what kind of program the refugees need? It is simply inappropriate. Do these regional officers understand what it is like to come to a country with language barriers, cultural differences and no fundamental understanding of the way of life? The answer is no.

The amendments proposed are designed to cut down on bureaucracy and ensure that the people who will actually be accessing the services have their opinions and ideas heard and implemented. Thus, clause 8, lines 1 to 26, have been omitted and the area director will no longer exist. The area board will be changed so that the board will comprise seven representatives—four to be members of the community actually accessing the service and three to include social workers, community leaders, members of NGOs and other support services. They will meet monthly to discuss the centres and report issues and strategies to the state board. By omitting the regional board in clause 9 the middleman is being removed thus cutting down on bureaucracy which would clearly be detrimental to the effectiveness of the fixed centres.

As previously mentioned, shared responsibility agreements will be entered into and the area boards will monitor the standards of the fixed centre. These amendments will ensure that the needs of the people accessing the services are clearly understood and their ideas are implemented in the syllabus, cutting out a huge amount of bureaucracy and making the entire bill far more effective.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR MOUNT GRAVATT: I would like to say that the government speak because they have something to say, but the opposition speak because they have to say something. I read the amendments to proposed section 9 and after I finished reading them I had three words to say: ha, ha, ha! The fact that I repeated those three words might seem irrelevant, but hear me out. I would love to embarrass the opposition. We are being honest. But how can I embarrass the opposition if the opposition are embarrassing themselves? What is stated in proposed section 9 is implied in the bill more eloquently, and therefore it is almost as unnecessary as having this opposition team in front of us here today. This can mean two things (a) the opposition is a bunch of retards; (b)—

An honourable youth member: I rise to a point of order.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR MOUNT GRAVATT: All right, I withdraw.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! There is a point of order.

An honourable youth member: That is unparliamentary conduct towards the opposition. We find that very offensive and would like the member to retract that statement.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR MOUNT GRAVATT: I withdraw. Option (b) is that they could not have come up with an argument to dispute our fantastic bill, and I would personally like to add option (c) which is all of the above—but I can't say that, can I? If those opposite think we are going to agree with their amendment, then—yes, we are going to agree with their amendment because we are agreeing with ourselves, but this just proves that the government is doing the opposition's job for them. We might as well get rid of the entire opposition.

An honourable youth member: Hear, hear!

YOUTH MEMBER FOR MOUNT GRAVATT: Hear, hear! That is right. Hear, hear; you are embarrassing yourselves in front of the government. Hear, hear; you are embarrassing yourselves in front of the Speaker.

Time expired.

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

Ayes—83

Noes—2

Resolved in the affirmative.

Non-government amendments agreed to.

Clauses 8 to 10, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 11 to 13, as read, agreed to.

YOUTH PREMIER: Madam Deputy Speaker, for the past 50 minutes we have had discussion about the bill presented by the government. It is a bill which hopefully, if implemented correctly, will really change the lives and help the settlement of those immigrants and refugees who come into our country and our state daily. I do not want to go over what we have talked about because you all know the issues, but I pose this challenge to the House. The opposition has had its amendments approved almost unanimously. If the bill is as good as we think it seems, then I pose a challenge to the House that we vote unanimously to prove to the community and to the wider public how much we really appreciate and how much we really want immigrants and refugees to settle in our state. We really want them to be accepted. We really want Australia to be as multicultural as it seems. I pose a challenge to the House: it is your decision.

Third Reading

YOUTH PREMIER: I move—

That the youth bill, as amended, be now read a third time.

Division: Question put—That the youth bill, as amended, be now read a third time.

Ayes—81

Noes—4

Resolved in the affirmative.

Youth bill read a third time.

Long Title

YOUTH PREMIER: I move—

That the long title of the youth bill be agreed to.

Question put—That the long title of the youth bill be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

YOUTH PREMIER: I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR ALBERT: A few years ago Australia entered a mild drought. Australia's mild drought has now become a serious water crisis. Instead of planning for the future or implementing long-term, significant change, the government is reacting to problems it has allowed to occur with short-term, quick-fix remedies for this colossal, detrimental environmental issue. The government should implement a series of dams up and down the coast of the eastern seaboard linked via a pipeline to supply water to severely drought-affected areas. The current dams are not in places that are beneficial, they are not in good rainfall or water catchment areas, and therefore they do not provide enough relief or assistance.

Although additional dams and pipelines may cost a great deal in the short term, in the long term the positive change they will make is well worth the initial financial cost. Moreover, currently the only legislation in place about the individual saving water in and around the home is legislation regarding the percentage of gutters to be put in place in order to fill rainwater tanks, which is only 10 per cent per home. That level should be raised to 100 per cent so that each individual can help save more water in their own home. Granted, the government is taking steps in the direction of water saving, but the question must be asked: is the government taking quick enough or big enough steps?

YOUTH MEMBER FOR ALGESTER: I have an admission to make: I like maths. As strange as it may seem to hear someone say that in a room full of youth parliamentarians who are mostly interested in subjects such as modern history and the humanities, I would like to say that it saddens me greatly and really injures my heart when someone says they hate maths or science.

Quite frankly, maths and science built this chamber for us. Maths and science has given us technology. Maths and science is continually improving the lives of people every day. This is an issue not only in my electorate but in the whole of Queensland. The fact is that the rate of people who are studying science is not proportional to the need for scientists, engineers or people who are interested in these kinds of subjects. Science needs some major catching up.

I am on the education, training and arts committee. I believe that we need to implement better teaching methods to try to solve this problem. I am sure all youth members would agree that it is very different learning from a teacher who is very passionate about a subject than it is learning from a teacher who obviously does not really care that much. Quite frankly, 30 per cent of senior maths teachers and junior maths teachers lack subject-specific qualifications and approximately 15 per cent of teachers indicated that they were neither qualified nor had the experience to teach these subjects. That is unacceptable and could be the reason we do not have many people liking maths, which I do not really understand. Maybe they should come and talk to me. I am sure I can convince them, because they are really interesting subjects.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR ASHGROVE: For many years now politicians and other influential people have been telling us that young Australians have a binge drinking problem. I agree that there is somewhat of a binge drinking problem in our society, but I have to disagree with the way in which the federal government is dealing with this problem. The federal government has singled out alcopops. I do not think any young person in this chamber has called a premixed drink an alcopop. I believe that illustrates just how out of touch the federal government is with the youth of Australia. Currently, the plan by the federal government, which has recently been passed by a Senate committee, is to increase the excise on premixed drinks by 70 per cent. That will see an estimated \$3 billion returned to Treasury each year.

Research, along with common sense, indicates that education rather than tax increases would ease the problem of binge drinking. To many, including me, this tax increase is just there to increase government revenue rather than to decrease binge drinking. In fact, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, which is ironically a government organisation, doubts the statistics the government has used to justify the tax increase, stating—

Given the stable prevalence of risky drinking, and the lack of any clear trend regarding preferences for RTDs, the increased availability of RTDs does not appear to have directly contributed to an increase in risky alcohol consumption.

Unfortunately, risky alcohol abuse is generally more common in communities with low socioeconomic status. However, that is not to say that rich kids do not binge drink. In these particular communities with low socioeconomic status, cheap wine—commonly known as goon—has become the drink of choice as it is only about \$10 or \$11 for four litres.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR ASPLEY: The issue I am addressing today has been around since the 1920s and is still just as relevant now and is currently making headlines in the newspapers. Does that sound like the issue has been solved? No, not to me.

What is the issue? It is the shortage in skilled labour, which is just worsening and causing more pain in all sectors of the workforce in Australia. We do not need our children and grandchildren to address this problem. It is estimated that by around 2012 in Australia there will be a worker shortage of about 200,000 workers. This is a gloomy picture and a formidable challenge, even after 80 years. Right across every sector the shortage phenomena is present and real.

We cannot turn a blind eye and accept the fact that this shortage will increase. Something must be done in order to address this concern. It has already seriously undermined Australia's oil and gas boom. It has also inflated the corporate, agricultural and trade sectors as well.

So how do we deal with this? We need to have a visionary educational approach that can address this need and lack of excellence. The educational innovation that is needed is the introduction of at least one or two trades that are tailor-made to the state or area to be compulsory at high school level regardless of which country on the globe has the best qualified people. This will aid all students if they go and work overseas where they will be representing our country in what they do.

This is not the only solution. Each and every school should run a leadership development program and each student must take part in order to develop the leader within him or her. We should be preparing our youth for the future—and not just the future but the best future they can have, which is one where they can become exceptional workers, leaders, employees and employers. When students study at universities, they should get the best and highest level of education and training.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR BEAUDESERT: As has already been mentioned, binge drinking is a major problem in Queensland today. In rural areas, under-age drinking is undertaken and accepted by a large majority of the youth. Recently, in a half-hearted attempt to bring down the national drinking levels, the federal government introduced a new tax on so-called alcopops.

However, it is the job of our state government to realise that there is a greater cause behind this new epidemic and it is its job to provide the solution to this problem. In my electorate, the average age to begin drinking is 14. Among the majority of high school students, alcohol is an accepted part of life. My question is: why? Their answer is boredom. It is not because it is inexpensive. Drinking every weekend has never been a cheap habit, but what else is there to spend your money on? It is not because they want to cause trouble. They would be quite happy to drink in their own backyard—on private property.

It is because of the lack of other things to do that drives young people to what is so frowned upon by the rest of the community. Of all the things missing in our towns, a pub is not one of them. There may be no dances, no festivals, no sign of community for young people to be involved in, but there is always that bottlo just down the road. With this boredom and the lack of community spirit, drinking and drugs in general seem to be an obvious choice to turn to.

Whilst the money that is to be made off this alcopops tax has been promised to help diminish the amount of binge drinking, I doubt that my little electorate of Beaudesert would see any of it. The government needs to look at introducing other activities. Have we not been taught for years that it is not material things that matter? It is not money that will deter us from drinking; it is that which interests our hearts.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR BROADWATER: Why is it that the licensed driver in Queensland who is the least likely to have an accident is a learner driver? Is it because they are more nervous or more cautious than other drivers? That is plausible, but if you are in the situation of a potential accident, being nervous is the least likely thing to help you. Is it because there is a fully licensed driver accompanying you? I would not completely disregard that, but they are certainly not driving the car for you.

If a learner driver is travelling through a roundabout and they knowingly and mistakenly forget to—or wrongly—indicate, they are more likely to feel repentant and take that mistake into account. However, the open licence drivers who continually change lanes and forget to indicate—which is through more than likely bad habit—do not feel repentant at all.

In a five-year study—from 2002 to 2007—it was found that adult drivers aged 25 to 49 and drivers aged 50 and over were involved in 65.5 per cent of the accidents in Queensland, half of which were driver-fault accidents. They were just simple, preventable mistakes. So although it is blatantly obvious that some P-platers are certainly compensating for something, they are not all to blame.

An effective way to possibly decrease the number of deaths on Queensland's roads is education. The problem is not incompetence; the problem is bad habits, forgetfulness or just simply not caring. I propose a practical exam to be taken every time a person goes to renew their licence. If they fail, their licence should be revoked—and rightly so. They will be able to reapply for their licence through both a practical and theory exam. Quite frankly, I do not understand why Queenslanders complain about blood spilt on our roads every year when they are not doing everything in their power to reduce it. I believe this proposal could do just that—unless, of course, you can give me three good reasons as to why—

Time expired.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR BULIMBA: I propose that legislation be introduced to end the cruel, expensive and ineffective drug prohibition laws and to replace them with a system of legalisation with heavy regulation to minimise the harm of drug use. It has become obvious that drug prohibition has failed to decrease both the supply and demand of drugs, but has made drug use far more dangerous.

A parliamentary commission report stated that prohibition is not effective as it has the effect of driving drug use underground. It is evident that those who take the massive risk of drug use, putting their health at extreme risk, are not discouraged due to its illegal status. As a parliamentary committee study on drug policy found, drug law enforcement measures such as customs, police, courts and prisons have proven to be relatively ineffective, expensive and often seriously counterproductive. It is clear that the laws have failed to deal with this grave problem.

Drug prohibition is not only not succeeding in its attempt to fight drugs but also exacerbating the harm that this enormous problem is causing to both the user and society. Drug prohibition has resulted in a number of serious, frightening consequences that impact on the safety of drug use and administration. Drug prohibition has had the effect of propagation of poor-quality and uneven-concentration drugs with unknown mix-ins and harmful administration methods, which can often result in a greater amount of poisoning and overdose.

If we are to take this dangerous resource out of the hands of sinister dealers, we can make it a safer and taxable source. Hundreds of thousands—if not millions—of innocent lives and families are torn apart by this enormous problem. We cannot allow these insane laws to prevent us from stopping this. This is not a war we can win but a problem we can manage.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR BUNDAMBA: I am here today to talk to youth members about apprenticeships. I am a young apprentice myself, so I know the struggles that the apprentices in my electorate go through. I know a young fellow who spends \$100 a week just on fuel to get to work. Considering he gets paid \$300 a week, that is \$200 to survive.

This government that sits in this House full-time—which I support—is not doing the right thing by apprentices. We need to raise the bar. The federal government has already put steps in place. We need to do it at the state level. We need to raise it. It is not efficient for us. We are out there. We love it. You could not find a tradesman who loves his job more than me. You might, but he is lying, I can tell youth members that.

The only reason I stay in my apprenticeship is for the love of the trade. That is it. If the money was better, mate, there would be more of us. That is why we have the biggest shortage. We are importing people. Let us keep our own youth in there. You say, 'No, let's go to uni. We can bludge, you know.' I am out there working every day. I am doing 10-hour days just to survive. Other kids are doing 13, 14-hour days and working on Saturdays. I am like, 'You're going to die, you poor kid.' They are only one year older than me. I am like, 'Wait up, wait up. Take two steps back. You are working on the weekend? I don't know anyone who does that.' We need to put in place a state government—

Time expired.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR BURDEKIN: I would like to first acknowledge the traditional owners of this land and also the land of the Burdekin electorate. The Burdekin electorate stretches over 18,000 kilometres and the population of the youth is just under 3,000, so it is a rather small electorate when it comes to youth. The electorate consists of two main cities—Home Hill and Ayr—and eight smaller towns. The youth of the electorate have told me that their main problem is that because of the remoteness of the Burdekin they tend to drive to the two main cities, Ayr and Home Hill. They leave in the morning with four people in the car and they come home with four people in the car. Some of them go to work at four o'clock and leave at 11 or 12 or whatever.

The main thing that was brought to my attention when I spoke to them was that the new P-plate system does not work in the Burdekin. The reason for this, as I explained, is that they car pool. They save money on fuel, which costs \$1.60 or \$1.70 up north—yes, it is ridiculous, but I am not complaining. So the youth have asked me to convey the message to the parliament to get the government—the big people, head office—to do something about the new P-plate system and amend the laws for the youth of the Burdekin or any other isolated area that has no public transport. That is right: there is no public transport. For all of those who live in Brisbane or any other city that has buses, there are no buses in the Burdekin, so you either drive or walk and you drive of course because of the remoteness. So what I am asking for here is that there is a need to replace the P-plate system.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR BURLEIGH: The world, as we know, is a harsh and cruel place. It is even worse if you do not have access to the basics of life such as food and water, shelter and medicine. Many of us here would associate a lack of these necessities with a Third World country, yet it is occurring right here on our doorstep. The Gold Coast is a city of gloss and glamour, the tourist capital of Queensland and perhaps Australia, a city where the rich and middle classes live it up and the workers are well off. We consider ourselves the lucky country and that our youth have it the best in the world, but not all do. In a Gold Coast City Council report entitled *Young people's housing in Gold Coast City*, it is stated that 'workers and organisations report that young people in crisis are being turned away' and that 'some workers report housing young people in motels in the private sector because there are no other options when crisis services are full'.

On 9 April this year ABC Online revealed that there are only 268 public housing dwellings for every 10,000 private dwellings on the Gold Coast, whilst the average Queensland-wide is 431 public dwellings to every 10,000 private dwellings. For a lucky country, something is seriously wrong here. Two days earlier ABC Online had published an article revealing that in 2001 there was an estimated 2,100 people under the age of 25 who were homeless on the Gold Coast. That is highly likely to have doubled or tripled since then. Even more disturbing is that in the same article it was said that some of these youth are exchanging sex for shelter as they cannot pay any other way.

Therefore, I implore this House to look at the situation that is presented before us, not just on the Gold Coast but Queensland-wide, and deal with it to ensure that these youth get a fair go like everyone else and that their basic rights, to quote our Prime Minister, are not thrown 'out the back window', not just because we are youth parliamentarians but fellow Queenslanders, fellow Australians and fellow human beings.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR BURNETT: I have three words for consideration by the chamber: Bundaberg Base Hospital. Possibly the first thing that comes to mind is the Dr Patel saga. He has been in the newspapers lately while he fights extradition. This whole debacle highlighted the inadequate health facilities in regional Queensland and particularly in Bundaberg. Former Premier Peter Beattie himself acknowledges that Bundaberg is one of the most deserving areas across Queensland for health funding. The state of health care in Bundaberg and Burnett is appalling. So \$41.1 million was planned for an expansion to the Bundaberg Base Hospital which would add up to 30 new emergency ward beds and bring a vast improvement to hospital facilities. Planning commenced and work was to be done by 2010. But then Bundaberg Base Hospital faded away. The Olympics came and regional health was not fun any more. Bundaberg Base Hospital became the puppy that you begged for for Christmas but got bored of when you got back to school and tamogotchis were cool.

So far only \$3 million has been allocated out of the \$41 million and minimal work has been done. Work started on 18 February this year on an extension to the hospital emergency department to include six new observation beds and to relieve immediate service demand. So far only a tiny amount of that work has been completed, leaving health in Bundaberg unchanged for the most part. This is indicative of the yo-yo level of care for regional health. We are helped out in times of crisis but just enough to get us out of the paper or until something new and fun comes along, and then we are pushed on to the backburner while people continue to die every day because of the substandard health conditions in regional Queensland. Something needs to be done by our government to help regional areas. It is unacceptable that anyone in Queensland should have to put up with this.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR CALOUNDRA: The youth of Caloundra are being robbed, cheated and swindled. A greedy power play has yet again seen the little guy bite the dust and the youth, as always, are left with the after-effects of these problems. The Queensland Air Museum is to be removed and forgotten, and its treasures that have been passed down from generation to generation will be rudely snatched from our grasp. The Queensland Air Museum, QAM for short, is a non-profit organisation which has been running since 1974. This collection of priceless treasures has painstakingly grown from one to more than 40 magnificent pieces today. It has taken 34 long and hard years to get here. This is undoubtedly a national treasure. Hundreds of years of our own history lay on that plot of land.

To believe that those who are meant to represent us are allowing this to happen is beyond comprehension. The government took a wrong turn in approving this disgusting plan in the first place, and then a few persuading words from a big company made them fast forward the plan and that of course meant that any opposition to the plan had no time to have a feasible debate about it. To expect the people of Caloundra to stand by and watch as the future generations are robbed of such a priceless treasure is despicable. Why are they robbing us? All for just a few dollars more. It is time that generation X stopped robbing generation Y.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR CHARTERS TOWERS: Today I would like to take the opportunity to talk about an issue that has begun to have quite a large impact on my electorate. This issue is a lack of qualified teachers choosing or wanting to teach in rural schools. While the distance education system is vital for those who live on properties hundreds of kilometres from a town or school to receive an education, I believe that it is ridiculous that many schools have had to resort to this form of education simply because, even though they have the resources and numbers to warrant and facilitate classes, they lack the teachers.

The state secondary school in my electorate has approximately 400 students. While this may seem like a small number to some, when compared to the other secondary schools in my electorate it is quite large. Even though it offers an extensive range of subjects, there are still some students who have had to resort to either distance education or virtual schooling in order to follow their career path simply because of a lack of qualified teachers. If we continue to ignore this problem, there will be serious future consequences which is why there needs to be more focus on enticing teachers to work in rural schools.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR CLAYFIELD: I rise today to speak about a policy that may one day prove as regrettable and embarrassing as the decision to release cane toads into the Queensland bush. That policy is the addition of fluoride into Queensland drinking supplies in the mistaken belief that it will help our teeth. Let me be clear: fluoride is a poison that has no place in the human diet. Saying that drinking fluoride will help your teeth is just as silly as saying that snorting shampoo is going to clean your hair.

Advocates of fluoridation say that, in areas where this has been introduced, the rates of tooth decay have fallen. What they neglect to also add is that in these same areas at the same time the rates of usage of toothbrushes and toothpaste have also increased. It is this and not the addition of poison to our drinking supplies that has reduced tooth decay.

Also, the proposed level of fluoride in our water is only 100th of that in toothpaste. So obviously even if you only drink water and do not brush your teeth because you cannot afford toothpaste, it is not going to be as effective, clearly. Not only are the benefits of water fluoridation a bit iffy, there is also evidence to suggest that it may have harmful effects. A key example is fluorosis, which affects the cellular structure of bones in teeth and leads to them becoming brittle and a hideous shade of brown. This is irreversible and costs between \$600 and \$1,200 per tooth to cover up. Someone has said that this would put dentists out of business, but if you are earning \$600 a tooth I think that is a pretty good deal.

The Australian medical research council has said that fluoride is especially dangerous to children under the age of five years. So forcing unwanted medication on everyone—

Time expired.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR CLEVELAND: With the increasing cost of fuel prices, people are being encouraged to use hybrid forms of transport—bicycles. However, there is a severe lack of bicycle-safe infrastructure in Queensland for cyclists to utilise. I live on a semirural island with no traffic lights, roundabouts or—worst of all—traffic congestion. We have no bicycle paths and it is terrifyingly

dangerous on our roads due to 40-tonne mining semitrailers. As the condition of our roads is just despicable, cyclists have only two choices: to either pull off the road or to continue cycling and run the risk of being hit. Cyclists should not have to deal with this.

The government has recently approved a \$7 million bike shelter, and plans are being proposed for a city based bicycle hire system. These ideas may be useful. These ideas may be helpful. But these ideas are impractical. Until adequate, practical bicycle-safe infrastructure is erected, bicycles will not be supported by the greater community as an alternative form of transport.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR CUNNINGHAM: In my electorate of Cunningham we have a major problem confronting us. The youth in my electorate are angry. They are really angry and the reason they are so angry is due to one simple thing: they believe that none of their governments are prepared to listen to them. The reason why this is the case is that they believe too many bills are being rushed through this chamber.

Take, for example, the amalgamations legislation which was passed last year. It put Cambooya and Greenmount, Clifton and other areas around Queensland into bigger councils. As the Youth Deputy Leader of the Opposition, I have heard the concerns of my electorate and I am proposing a simple solution to this major problem. I am proposing that we should have an upper house elected by the people. Instead of it being able to be easily controlled by the government, instead of it being out of the Colwell system of 1967, it should be like the New Zealand system which the New Zealand parliament has today.

The reason why this should be the case is so that one party cannot dominate the parliament under any circumstance. The way to do this is for the government to call an election. The election should be for the public to decide whether they want a Senate. If the government of the day which proposes the Senate is elected—

Time expired.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR FERNY GROVE: Acknowledgement: the action of expressing or displaying gratitude or appreciation for something. Today I want to simply remind the House that we should acknowledge and appreciate the efforts of social workers within our society. In our hectic world it is easy to get caught up in the hurly-burly of life. Our budgets are tighter and our bills seem to multiply. As we seek to climb the ladder of success, it is easy to forget that some citizens fall through the cracks of society. It is even easier to forget that there are some selfless professionals who work to understand and help these people.

A social worker has many guises. They work to keep people off the streets. They work to combat drug and alcohol abuse. They work with the unemployed, the neglected and the exploited. A social worker with 20 years of field experience can be paid the equivalent of a first-year teacher. No-one ever said that there was money to be made in human services but these humble, altruistic people who work behind the scenes of society challenge the materialism inherent within society. Let us acknowledge the time and effort they spend on behalf of all of us to make society more equitable and human for those who struggle.

In addition, I would like to acknowledge the Queensland Youth Parliament executive—Lewis, Erin, Jenny, Daniel, Alex, Mark, Tom M, Jess, James, Thomas, Sarah, Bruce, Rob and Chris, all of whom have put themselves—mind, body and spirit—into the planning and operation of this amazing youth program.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR GLADSTONE: My electorate of Gladstone is home to eight major industrial plants including the world's largest alumina plant, QAL, and Queensland's biggest power station, NRG. Despite this, Gladstone is not the typical industrial city. It is not dirty and there is no visible pollution. In fact, Gladstone consistently has met or surpassed all air pollution benchmarks. Why is it, then, that from 1996 to 2004, 19 cases of chronic lymphoid leukaemia were diagnosed in the city itself? Based on state averages, that is more than double the rate of this rare form of leukaemia that should be occurring in Gladstone. Historically, air monitoring has only focused on chemicals released on a large scale. The EPA has recently installed additional monitoring stations in new locations to measure chemicals that are usually excluded from standard monitoring programs. This has come from years of community concern over heavy metals and mineral by-products which have been ignored.

A local volunteer from Queensland Parks and Wildlife has said that birds of prey are usually the first animals to show the signs of pollution. X-rays of local birds reveal traces of heavy metals. Surely this is a sign that something is not right. Whilst a link between pollution and this rare form of leukaemia has yet to be proven, the disturbing rates of leukaemia are of concern. Whether these rates are the result of an unknown form of pollution or just a mere coincidence, something must be done for Gladstone.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR GREENSLOPES: It is widely acknowledged that Queensland is Australia's fastest growing state with over 1,500 people moving to our great state each week—a thousand people in the southern part of our state alone. These figures are encouraging for the future of Queensland, yet as our state has grown the infrastructure, in particular public transport, has not grown with it.

As one of the many Queenslanders, in particular young Queenslanders, who does not drive, I rely on a reliable, efficient and consistent public transport system. The extent to which young people rely on public transport was brought to my attention just a fortnight ago when my local paper reported that two local schoolgirls at the age of just 13 were left waiting for a bus for over two hours late at night because the scheduled buses were full and could not pick them up. Daniel Morcombe was abducted while in a similar situation. It is therefore something that represents a significant public safety hazard and issue and something that should not be happening.

If we are serious about acting on climate change, if we are serious about getting cars off our road and getting people into public transport, there needs to be greater investment. We need a competent government authority to look after public transport. We need greater cooperation between all levels of government. The government needs to get serious about public transport so that no more university students will miss lectures because their bus was running late and no more young Queenslanders will choose to drive to school or university because their buses are running late.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR GREGORY: Today I would like to talk about an issue that everybody in Queensland knows about, and that is the shortage of hospital beds in our public hospital system. It is a well-known fact—it is on the television, it is in the newspapers, it even makes it on the talkback radio shows. But a fact that is not often talked about when these debates are happening is the type of patients we have in our acute-care facilities who are holding up the emergency departments because those facilities are full. These are the patients who we like to call nursing home placement patients.

Let me give youth members an example of the type of patient I am talking about. Mr Oldtimer comes to the emergency department with a bit of a cough. He is diagnosed with pneumonia. He needs to be hospitalised for antibiotic treatment. During his stay to receive that treatment we inquire about his social status and how he is going at home. We find that it is difficult for him to do his shopping because he does not have a licence. It is hard for him to wash his clothes because of the arthritis in his hands. We find that he is not coping at home and we decide that it is not safe for Mr Oldtimer to go back to his own home. What do we do with this patient when he recovers from his chest infection? He is no longer unwell; he is quite healthy and happy but it is just not suitable for him to go home. We cannot put him in a nursing home because they are full. We cannot send him home, because he is just as likely to bounce back to hospital with another severe chest infection.

I ask youth members: is it Mr Oldtimer's fault that he cannot go home? Absolutely not. Is it the fault of the people in the nursing homes who are just refusing to die? Is it their fault that we have no place for him? I tell youth members: absolutely not. It is this government's responsibility to provide adequate facilities for these patients so they are not in our hospital system. They are not sick; they do not belong there.

Finally, as the representative for the Gregory electorate, I would like to publicly acknowledge the health workers in my region who are doing such a fantastic job looking after the people.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR HERVEY BAY: Youth of a nation—that is who we are as youth parliamentarians. *Youth of a nation* is also a song title from the band POD. This song describes the issue that I wish to bring before the Youth Parliament today. It is an issue which, as a society, we would rather not talk about: suicide, the one moment where life is lost.

Some people in this room may know somebody who took this route, or who tried, or maybe they tried it themselves. Each year in Australia 2,400 people take their lives. That is 24 times the number of young people in this room. One part of the song says—

He put his life to an end

They might remember him then

For the sanity of the Youth Parliament, I am not going to try to sing that. But this phrase describes how those who might contemplate suicide feel. They have no or minimal support structure, they feel victimised and things are too much to handle.

Society in general would rather not hear about this taboo subject. This compounds the issue. We have a whole debate raging as to whether or not assisting someone to commit suicide is legal. Are we not missing the point? There are already community counsellors in place who deal with the depressed, suicide hotlines and so on. These only help the people who are willing to get help and those who are not willing to get help may contemplate suicide. As fellow members of society, we are the only ones who can do anything to change this. We are the youth of the nation and, as a collective, we need to look out for those who are struggling and to not shun them.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR INALA: Queensland's population is skyrocketing, particularly in the south-east corner. The greater Springfield region is widely recognised as the fastest-growing area. With more than 16,000 residents living there and more than three families moving to the region every day, is it any wonder it is one of the fastest-growing communities in Queensland? With every increase in population, there is an increased need for transport and infrastructure to facilitate the growing community, especially the teenage demographic. The only way they can get around is to rely on the public transport system, although there seems to be a distinct problem with finding reliable forms of transport in this area.

The state of the public transport system in the greater Springfield region is, to say the least, woeful. As a resident of this region, I see and feel the frustration of the residents on a daily basis. For instance, one resident needed to get herself from Camira to Redbank Plains. I hear youth members say that that is not even a 15-minute journey by car. How long could it take? But it took her two and a half hours on two buses and a train. If she lived in Brisbane or even on the Brisbane side of the Inala electorate, public transport could take her anywhere she wanted to go. Yet in the fastest-growing region of south-east Queensland, she cannot.

This issue is the tip of the transport crisis in Inala. On any given day a multitude of problems could arise—services breaking down, being late, or simply not turning up. This lack of quality transport is a major problem for young people. The state government has pledged to fix the transport problems of the western corridor, but these initiatives will not be in place fully until 2015, by which time these measures will be outdated. What is needed is a solution to the problem and a promise for better public transport coverage. In the greater Springfield region, we need it sooner rather than later.

YOUTH MEMBER INDOOROOPIILLY: There is no way really to tiptoe around my issue today so I am going to explain it as clearly as possible, and I ask for a degree of maturity from the youth members. Queensland's age of consent for sexual intercourse is both 16 and 18, that is, 16 for those who choose to have vaginal intercourse and 18 for those who choose to have anal intercourse. Many people incorrectly believe this law as sexual activity to be legal at 16 for heterosexual people and 18 for homosexual people. This is a wrong assertion and this means that many gay people, especially men, fail to seek information and tests, including HIV, as they believe they may be dobbed in. Being dobbed in and convicted of this offence results in a jail time of up to 14 years and consent is no defence in the courts.

As per a La Trobe University study in 2001, 25 per cent is the percentage of all young male and female people in Australia—that is male and female people—who choose to participate in anal intercourse. Therefore, I am not standing up here—youth members are probably thinking 'What's this screaming queen doing standing up talking about gay rights?'—I am saying it is for all people who choose to participate in anal intercourse.

However, the discrimination is obvious and this was confirmed by the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner, Susan Booth, who in 2005 wrote a letter to the cabinet requesting and demanding that the law be changed, but to no avail. My own requests have resulted in letters answering me in one line, 'There are deeply held and opposing views.'

Since 2003, there has been only one state in Australia that has an unequal age of consent, and that is Queensland. I am not calling for special consideration for young gay men; I am just calling for a stop to calling us criminals for doing what we do best.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR IPSWICH: Today I wish to speak to youth members about the topic of household organic waste recycling. Organic waste is green waste, such as leaves, grass and weeds, and also kitchen scraps. There are numerous ways of recycling organic waste, including composting, worm farms, and also you can burn the gases that are given off when this organic waste decomposes.

So why is using these methods to recycle household organic waste so important? In just one year, a single person produces over 500 kilograms of recyclable or organic waste. This is about 50 per cent of their domestic rubbish. So apart from being able to divert up to 50 per cent of waste away from valuable landfill space, recycling organic waste can also improve soil quality, can create chemical-free fertilisers, can be a source of energy and can also reduce the greenhouse gases that would be emitted when this organic waste decomposes in landfill.

I realise that some people are already composting in their yards, but I believe that councils need to take action and address the issues of climate change and the scarcity of our resources and space in landfill. They need to provide us with another bin, not only our current bin for waste and the current recycling collection but another bin for compostable organic household waste. Having the councils facilitate the composting in this way not only makes recycling household organic waste so much easier but has other benefits as it can be sold to nurseries as a fertiliser, it can be used in the rehabilitation of mine sites and quarries, and the gas that is given off when decomposing can be trapped and burnt to produce energy. I have seen kerbside organic waste collection systems function brilliantly in London and I am aware that it happens all around the world—

Time expired.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR IPSWICH WEST: 'Stop in the name of the law. You are under arrest for the murder of Bobby. You have the right to remain silent. Anything you say or do will and can be held against you in a court of law.' Everyone knows that these words are spoken by the good old coppers. They enforce the law in society's everyday world. But what about coppers in a school environment? They do so much more than enforcing the school law. They participate and communicate within the school environment. I attend the Ipswich State High School and we have our very own copper. And, yes, I know what you are thinking: that does not really give my school a positive image. But having a copper

gives the school community a heads-up on what coppers are really like. Coppers are genuine, funny, talkative, kind humans who are not hideously ugly, mean human beings out to get youth like most Hollywood films would suggest.

Having coppers in schools of course gives them the opportunity to help enforce the school laws, put their detective caps on and increase safety, but they get out there and involve themselves in the school community and demonstrate to the youth what coppers are really like. They coach and support sporting teams. They drive excursion buses and school camp buses. They attend school camps. They chat with the students at lunchtime and, my personal favourite, they plan our origin competition that we run at school—Queenslander!

I know when our school attends district competitions our copper comes to support the school and the youth involved. At the beginning of the day the other schools think our school must be pretty dodgy if we need a copper with us to, as they assume, monitor our behaviour. However, by the end of the day the other schools see us chatting and joking with the copper and they see that the copper is in fact there to support the youth as opposed to monitoring youth behaviour. They realise that coppers are quite the mad fellows and are not out to get the youth and therefore make them want a copper of their very own at their school. So, bingo! That is exactly what I want to do. I want all schools to have their own copper because all schools and the youth within the schools would benefit from having their own copper. I leave you with two questions: what is the colour of a 2c piece—

Time expired.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR KEPPEL: Education is at the forefront of long-term development in this state. To not uphold education as an area of high priority is to endanger the economic health, workforce capability and the very future of this state. In recent years the government has funded programs to upgrade and increase air conditioning and computer facilities within public schools. There has been, however, no support for these schools in terms of electricity and other forms of infrastructure which are required to make use of these improvements. We have upgraded, we have plugged it into the wall, we have tried it out but nothing is happening. No-one has bothered to turn on the switch. As more and more Queenslanders turn away from public education in favour of their private counterparts, more must still be done to bring our state schools up to the standard which has been set in other states and territories.

The base grant, which is used alongside enrolment figures to calculate the foundation of a school's funding, has remained unchanged for two decades. I repeat: the base school grant has remained dormant for 20 years. An increase in this base grant which has been neglected for far too long is a significant step forward in revamping the Queensland education system. An increase in this base grant gives principals and our education providers—those who know where the problems are in their communities and know where this money must be spent to improve our services—the opportunity to provide the medication the Queensland public education system so desperately needs.

An increase in this base grant will most importantly provide students with a better, more localised, focused and refreshed education system. Without these long-term commitments, Queensland's public education will become ever more stale, stagnant and obsolete—a combination which will ultimately lead to a cloudy outlook for generations to follow.

Time expired.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR KURWONGBAH: Ask any young girl what she wants to be when she grows up and invariably she will answer, 'Rich and famous.' Ask how she will earn her wealth and what she will be famous for and you will get a blank stare. In primary school we all wanted to be like Britney Spears—or I did—and I guess today little girls want to be like Paris Hilton. Now Britney is shameless, so she sings, and she has moved from 'Miss America Dreams' to 'Miss Bad Media Karma'—another day, another drama. Like Britney, Paris is another paparazzi favourite. Lifestyles of the rich and famous; bad girls or good girls doing bad things; who are they with or not with; what are they wearing; have they put on weight; have they had a hair cut, changed their look or had a family fallout; are they in love or out of love, partying, shopping, eating, dancing—we are fed their every move. A daily diet of this and we are led to believe that this is how you look good. Just look sexy, put on skimpy clothes, pout—this is the way to get ahead.

Well, girls, I implore you to listen to my old idol, Britney—they just want a piece of you. It is time to stand up, all of us together, and say, 'Enough is enough.' Girls are worth so much more than their body and looks. Reject the demand for glamour and let us all be committed to good self-esteem. Money does not buy happiness but being healthy, in control and making a contribution to society does. Be a discerning reader of the glossy magazines. The manipulation of female beauty in these magazines is promoting negative self-image. Magazines exist because of advertising, showing off all types of clothing, beauty products, make-up and hair. But how do they sell these items? They tell you that you are incomplete, inferior, flawed or not perfect until you buy their product. Young girls are experiencing low self-esteem like never before. Magazines should inspire you to be different and to be yourself.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR LOCKYER: My concern today lies with the hospital system in my electorate of Lockyer. Recently a local mother suffering from severe symptoms of vomiting and diarrhoea was turned away from the Laidley Hospital. The staff told her that there was no-one to see her and that her best option was the Gatton Hospital, nearly half an hour away. She received the same story at Gatton. The Gatton and Laidley hospitals are the only hospital facilities in the Lockyer Valley. There are many other stories of people who are turned away from our hospitals. Babies are very rarely delivered in these hospitals and any emergency patients, such as broken bones and severe accidents, are taken by ambulance to either Ipswich or Toowoomba and both of these cities are for many people double the distance. This exponentially increases the risk of permanent damage and, in severe cases, death.

The recent council amalgamations have united Gatton and Laidley shires to become the Lockyer Valley region. It is time to review rural hospitals and, in the case of the Lockyer electorate, build a new updated complex in close proximity to the UQ Gatton campus, which acts as a halfway point between the two major towns in the Lockyer Valley. Health care in Queensland is in astounding disrepair. This is not the fault of the staff. It purely reflects the need on the part of government and universities to fund and restructure the system. This is a vital facet of our society that is in dire need of help. It is time, youth members, to take a stand and work with our local members to make some changes.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR LOGAN: Recycling just one plastic bottle saves enough energy to power a light bulb for 30 years. Just one recycled aluminium can saves enough energy to run a TV for three hours. For each tonne of paper or cardboard recycled, 30,000 litres of water are saved. These are the facts provided by the Queensland government web site to support the Public Place Recycling Initiative allocating \$1.1 million to fund public places to set up recycle bins. The premises receiving funding are shopping centres, entertainment venues, local councils and so on. However, very important places have missed out on this—our schools, universities and other educational institutions have been forgotten.

Most of us spend half our day at school but we produce a huge amount of wastepaper in the classroom and throw away countless plastic bottles, aluminium cans et cetera at lunchtime. Let me do a simple calculation. Let us say that an average high school has 500 students. If each of them drink just a bottle of coke every week, then in the school year of 40 weeks the school will throw away 20,000 bottles. That is 68 years of continuous energy to power one light bulb. So we are wasting tonnes of useful waste resources. But it is even more important for us to realise the power of actually involving young adults in protecting the environment through the simplest actions of our daily life.

A quick phone call to my city council reveals that there are programs for schools but they are merely theoretical education. Even worse, our council would not start considering public place recycling until four or five years time. There are places that have started recycling and the two regions in Queensland are Brisbane city and the Gold Coast. It is time that we were more serious about protecting our environment and prioritised recycling, especially—

Time expired.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR MACKAY: I may appear to be a regular member but compared to everybody else I am a lower-class member. This government believes that it has the right to control my life. I am gay and have next to no rights and no entitlements in my future, and it is mainly because of some dirty 50-year-old homophobes in parliament.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! That is offensive to the House and I ask you to withdraw.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR MACKAY: I withdraw.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Thank you.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR MACKAY: I ask honourable youth members: will me settling down when I am 40 with a sexy blond half my age really affect the economy? I do not think so. Victoria brought in the gay civil unions act not so long ago. Godzilla did not come and eat the Premier. Marriage may not be for everyone, but neither is the member for Stafford. We talk about our freedom of choice and how we take it for granted, but how can we when we have none? On behalf of all homosexuals I would like to thank the small majority of ignorant, bigoted heterosexual—

Time expired.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR MIRANI: As a typical Australian, or even as a typical Queensland, it is a typical dream to be able to purchase one's first home. In this era of the global credit crunch and soaring interest rates, it seems almost impossible to achieve that dream. However, in my electorate and in many other regional areas of Queensland it gets worse. With the mining boom that has taken over, it seems that if one is to achieve this dream of owning one's first home they, too, must join this growing resources explosion. Stated as the biggest single influence on Australian real estate, this boom has been the single cause of property price rises, specifically in regional Queensland.

In our state just two years ago the No. 1 region for the largest price rise was Moura, where the average house price rose a massive 87 per cent. As shocking as it is, it is not surprising that eight out of the top 10 were coalmining areas. Between 1996 and 2026 the Mackay region, along with four other

regional areas, obtained almost half of Queensland's population growth outside the south-east corner. While the population in these towns just keeps on rising, the number of houses for rent and sale does not. It is the prices that rise. The fact that average working families who have been living in the area for many years have been forced to move into caravans just to keep a roof over their heads is something that definitely needs addressing.

Locally employed workers having to travel two hours a day just to get to work purely because that is the closest accommodation they could get is something that definitely needs to be addressed. If one day I wish to purchase my first home, it will not be in regional Queensland for the simple fact that as a young person in regional Queensland I simply will not be able to afford it.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE: On the Sunshine Coast approximately 30 per cent of the population are under the age of 25. This is approximately 85,000 young people. I ask you, Mr Deputy Speaker, how many of these people do you think truly express their ideas for a better community to their local, state and federal government members? I can tell you that less than 150 of these young people have their say in what is happening on the Sunshine Coast. While there are occasional forums held to gauge interest of the youth for various events and infrastructure, these are generally a one-off with less than 50 members or participants at them. So how can the representatives expect to learn anything about youth and what they want if they refuse to work with and listen to them?

As every young person has the potential to share their view, it then becomes our job that their opinions are heard. This is why I propose that a survey be issued to all high school students on the Sunshine Coast as well as all university students on the Sunshine Coast to finally give the youth of the Sunshine Coast a say in what they want, and not what they assume they want. I also propose that all local, state and federal government members support this proposal as it is also their responsibility to effectively represent and encourage the leaders of tomorrow, because if youth are not given the chance to share their ideas and are shoved to the side now then I have to question what the future holds.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR MOGGILL: I would like to bring a serious health matter to the attention of the floor—smoking. Smoking is a dirty, unhealthy and practically pointless habit. It is expensive; it costs people money which should otherwise be spent on everyday basic necessities. Every year thousands of people die from diseases and illnesses caused by smoking. The health care provided for these people costs the government millions of dollars every year. These people who poison themselves every time they take a draw simply do not deserve health care for all that they have brought upon themselves by smoking. Smokers also litter the environment with butts and further cost the people of Queensland money. Because of all these reasons and many more not mentioned, I propose to the floor of the House that we simply make smoking illegal.

Many smokers claim that smoking calms them down. Why don't they try something that is actually healthy? How about Tai Chi for youth members, as the youth members all saw in the park? Or maybe try breathing exercises or even massage? People do not need to slowly kill themselves to calm down.

By prohibiting smoking, we will increase the longevity of Queenslanders. People will live longer and they will work longer. This will be a great stimulant for Queensland's economy. The benefits of the prohibition of smoking I believe far outweigh the almost non-existent costs. With a healthy state we will be happier, healthier and more affluent Queenslanders, and the youth of the state of Queensland will grow up in an immeasurably cleaner and, most importantly, better place.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR MULGRAVE: Over the course of the last 20 years those who have made their living as cane growers in Queensland have often been plagued with financial disasters due to the low world market. Recently agents from the south have emerged with copious amounts of money at their disposal. Despite these agents buying land that has already been cultivated, they are deciding to use the land to plant trees instead. In a world full of get rich quick schemes, it may be hard to believe that growing trees for timber and having to wait some 20 years to make the first harvest could be a financial success.

Yet somehow the taxation rules that apply make it worthwhile. The amount of the annual cane crop that is to be produced has been reduced by 200,000 tonnes and the length of the crushing season has been reduced by two weeks due to the inroads that these southern buyers have already made into the Mulgrave electorate. Should these figures continue, the mills in the area will not have enough cane to crush. If that is the case, the mills will be forced to close down. No mill means no town and this could be the situation across the state.

Fortunately, there exists a quick, effective and even inexpensive way to avoid the disaster: simply grow cane not for the production of sugar to be sold but instead solely for the production of ethanol. Ethanol from sugar could be to Queensland the golden egg, just as the production of ethanol from corn is for the American dirt farmer. Therefore, if Queensland farmers grew cane solely to be made into motor fuel, their market would be ever increasing.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR NUDGE: I would like to start by commending the youth member for Indooroopilly for raising the issue of sodomy and the age of consent. This is a very delicate issue and I think it was very brave of him to come up here and speak about that. I commend the youth member for Indooroopilly.

One of the consequences of the housing boom is that it has pushed many low-income families out of the city in search of more affordable housing. This has led to a concentration of all the negative aspects of disadvantage, such as finite resources, both within the family and within the local community. When the family budget is stretched, access to extracurricular activities enjoyed by many Australian youths can be a distant and unachievable concept. Boredom ensues and entertainment for many ends up in either breaking the law or, as has been perhaps overdiscussed in the media of late, binge drinking. To seriously tackle these issues the cause—boredom—must be addressed.

The government youth holiday program Chill Out is a wonderful success and is a great indicator of the willingness of young people to become involved in extracurricular activities outside of school—from drama, to DJ workshops, to rock climbing—and at a very affordable price. If the government is serious about tackling binge drinking and reducing juvenile offending, it should invest in more frequent and targeted meaningful recreational activities for young people to counter the boredom bug. The government should remember that investment in youth is an investment in the future of our state.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR PUMICESTONE: With the ever-rising inflation rate, especially of everyday living necessities, and the price of petrol and other fuels, it has quickly become evident that many, and not only from our young society, are struggling with the tremendous burden of caring for a young family—through meeting excessive mortgage repayments due to the forever rising interest rates and the consumption of the most commonly disputed necessity, petrol. While petrol many years ago may not have been considered an item of necessity, the changing times in our modern high-speed world prove it to be of great significance.

As it stands in Brisbane, the current average unleaded fuel cost is in excess of 150c per litre and it is much more costly again for diesel or other special-purpose fuels. We as consumers currently pay approximately 38c excise on each litre. We then pay another 10 per cent variable cost on top of this. Therefore, we are paying a tax on top of a tax. I pose the question today: is charging a tax on top of another tax really ethical in our apparent fair consumer trading relationship?

I am fully aware of the purpose for which such taxes are put in place and that these greatly benefit the continuous growth of our country. However, something must be done in order to give struggling Australians—as many of us are these days—the chance to at least feel the least bit comfortable with their financial circumstances. I know I and many others in this very room may never have the opportunity to own our own home due to the exponential growth and rate of inflation in this day and age.

I feel that the GST should be a tax paid only on consumer goods that are deemed unnecessary for everyday life. Petrol purchased directly from the bowser in non-industrial enterprises should be free of this tax on a tax, as this would greatly reduce the impact of the forever rising costs. It would seem that there is no easy fix to this problem and the problems associated with these rising living costs.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR REDLANDS: Today, the youth of Australia are growing up in a society where the rights of criminals outweigh those of the victims. One must certainly ask the question: why in a developed country such as Australia can a convicted murderer or repeat rapist be sentenced to only a few years in prison when they have completely destroyed the lives of others?

Capital punishment is one highly cost-effective and motivational method of maintaining public order. The threat of death would without a doubt help to reduce the number of life-destroying crimes that are committed in Australia. If the thought of dying for these heinous crimes does not influence a potential criminal's action, then perhaps taxpayers will be more at ease knowing that their hard-earned dollars are not supporting the life of a heartless criminal in prison.

One might ask: what about the children of these vicious criminals? Parents are the main influence on children. Do we want the next generation to inherit these socially unacceptable behaviours? Admittedly, one must be certain that these people are truly responsible for these crimes. However, capital punishment is the key to the behavioural future of this fine state. If you can't fix them, kill them.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR ROBINA: The Australian youth of today are constantly being labelled—labelled by each other, by the media and, most recently, by politicians. These labels are important as they influence feelings in society, particularly when legislation is introduced regarding teenagers. I, however, believe that serious harm can occur when the entire youth of Australia is slapped with a label that is accurate for only a small, irresponsible minority. The label I am considering here is that all young Australian people between the ages of 18 and 21 are irresponsible drinkers and need laws such as the alcohol tax increase and new legislation regarding P-plates to force them into being responsible drinkers.

These laws, in fact, make things more difficult for those of us who are trying to be responsible with our drinking. In the past, responsible young Australians who had just turned 18 would have eased themselves slowly into the drinking world through the consumption of—and I hate it say it now—relatively weak alcopops. Now, due to the alcohol tax increase, these young Australians are jumping straight into the exceedingly more economical bottles of straight spirits, most of which have about 10 times the alcohol concentration that would be found in alcopops. Consequently, many of these people find it harder to be responsible drinkers as they consume too much alcohol before they know how much they can take. Those who still try to buy the weaker alcopops suffer economically as a result.

The second piece of legislation that is hindering responsible young adults is the recent P-plater rule that first-year drivers are to carry only one passenger under the age of 21 between the hours of 11 pm and 5 am. This law, quite frankly, completely destroys the whole point of having a designated driver. Those without one are left to either catch a cab or be forced to irresponsibly drive themselves home, or they may still be intoxicated. Those normally responsible young adults are being given fewer options and, therefore, have an increased probability of making a wrong decision, which could result in the loss of a life. These new laws make it easier to be an irresponsible drinker. They economically hinder those who still try to be responsible.

YOUTH MEMBER FOR ROCKHAMPTON: Today I would like to take this opportunity to talk about diversity as the goal for promoting peace, harmony and tolerance within our youth. Diversity is necessary for a community's development. It is important to be accepted by others and to learn to work together for our common goals. Diversity refers to any number of differences—gender, age, culture and traditions to religions, customs and languages. Diversity is as much about the visual differences as well as the unseen differences, such as values and beliefs.

It is important that we appreciate the fact that we as young people have the opportunity to socialise and work alongside people of various cultures, beliefs and ideas. Someone who leads their whole life with those who hold similar beliefs and ideas would have a more narrow view of the world than someone who is exposed to many different cultures throughout their life. I am not saying life is always smooth sailing and at times people succumb to a feeling of insecurity and distrust. People prefer to stick with the people they know and are quick to disapprove of anyone outside of their usual circle. For some it is difficult for them to stop and to make someone else feel welcome, but we must overcome this insecurity and acknowledge our differences, not disregard them.

We must move out of our comfort zone and embrace the wonderful opportunity we have to be a part of a community made up of all walks of life. We should welcome our friends into our global village with open arms, open hearts and open minds. Let diversity lead us to peace, harmony and tolerance within our youth.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have listened to all of the two-minute adjournment speeches. Some of them were provocative, some of them were interesting and some of them were humorous. In most cases they were tremendously well thought through, very enjoyable to listen to and good food for thought. You do not want too many 44-year-old homophobes sitting up here not paying attention to the fact that alcopops seem to be still fairly popular, that it is too hard to get a P-plate and that if you are in strife, you cannot get into a hospital in a region. So thank you very much for making those points. I have listened to them and, hopefully, something might happen on them.

Question put—That the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The Youth Parliament adjourned at 4.51 pm.