

corrupt payments to jailed former Queensland cabinet minister Gordon Nuttall. At the very least, Talbot's decision to give money to a sitting cabinet minister was foolish. The deal brought into question how business and politics mixed in Queensland. How Talbot — who made many excellent decisions during his business career — could make such a poor choice is worthy of investigation. The charges were serious and deserved to be put before a jury for its deliberation. Talbot's death in the remote jungles of Africa should serve as a reminder that mining is not an easy business. It carries with it enormous financial and in many cases physical risk. It is hard, potentially dangerous and may never produce a viable return.

But Talbot in that sense was a risk taker, and prepared to bet the farm on what he believed would work, and indeed on those people whom he thought deserved a chance in life. He was never a glory seeker, and preferred the business pages to the social pages. Terms such as self-deprecating, generous and loyal would come to mind for those who knew him; along with the entrepreneurial qualities of hard work, vision and a strong sense of self-belief. His contribution to the mining industry has been significant. Talbot was a man who got things done through actions rather than words. He will be sorely missed by his family, friends and colleagues. Our thoughts are with them.

Get rail back on track

THE news that the taxpayer subsidy for Queensland regional passenger rail services has increased comes as no surprise. The services are hamstrung by having to honour all manner of concessions and free fare structures that discourage efficiency. Their marketing also needs improvement. Transport Minister Rachel Nolan has raised questions about Traveltrain's viability, understandable given the level of subsidy needed to keep it going. But she has a responsibility for the improvement of these services, too. The Bligh Government should stop promising a review and start making sure that they are as run as a productive business rather than as an indulgence.

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talk about your triple whammy. What other sport spans a player three times for one offence?

A handball in the box earns a red card, a goal to the other team and a suspension from the next game. Oh, but it gets better. In the next game, two blatant handballs in the box are missed by all the officials and a goal results.

It makes you look forward to *Friday Night Football*.

Bryan Knight, Wurtulla

SOC CER OO Tim Cahill said (C-M, June 22): "For us as a nation we've never been given a fair go or got a chance at any competition we play in, but this is it."

What is Cahill talking about? Is he just trying to psych up his team-mates (for their game against Serbia) by inducing a siege mentality?

Bob Meadows, Mansfield

NO, no, no, not New Zealand for the World Cup. It's all just a bad dream.

Donald Lane, Edens Landing

Fine regime passed trial

REFERRING to on-the-spot fines for public nuisance offences, Mike O'Connor claims (Viewpoint, June 22) the "Queensland Police Service asked for more power and the Government quickly agreed".

In fact, this was a recommendation of a report by the Crime and Misconduct Commissioner in 2008. The Government conducted a 12-month trial of these powers in the South Brisbane and Townsville police districts in 2009. The trial was independently evaluated by Griffith University. The trial showed positive results and, on this basis, the Government resolved to extend this option statewide.

Neil Roberts, Police Minister, Brisbane

AFGHANISTAN: Australians have been there for nearly a decade.

Bring them home now

WHILE I have nothing but admiration for Australian service personnel, does our Government learn nothing? Vietnam was unwinnable and Afghanistan is unwinnable. Another three of our soldiers have been killed and seven have been wounded, two critically. For what?

Bring them home now before more cherished lives are lost in that God-forsaken, barren land.

Vandra Neylan, Murarrie

THE sad news of another three Australian soldiers being killed in Afghanistan will again raise the question of why we are there.

Politicians say that training Afghanistan troops is the priority. How long does it take? It has been almost 10 years. How much longer will it take to train Afghan soldiers to defend their own country and

borders from the Taliban? That the former Howard government committed our troops initially in 2001 with the bipartisan support of the Labor Party puts Prime Minister Kevin Rudd and Opposition Leader Tony Abbott in difficult positions politically.

A tipping point seems to have been reached with these latest deaths of Australian soldiers and serious debate is needed on this issue. The futility of war and the fragility of life are on show.

Paul Henderson, Wynnum

PRIME Minister Kevin Rudd should earn his pay by making the call to end Australia's commitment to this useless cause, and then ensure that our forces are withdrawn from Afghanistan as speedily as possible.

Les de Kretser, Taringa

Conned on Stradbroke

IT is true that conservation groups congratulated the Government on Sunday after we and the public were led by Premier Anna Bligh to believe that no expired mining leases on North Stradbroke Island would be renewed.

We believed that mining would end soon at the Enterprise mine. This is because three expired leases are critical to that destructive mine continuing. This is the mine that has featured in so many photographs in your paper and others. The main lease expired on October 31, 2007, so the miner has been given a very fair go.

Late on Sunday, we became aware of the statement from the

Environment Minister's office that Enterprise was considered a "special case" and that the expired leases were likely to be renewed. (This explains my reported comments about our concern that we might have been conned.)

It defies belief that having recognised a beautiful area as being worthy of national park status, you would allow mining to trash it before you actually declared it as national park.

Yet that is what would happen if Enterprise was renewed for more mining.

Sue Ellen Carew, president, Friends of Stradbroke Island, Point Lookout

lower pensions. Problem solved. **J. Jarvis, Parkinson**

● I COULDN'T agree more with Judith Aitken (Letters, June 22) about the double header on Friday night. It was the same last year. During the Broncos game the crowd was seated and watching the game. However, once the second game started, "restless" doesn't quite cover it. People were in and out of their seats, back and forth. The young security guy near us had a devil of a time. By the second half he just gave up and let the people do as they wanted, and that had nothing to do with watching the football.

Cherie Alexander, Runcorn

Thought for today

I am the Lord your God. I am holding your hand, so don't be afraid. I am here to help you. Isaiah 41:13

Selected by the Bible Society from the Contemporary English Version.

FOR THE RECORD

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