

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Thursday 17 August 2000

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**Mr Speaker (The Hon. John Henry Murray)** took the chair at 10.00 a.m.

**Mr Speaker** offered the Prayer.

## **PAY-ROLL TAX AMENDMENT (COUNTRY EMPLOYMENT) BILL**

**Bill introduced and read a first time.**

### **Second Reading**

**Mr ARMSTRONG** (Lachlan) [10.00 a.m.]: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

It is with great pleasure that I introduce the Pay-roll Tax Amendment (Country Employment) Bill. The object of the bill is to provide an exemption from payroll tax for businesses located in country areas of New South Wales that comprise value adding primary industries or employ additional workers aged 25 or under. Clearly, jobs are the lifeblood of rural and regional New South Wales. Every additional job created in country areas brings an additional income, which is used to purchase more local goods and services, which in turn creates more jobs. The normal factor used in relation to job creativity is a three to one multiplier. A job for a young person can provide a much-needed start in life, a valuable improvement in self-esteem and also act to stop the brain drain to metropolitan areas. The exodus of people from the country to the city is one of the major social problems confronting the nation.

An article in the *Sydney Morning Herald* of 3 May illustrated this point. A new population report, entitled "Population Growth", shows that the stream of young people leaving country areas remains steady and in some cases is rising. For example, Warren, north-west of Dubbo, lost 0.7 per cent of its population between July 1998 and June 1999. According to the report's author and KPMG consultant, Bernard Salt, over the past 20 years almost 15 per cent of Warren's population has left that shire. There has been a 45 per cent reduction in the five- to 14-year-old age group, and a 43 per cent reduction in the 15- to 19-year-old age group. Other towns badly affected include Murrurundi, in the upper Hunter Valley, which lost 2 per cent of its population; and Holbrook, near Albury, which lost 2.1 per cent of its population. Therefore, jobs must be the priority of all members of this House, no matter what their political persuasion.

The Carr Government has failed terribly in creating employment in rural and regional New South Wales. Perhaps it has been a bit too preoccupied with the Olympic Games. Unemployment in rural and regional areas is twice as high as it is in Sydney. Unemployment figures released in February showed that the gap between Sydney and the country is widening. Unemployment in Sydney is at 4.4 per cent, while in regional New South Wales it is almost double, at 8.4 per cent. These are only average figures—in many areas the jobless rate far exceeds 10 per cent, particularly for young people, and particularly on the North Coast and in the far west of the State. The Carr Government's claim that New South Wales is experiencing an economic boom is a myth to young people in many regional and rural areas.

Under this bill businesses in country areas will be granted an exemption from payroll tax for five years if they are a value adding primary industry or if they employ additional workers aged 25 or under. Country New South Wales, as defined by the bill, means that part of New South Wales that is not within the County of Cumberland, or the cities of Liverpool, Newcastle, Penrith or Wollongong. However, if in the future a case can be made to extend this geographical area the definition should be able to be altered by regulation. I understand that the County of Cumberland creates some anomalies. Hawkesbury, Camden and Wollondilly local government areas straddle the boundaries of the County of Cumberland. Those parts of the Hawkesbury local government area that are, arguably, suburban—Richmond, Windsor and Bligh Park—are in the County of Cumberland.

However, the rural parts of the Hawkesbury local government area are both within and outside the County of Cumberland. Some parts of the Hawkesbury local government area will be eligible, some will not.

That part of the Camden local government area that falls outside the County of Cumberland is now almost wholly urban. The rural parts of that local government area are in the County of Cumberland. The Appin district, which is still predominantly rural, falls within the County of Cumberland, while the rest of the Wollondilly local government area falls outside. Shellharbour and Lake Macquarie local government areas are eligible for exemptions, when both are integral parts of metropolitan Wollongong and Newcastle respectively.

Value adding primary industries are defined as mining, forestry, agriculture, aquaculture, commercial fishing, horticulture, permaculture, viticulture, biotechnology, environmental engineering, waste and effluent processing technologies and any other industries that may be prescribed by the regulations, and such processes prescribed by the regulations as are applied to primary produce in order to bring it, or products derived from it, to the point of retail sale. For example, the exemption should apply to jewellery manufacturers who use mining products and agriculture in all its forms. This includes the breeding of livestock, race horses, harness racers and recreational horses. I learnt only yesterday from the mayor of Windsor that it is estimated that there are more than 100,000 recreational horses in the west, south-west and north-west of the city of Sydney. The exemption should extend also to the processing of canned, frozen, manufactured and fresh food.

The bill will encourage decentralisation of industry, which has failed to materialise under the Carr Labor Government, despite promised action. The rhetoric has been strong but job creation has been almost invisible as a result of the past five years of this Government. The bill will alleviate general rural unemployment, which is chronic in many areas, and will particularly address youth unemployment. The bill will boost the economies of moribund regions and help ensure the survival of small rural towns that have been hit hard by government cutbacks, bank closures and population migration. This is a positive and proactive initiative aimed at solving very real problems. It deserves the support of every member of this House, particularly those members who parade as Country Labor. This is a real test of their mettle.

A considerable amount of infrastructure in rural New South Wales is currently being underutilised. It has been estimated that anywhere from 100,000 to 500,000 people could be accommodated in the current rural infrastructure. Most country towns—certainly those in the Central West, upper North Coast and South Coast—have surplus streets, electricity, schools, churches, playgrounds, industrial land and housing. The value of housing and industrial land in rural areas is extremely attractive in comparison to the rapidly escalating prices of land in the cities of Newcastle, Sydney and Wollongong.

Recently a number of publications noted that Sydney is recognised as one of the world's most expensive cities in which to live. Members of all political persuasions from country electorates would argue that rural New South Wales offers a golden opportunity for people to live, travel to work and educate their children at an affordable level. If my bill is accepted their children can look forward to obtaining jobs in country towns. As the population spreads across rural New South Wales it will use infrastructure that has been put in place by local, State and Federal governments—and paid for by the rate payers—but currently is not being used. That spread may minimise many of the social problems that come with an increasing density of population in major centres. There is no doubt that a happy lifestyle and happy workplace lessens tensions in the community and reduces many of the social problems that seem to be increasing, as recounted by honourable members in this House day in and day out.

During the past 15 or 16 years the number people who have come to my office with social problems has quadrupled, mostly as a result of pressures brought on by the increased density of living. In towns where there is good employment and expansive industry—such as Lake Cargelligo, Condobolin or Cootamundra—the crime rate drops and productivity increases, resulting in better health. Such towns have less demand for health facilities than do towns which are overcrowded. The economy and the retention of young people in country towns are not the only issues that impact on the cultural, social and economic structure of New South Wales. I ask the House to accept this bill.

**Debate adjourned on motion by Mrs Lo Po'.**

#### **JURY AMENDMENT (DISSENTING JUROR) BILL**

**Bill introduced and read a first time.**

#### **Second Reading**

**Mrs CHIKAROVSKI** (Lane Cove—Leader of the Opposition) [10.17 a.m.]: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The object of the bill is to amend the Jury Act 1977 to provide for a valid verdict by a jury in criminal trials in which there is one dissenting juror. The bill will insert a new provision in the Act, new section 55F, to enable juries in criminal trials to deliver a verdict if, in the case of a jury of 12 persons, 11 of the jurors agree on a verdict and only one dissents. The bill will also insert into the Act a new section 56 to enable a court to discharge a jury of 12 persons after six hours of deliberations if it finds that a jury is not likely to reach either a unanimous or majority verdict. The provisions relating to the discharge of jurors in existing section 56 are re-enacted for juries consisting of less than 12 persons. The present law in New South Wales is that in criminal trials 12 jurors—that is, all jurors—must agree on a verdict for a trial to have a result. If one or more than one of those jurors is not able to agree on a result there is a hung jury.

The Opposition is bringing this bill forward as a result of a number of recent incidents that have reignited public debate on the merits of allowing valid verdicts for all criminal proceedings, including murder, where such a verdict is precluded because one jury is dissenting. The Opposition sees it as a major flaw that one dissenting voice can have the final say and, in effect, overrule 11 others and decide how a case concludes. An 11 to one system of verdicts will remove the expense and inconvenience of hung juries unable to reach a unanimous decision and at the same time the bill will ensure that the safeguard of reasonable doubt remains firmly in place. In 1996 my colleague the then honourable member for Eastwood, now the honourable member for Epping, introduced a similar bill, which was defeated by the Government.

If the Premier's attitude is any indicator I expect that the same thing will happen with this bill. For some time the Premier has rejected out of hand calls for majority verdicts and is most reluctant to engage in any discussion or consideration of the issues. However, it is essential that, at the very least, there is full and open debate on the options. Certainly there is a strong body of public support for the provisions of the bill. In recent years there has been an increase in the number of hung juries in New South Wales. This trend raises sufficient cause for concern to bring this legislation forward. I mention at this point the updated briefing paper prepared for the New South Wales Parliamentary Library research service by Dr Gareth Griffith—an updated version of briefing paper No. 6 first prepared by Dr Griffith in 1996. I commend the paper to honourable members and I congratulate the Parliamentary Library and, in particular, Dr Griffith on its production. The original paper included some fundamental statistics and reported a doubling of hung juries between 1993-94 and 1994-95 from 3.2 per cent to 6.2 per cent.

This most recent edition refers to the New South Wales Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research study from July 1997. The evidence was based on 343 trials involving 853 charges. The bureau's most recent research has found that about 10 per cent of criminal trials ended with hung juries on one or more charges. It also found that longer trials tended to produce more hung juries. The mean duration for trials resulting in hung juries was 33 per cent more than for trials which were not hung. It is interesting that trials involving sexual assault did not vary markedly from the average, with 9.2 per cent ending in hung juries. The final point was that about 33 per cent of hung juries involved one dissenter and a further 10 per cent involved two dissenters. Dr Griffith's paper noted that the new Zealand Law Commission is currently undertaking a major study into every aspect of the operation of juries in criminal trials. The commission is due to report in December, but it is instructive to note the arguments presented in its discussion paper published in November last year.

The arguments in favour of majority verdicts include: unanimity is often the result of attrition; unanimity is an incentive to intimidate, corrupt or otherwise improperly persuade jurors; unanimity is undemocratic; unanimity increases the personal, resource and final costs involved in the trial process; and unanimity gives rise to compromise verdicts or hung juries. The arguments against majority verdicts include: majority verdicts provide insufficient certainty of accurate results; they compromise the criminal standard of proof; the strength of jury deliberations is reduced by majority decision; and unanimity maintains public confidence in jury decisions.

The New Zealand commission has indicated an early preference for majority verdicts conditional on current trends continuing up to the publication of its final report. In New South Wales we recently had reports of one dissenting juror in the trial of those charged with the murder of a former member of this House, John Newman. The trial relating to the death of John Newman went for 13 weeks with the jury failing to make a decision. Mr Mark Tedeschi, QC, the Crown prosecutor in that case and the current President of the Australian Association of Crown Prosecutors, made his feelings clear at the end of that trial. Mr Tedeschi said:

To my way of thinking, if it is the right way to go to have majority verdicts, it's right for all trials including murder trials.

I agree with Mr Tedeschi that majority verdicts should apply in all criminal trials, including murder trials. So I reject the compromises adopted in some other jurisdictions, for instance, in Victoria, where majority verdicts

apply in most criminal cases but not for murder cases. Mr Tedeschi is correct: If majority verdicts are to apply, they should apply in all criminal cases. Already, along with all other Australian jurisdictions, New Zealand and the United Kingdom, New South Wales has majority jury verdicts for civil trials. In recent weeks I have received correspondence from a jury member involved in a case on the North Coast of New South Wales, where again one dissenting juror resulted in a hung jury and a mistrial. Without disclosing the deliberations of the jury, this juror advised me that in her view the dissension did not spring from the facts of the case but from the attitude and approach of one juror to interaction with other members of the panel.

One thing I should make very clear is that no one case has been responsible for the Opposition taking the position it has on this issue. Rather, we have been convinced by the accumulation of cases in which we feel justice has not been satisfied and which have had obvious and serious negative impacts for the majority of the individuals involved and for the community. The Director of Public Prosecutions, Mr Nicholas Cowdrey, QC, and the former Director of Public Prosecutions and current Chief Judge of the New South Wales District Court, Mr Reg Blanch, are both on record as supporting majority verdicts. In support of Mr Cowdrey and Mr Blanch, we have had too many reports of one juror frustrating the rest of the jury through obstinance or straight out bloody-mindedness. In a number of cases there have been indications that one juror has come into the process and developed issues unrelated to the trial process and the evidence, and has eventually frustrated a unanimous verdict.

There have been reports of individual jurors who were caught up by issues not related to the facts of the case but which sprung more from the dynamics that developed between those in the jury room. The Director of Public Prosecutions, Mr Cowdrey, felt compelled, as early as 1996, to take a public position in favour of majority verdicts. He indicated that majority jury verdicts of 11 to one were totally reasonable in his opinion. He has made the point that New South Wales, the Australian Capital Territory and Queensland are the only jurisdictions in this country that do not provide for majority jury verdicts in criminal trials. Mr Cowdrey has also made the point that majority jury verdicts operate for an acquittal as much as they do for a conviction. The frustrated juror from the North Coast, to whom I referred earlier, made the same point without going into the detail of what occurred in the jury room.

There are documented instances of cases in which 11 jurors have wanted to acquit a person charged with a serious crime and one juror has held out for a conviction. This is a fundamental point. It is critical that we acknowledge that in many instances majority jury verdicts are just as important for the defence as they are for the prosecution and the public. This point has not been canvassed sufficiently when the issue of dissenting jurors has been discussed or debated. I would particularly commend this proposition for the thoughtful consideration of those in the legal profession who have adopted a knee-jerk reaction and opposed change in the past. I ask honourable members to note that this bill reflects quite a conservative approach to moving towards majority verdicts. We believe that a majority decision means 11 out of 12, and if a jury in a criminal case is reduced from 12 to 11, by reason of a juror becoming ill and being discharged, then the bill provides for a majority verdict of 10 out of 11.

According to reports, if these provisions had applied, then the family and public would have seen a final result in the John Newman case. However, I must make the point clearly that the Opposition would be uneasy if the law were to move to majority verdicts of 10 out of 12. In practical terms, if not strictly legal terms, one is then moving into the area of reasonable doubt in the minds of the jury collectively, which needs to be carefully considered. We believe that such a situation should be avoided. It is worth noting that for many years majority verdicts have been returnable in a number of jurisdictions, including South Australia, Tasmania, Western Australia, the Northern Territory, Victoria and England. As the honourable member for Epping has noted on a previous occasion, judges with many years of experience on the bench and in trial work strongly support the proposal.

The honourable member quoted just two examples: former Justice Finlay of the Supreme Court and Judge Ducker of the District Court, both of whom are experienced trial lawyers and have represented people on both sides of the fence in criminal law. And, of course, there are others. They believe that the approach reflected in this bill is appropriate and reasonable. Honourable members on this side of the House are impressed by the fact that a number of jurisdictions have had majority jury verdicts for upwards of 60 years. No-one has suggested that any problems have arisen in jurisdictions in which majority verdicts apply. In 1986 the New South Wales Law Reform Commission expressed the view that there was no need to introduce majority verdicts.

However, there has been a major time lapse, and a lot has happened, since then. The Opposition believes that there is now enough evidence to make the case for change. The Opposition believes that the legal

system must take account of the pain, anger and anguish inflicted on victims of crimes and their families when they are forced to endure a retrial because there was a hung jury with one dissenter. Apart from the cost, delays and frustration caused by mistrials, the community has every right to expect that victims of crime have a fair go before the law. This bill has strong public support. It will make a tiny change to the law. It will protect the interests of the accused, and it will balance the interests of the accused against the interests of the victims of crime and their families. I commend the bill to the House

**Debate adjourned on motion by Mrs Lo Po'.**

## **YOUNG OFFENDERS AMENDMENT BILL**

**Bill introduced and read a first time.**

### **Second Reading**

**Mr TINK** (Epping) [10.27 a.m.]: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Young Offenders Amendment Bill will simply reduce the quantity of drugs young offenders can possess in order to be dealt with by a caution under the Young Offenders Act. At the Drug Summit an anomaly was pointed out in terms of when certain drug offences are not able to be dealt with under young offenders legislation and when a caution is not available. The Opposition accepted then, and accepts now, that there is a place for cautioning juveniles when they have a small quantity of drugs in their possession. On reflection, the Opposition does not accept that the Government got it right in terms of the quantity of drugs a young person can possess when the cautioning scheme comes into effect. The Government, or those advising the Government, took the small quantities outlined in the Drug Misuse and Trafficking Act and simply brought those small quantities across to the Young Offenders Act to provide for cautioning when young persons possess that quantity of drugs.

It seems that the Government and its advisers did not get beyond the words "small quantity" in the Drug Misuse and Trafficking Act and simply assumed, without looking at it, that "small quantity" as defined was appropriate to provide for the cautioning of juveniles. The more than 200 drugs listed in the Drug Misuse and Trafficking Act are defined as "small quantity", "trafficable quantity" and "other quantities". A juvenile in possession of a small quantity of drugs, as defined in the Act, is not cautioned. In fact, the quantity of drugs being used by juveniles is enormous. In the *Police Service Weekly* of 21 February, new instructions to police set out the quantities applicable to cautioning as follows, "Heroin, one gram; cannabis leaf, 30 grams; cannabis oil, two grams; cannabis plant, five grams; cannabis resin, five grams; THC, one gram; cocaine, one gram; amphetamine, one gram; LSD, .0008 grams; and MDMA/MDA, .25 grams."

To demonstrate the problem, 30 grams of cannabis leaf provides enough leaf for a high-quality joint for every member of a school class. In practical terms, it is a dealable quantity. The Government has used the definition "small quantity" as the amount a young person can be in possession of and for which he or she can be cautioned. If a student or other person is found outside a school in this State with 30 grams of cannabis leaf, enough for a joint for every student in a class, under the present legislation the police give a caution. Many police are alarmed by the amendments to the legislation. They share the view held by all honourable members on this side of the House—that, in some circumstances, a one-off caution for a first offence by a young person who is in possession of a small quantity of drugs, not as defined in the Drug Act but as commonsense would dictate, is not unreasonable. We are appalled that a person can be given a caution for possession of 30 grams of cannabis leaf, which is enough to supply a classroom of students.

One gram of heroin is worth about \$300, one gram of amphetamine \$100 and one gram of cocaine \$120. The intention of the legislation—and I am sure the intention of the Drug Summit—was to introduce a cautioning system for young people who were found to be in possession of a small personal quantity of drugs. However, current legislation provides, in effect, a cautioning system for juvenile drug dealers. This bill rolls back the quantities so we end up with what was always intended: a quantity of drugs defined for personal use in the possession of a first-time young offender who, given an appropriate ticking off, will not offend again.

This bill is an important one. I ask the Minister and the Government to accept that, although the principle was accepted at the Drug Summit and by virtually every member of this House, we got it wrong on the quantity. We did not intend it to be legislation for juvenile drug dealers; we intended it to apply to one-off young

offenders who are in possession of prohibited drugs only for personal use. This amending bill will right the wrong and include a caution for first-time personal use. Juvenile drug dealers have been given a green light as a result of a government mistake. The Government simply imported the definition "small quantity" into the bill without giving it due consideration. The Opposition has rethought the matter and I suggest that the Government should rethink it too.

**Debate adjourned on motion by Mrs Lo Po'.**

**CRIMES (SENTENCING PROCEDURE) AMENDMENT  
(LIFE SENTENCE CONFIRMATION) BILL**

**Second Reading**

**Debate resumed from 10 August.**

**Mr WHELAN** (Strathfield—Minister for Police) [10.35 a.m.]: I move:

That this debate be now adjourned.

**The House divided.**

*[In division]*

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The Leader of the Opposition will resume her seat. She knows that when members enter the Chamber after a division has been called they are to be seated. I place the honourable member for Coffs Harbour on three calls to order.

**Ayes, 45**

Ms Allan	Mr Gibson	Ms Nori
Mr Amery	Mr Greene	Mr Orkopoulos
Ms Andrews	Mrs Grusovin	Mr E. T. Page
Mr Aquilina	Ms Harrison	Mr Price
Mr Ashton	Mr Hickey	Dr Refshauge
Mr Bartlett	Mrs Lo Po'	Ms Saliba
Ms Beamer	Mr Lynch	Mr Scully
Mr Black	Mr McBride	Mr Stewart
Mr Brown	Mr McManus	Mr Tripodi
Miss Burton	Mr Martin	Mr Watkins
Mr Campbell	Ms Meagher	Mr Whelan
Mr Collier	Ms Megarrity	
Mr Crittenden	Mr Mills	
Mr Debus	Mr Moss	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Face	Mr Nagle	Mr Anderson
Mr Gaudry	Mr Newell	Mr Thompson

**Noes, 34**

Mr Armstrong	Mr Merton	Mr Souris
Mr Barr	Ms Moore	Mr Stoner
Mrs Chikarovski	Mr O'Doherty	Mr Tink
Mr Collins	Mr O'Farrell	Mr Torbay
Mr Debnam	Mr Oakeshott	Mr J. H. Turner
Mr George	Mr D. L. Page	Mr R. W. Turner
Mr Hartcher	Mr Piccoli	Mr Webb
Ms Hodgkinson	Mr Richardson	Mr Windsor
Mr Humpherson	Mr Rozzoli	
Dr Kernohan	Ms Seaton	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Kerr	Mrs Skinner	Mr Fraser
Mr McGrane	Mr Slack-Smith	Mr R. H. L. Smith

**Pairs**

Mr Hunter  
Mr Iemma

Mr Glachan  
Mr Hazzard

**Question resolved in the affirmative.**

**Motion for adjournment agreed to.**

**Resumption of Debate**

**Mrs CHIKAROVSKI** (Lane Cove—Leader of the Opposition) [10.44 a.m.]: I move:

That resumption of debate on this bill be fixed as an order of the day for a later hour.

I would like it noted that the Premier did not have the decency to come into the Chamber.

**Motion agreed to.**

**BAIL AMENDMENT (CONFISCATION OF PASSPORTS) BILL****Second Reading**

**Debate resumed from 10 August.**

**Mr WHELAN** (Strathfield—Minister for Police) [10.44 a.m.]: I move:

That this debate be now adjourned.

**The House divided.**

**Ayes, 45**

Ms Allan  
Mr Amery  
Ms Andrews  
Mr Aquilina  
Mr Ashton  
Mr Bartlett  
Ms Beamer  
Mr Black  
Mr Brown  
Miss Burton  
Mr Campbell  
Mr Collier  
Mr Crittenden  
Mr Debus  
Mr Face  
Mr Gaudry

Mr Gibson  
Mr Greene  
Mrs Grusovin  
Ms Harrison  
Mr Hickey  
Mrs Lo Po'  
Mr Lynch  
Mr McBride  
Mr McManus  
Mr Martin  
Ms Meagher  
Ms Megarrity  
Mr Mills  
Mr Moss  
Mr Nagle  
Mr Newell

Ms Nori  
Mr Orkopoulos  
Mr E. T. Page  
Mr Price  
Dr Refshauge  
Ms Saliba  
Mr Scully  
Mr Stewart  
Mr Tripodi  
Mr Watkins  
Mr Whelan

*Tellers,*  
Mr Anderson  
Mr Thompson

**Noes, 34**

Mr Armstrong  
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Mr George  
Mr Hartcher  
Ms Hodgkinson  
Mr Humpherson  
Dr Kernohan  
Mr Kerr  
Mr McGrane

Mr Merton  
Ms Moore  
Mr O'Doherty  
Mr O'Farrell  
Mr Oakeshott  
Mr D. L. Page  
Mr Piccoli  
Mr Richardson  
Mr Rozzoli  
Ms Seaton  
Mrs Skinner  
Mr Slack-Smith

Mr Souris  
Mr Stoner  
Mr Tink  
Mr Torbay  
Mr J. H. Turner  
Mr R. W. Turner  
Mr Webb  
Mr Windsor  
  
*Tellers,*  
Mr Fraser  
Mr R. H. L. Smith

**Pairs**

Mr Hunter  
Mr Iemma

Mr Glachan  
Mr Hazzard

**Question resolved in the affirmative.**

**Motion for adjournment agreed to.**

**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE****Precedence of Business: Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders**

**Mr WHELAN** (Strathfield—Minister for Police) [10.50 a.m.]: I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to permit the consideration forthwith of Orders of the Day (General Orders).

**Mrs CHIKAROVSKI** (Lane Cove—Leader of the Opposition) [10.51 a.m.]: Mr Speaker—

**Mr THOMPSON** (Rockdale) [10.51 a.m.]: I move:

That the honourable member for Lane Cove be not further heard.

**The House divided.**

**Ayes, 45**

Ms Allan  
Mr Amery  
Ms Andrews  
Mr Aquilina  
Mr Ashton  
Mr Bartlett  
Ms Beamer  
Mr Black  
Mr Brown  
Miss Burton  
Mr Campbell  
Mr Collier  
Mr Crittenden  
Mr Debus  
Mr Face  
Mr Gaudry

Mr Gibson  
Mr Greene  
Mrs Grusovin  
Ms Harrison  
Mr Hickey  
Mrs Lo Po'  
Mr Lynch  
Mr McBride  
Mr McManus  
Mr Martin  
Ms Meagher  
Ms Megarrity  
Mr Mills  
Mr Moss  
Mr Nagle  
Mr Newell

Ms Nori  
Mr Orkopoulos  
Mr E. T. Page  
Mr Price  
Dr Refshauge  
Ms Saliba  
Mr Scully  
Mr Stewart  
Mr Tripodi  
Mr Watkins  
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Mr Hartcher  
Ms Hodgkinson  
Mr Humpherson  
Dr Kernohan  
Mr Kerr  
Mr McGrane

Mr Merton  
Ms Moore  
Mr O'Doherty  
Mr O'Farrell  
Mr Oakeshott  
Mr D. L. Page  
Mr Piccoli  
Mr Richardson  
Mr Rozzoli  
Ms Seaton  
Mrs Skinner  
Mr Slack-Smith

Mr Souris  
Mr Stoner  
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Mr J. H. Turner  
Mr R. W. Turner  
Mr Webb  
Mr Windsor

*Tellers,*  
Mr Fraser  
Mr R. H. L. Smith

**Pairs**

Mr Hunter  
Mr Iemma

Mr Glachan  
Mr Hazzard



**Question resolved in the affirmative.**

**Mrs CHIKAROVSKI:** I would like it to be noted that the Premier is still not in the Chamber.

### **MONA VALE ROAD BUSHLAND**

**Debate resumed from 4 May.**

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I seek guidance from the Leader of the House as to whether any Government member wishes to contribute to the debate.

**Mr Whelan:** No. Would the honourable member for Davidson care to adjourn this debate?

**Mr HUMPHERSON** (Davidson) [11.00 a.m.]: The matter has been waiting 11 months and was adjourned on one previous occasion so that the honourable member for Wollongong could make a contribution. On that occasion he was not in the House. Yet again, the honourable member for Wollongong is absent because he is overseas. When is the Coalition going to hear a decent contribution on such a significant matter from the Government side of the Chamber?

**Mr Whelan:** You can adjourn it.

**Mr HUMPHERSON:** No. The matter has been around for 11 months. If the Leader of the House cannot offer support and find a Government member who can contribute to the debate on this matter, the Coalition will decline to adjourn it and will deal with the matter immediately. This matter is of great significance and symbolic importance to everybody on the northern beaches and the upper North Shore. The issue is about preserving pristine bushland which connects two national parks in that part of the world. The bushland track extends from the Hawkesbury River in the north to Sydney Harbour in the south and is connected by a one-kilometre wide stretch of bushland between St Ives and Terrey Hills. The purpose of the motion is to support and preserve the bushland because there is a proposal by the Aboriginal land council for it to be sold.

The Government has refused to support preservation of the land and the Minister for the Environment has left the Chamber, which shows his lack of commitment and lack of desire to preserve bushland in the northern part of Sydney. A simple and basic political position has been taken by the Government because the bushland area does not fall among electorates over which the Government has control. That is typical of the partisan and bigoted approach taken by this Government to funding projects for the preservation of bushland in New South Wales. The simple fact of the matter is that the Government has failed on this issue and has demonstrated an absolute lack of commitment to preserving bushland. That puts the lie to the Premier's alleged concern and compassion about preserving bushland in this State. Hollow rhetoric is all that this Parliament has ever had from this Government when it comes to preserving bushland.

This bushland is a perfect example of a substantial area of untouched bushland with steep topography. There is no argument that this bushland should be preserved. The Government and the Premier have walked away from this issue. They ought to join the Coalition to support its preservation. They had a chance to put into action the rhetoric that one normally gets from the Premier from time to time. The only defence of the Government's action by the Minister for the Environment was to refer to the announcement of a number of new national parks in this State. Announcements of the creation of national parks do not preserve one tree. In everything that the Premier has done, he has done nothing to preserve pristine bushland from destruction.

The bushland amounts to 90 acres or 36 hectares and connects two national parks, yet the Premier has walked away from the issue. Thousands upon thousands of people throughout the northern beaches and the St Ives area have demanded or asked at all levels of government, one way or another, to support preservation of this land. Warringah Council and Ku-ring-gai Municipal Council have called on the State Government for support and so have the Federal Government and the Federal Minister for the Environment. On each occasion, the Premier has walked away from the issue. He has shown absolutely no commitment to preserving very significant bushland.

As a result of that lack of commitment, two substantial portions of land have been sold into private ownership by the Metropolitan Area Aboriginal Land Council. Potentially, that land is forever lost. Under present circumstances, no-one knows what the prospective owners will seek to do with the land but potentially

they can seek to clear and develop all of the land. We do not know what will happen. The only chance that the community in my electorate has of ensuring that the land will be preserved in perpetuity is for it to be acquired for public ownership, transferred and merged with Garigal National Park and Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park. The lack of commitment on the part of this Government is breathtaking.

I commend the many people in my electorate who attended public meetings and sent emails, letters and petitions calling for the preservation of the bushland. In one way or another, they showed genuine commitment to preserving it. I commend Nancy Woods, the only member of the Aboriginal land council who spoke in favour of preserving the land. It was a challenge for her to have that land preserved, notwithstanding the multipartisan approach to the issue in that area. The aim of the people who live in that area was to preserve the land, but the Government has walked away from it.

The Coalition will not give up. A substantial battle has been lost but the war will continue. Members of the Coalition will do everything possible to ensure that no tree or shrub is removed from that land as far as is practicable or possible. If it means that we have to continue to pressure the Government to purchase the land and if it means that we have to pursue rezonings and preservation orders, we shall do it. [*Time expired.*]

**Question—That the motion be agreed to—put.**

**The House divided.**

**Ayes, 33**

Mr Armstrong	Mr Merton	Mr Souris
Mr Barr	Ms Moore	Mr Stoner
Mrs Chikarovski	Mr O'Doherty	Mr Tink
Mr Collins	Mr O'Farrell	Mr Torbay
Mr Debnam	Mr Oakeshott	Mr J. H. Turner
Mr George	Mr D. L. Page	Mr R. W. Turner
Mr Hartcher	Mr Piccoli	Mr Webb
Ms Hodgkinson	Mr Richardson	
Mr Humpherson	Mr Rozzoli	
Dr Kernohan	Ms Seaton	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Kerr	Mrs Skinner	Mr Fraser
Mr McGrane	Mr Slack-Smith	Mr R. H. L. Smith

**Noes, 45**

Ms Allan	Mr Gibson	Ms Nori
Mr Amery	Mr Greene	Mr Orkopoulos
Ms Andrews	Mrs Grusovin	Mr E. T. Page
Mr Aquilina	Ms Harrison	Mr Price
Mr Ashton	Mr Hickey	Dr Refshauge
Mr Bartlett	Mrs Lo Po'	Ms Saliba
Ms Beamer	Mr Lynch	Mr Scully
Mr Black	Mr McBride	Mr Stewart
Mr Brown	Mr McManus	Mr Tripodi
Miss Burton	Mr Martin	Mr Watkins
Mr Campbell	Ms Meagher	Mr Whelan
Mr Collier	Ms Megarrity	
Mr Crittenden	Mr Mills	
Mr Debus	Mr Moss	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Face	Mr Nagle	Mr Anderson
Mr Gaudry	Mr Newell	Mr Thompson

**Pairs**

Mr Glachan	Mr Hunter
Mr Hazzard	Mr Iemma

**Question resolved in the negative.**

**Motion negatived.**

## OZONE DEPLETION

### Debate resumed from 13 April.

**Ms SEATON** (Southern Highlands) [11.16 a.m.], in reply: I shall conclude debate on this motion, which states:

That this House notes:

- (1) the worsening hole in the ozone layer over Antarctica and the danger this represents for all Australians.
- (2) that 16 September 1999 is National Ozone Depletion Awareness Day.
- (3) the obligations Australia has taken on in the Montreal Protocol on reduction of ozone depleting activities.
- (4) the Olympic Minister's actions in knowingly overriding our green Games obligations when he authorised the use of non-compliant refrigerants in Olympic venues.
- (5) the enormous costs to be shouldered by New South Wales taxpayers when we inevitably have to retrofit 2000 Olympic venues with compliant equipment prior to 2010 as result of the shortcut.
- (6) the efforts of Greenpeace to highlight the Minister's failure to maintain the Sydney Games' compliance with green Games guidelines.
- (7) the failure of the Minister for the Environment on these issues.

This motion was moved in April but debate has been delayed since then. That is a damning indictment of the so-called green Carr Government. Only this week Greenpeace gave a resounding vote of no confidence in the so-called Sydney Green Games, the Minister for the Olympics, the Minister for the Environment and the Premier by awarding Sydney a mere six out of 10 for environmental performance on the Olympic Games. That is a damning indictment of the Government. In the space of 12 short months our rating of seven has been revised and we have lost one point. In fact, Greenpeace has awarded the Sydney Games not a gold medal, not a silver medal, but a bronze medal. That bronze medal is entirely appropriate for the credentials the Premier is fast acquiring as the khaki Premier. The Sydney Games will not be green but rather khaki or brown.

Greenpeace, one of the most respected organisations in the world in environmental activism, advocacy and research has given the Sydney Olympic Games only six out of 10. Ms Palese, speaking on behalf of Greenpeace, said that the Sydney organisers, despite the criticism, should be congratulated on pioneering the green Games concept. It was the Greiner and Fahey governments that pioneered the green Games concept and put in place all the foundations for the greenest Games ever, but the Minister for the Olympics, the Minister for the Environment and the Premier have stood by idly watching all those green Games objectives being eroded. They have made sure that none of the necessary money or commitment has gone towards fulfilling that promise to the people of New South Wales and the world community. There is no shortage of evidence about the failure of the Government in that matter. Material distributed by the Office of International Information Programs, an office of the United States Department of State, contains the following text on Arctic ozone depletion linked to an increase in clouds:

The greenhouse effect, which warms the Earth near its surface, may be preventing the damaged ozone layer over the Arctic region from recovering as quickly as scientists previously thought.

That material also contains the following text from a NASA press release reporting on a paper published in the 26 May issue of the journal *Science*:

While CFC emissions are banned by the Montreal Protocol, recent studies show that recovery of the Arctic ozone layer may be delayed by decades.

No wonder! The Minister for the Olympics, who is running the Olympic Games, has made sure of that by abandoning any opportunity he had to install ozone-friendly refrigerants in all Games facilities. Greenpeace has been trying to pull up the Government on that issue for some time and it has been roundly ignored. A toxicological assessment issued by Peter Goldsmith on behalf of Greenpeace adds further damaging evidence to this argument. It said:

The effects of acute exposure to HCFC-123 are eye irritation, liver toxicity, cardiac sensitisation and asphyxiation. Apart from eye irritation these effects are due to inhalation - the major route of exposure.

The Minister ignored many alternate products, some made in Australia and others overseas, that could have been used in Games facilities. The Minister should bear responsibility for his role in worsening the hole in the

ozone layer—of worldwide concern—and for whatever health effects Australians and people around the world might suffer as a result of ozone depletion. The Government deserves its bronze medal because a bronze medal is brown. That is exactly the reputation that the Premier has managed to acquire for New South Wales in respect of the so-called green Games, and he should be remembered for it.

**Question—That the motion be agreed to—put.**

**The House divided.**

**Ayes, 33**

Mr Armstrong	Mr Merton	Mr Souris
Mr Barr	Ms Moore	Mr Stoner
Mrs Chikarovski	Mr O'Doherty	Mr Tink
Mr Collins	Mr O'Farrell	Mr Torbay
Mr Debnam	Mr Oakeshott	Mr J. H. Turner
Mr George	Mr D. L. Page	Mr R. W. Turner
Mr Hartcher	Mr Piccoli	Mr Webb
Ms Hodgkinson	Mr Richardson	
Mr Humpherson	Mr Rozzoli	
Dr Kernohan	Ms Seaton	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Kerr	Mrs Skinner	Mr Fraser
Mr McGrane	Mr Slack-Smith	Mr R. H. L. Smith

**Noes, 45**

Ms Allan	Mr Gibson	Mr Newell
Mr Amery	Mr Greene	Ms Nori
Ms Andrews	Mrs Grusovin	Mr Orkopoulos
Mr Aquilina	Ms Harrison	Mr E. T. Page
Mr Ashton	Mr Hickey	Mr Price
Mr Bartlett	Mr Knowles	Dr Refshauge
Ms Beamer	Mrs Lo Po'	Ms Saliba
Mr Black	Mr Lynch	Mr Stewart
Mr Brown	Mr McBride	Mr Tripodi
Miss Burton	Mr McManus	Mr Watkins
Mr Campbell	Mr Martin	Mr Whelan
Mr Collier	Ms Meagher	
Mr Crittenden	Ms Megarrity	
Mr Debus	Mr Mills	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Face	Mr Moss	Mr Anderson
Mr Gaudry	Mr Nagle	Mr Thompson

**Pairs**

Mr Glachan	Mr Hunter
Mr Hazzard	Mr Iemma

**Question resolved in the negative.**

**Motion negatived.**

**SEAFORTH TAFE CLOSURE**

**Debate resumed from 13 April.**

**Mr O'DOHERTY** (Hornsby) [11.34 a.m.]: I move:

That the motion be amended by leaving out paragraph (3), with a view to inserting instead the following:

- (3) calls on the State Government to improve funding for TAFEs and schools in New South Wales.

The Opposition supports the bulk of the motion moved by the honourable member for Manly, as it supports his recent motion for an amendment to the Education Act, which was rejected by the Government and therefore was not passed by this House. That motion contained a very sensible provision to change the Act so that when the Minister wants to close down a TAFE college he has to ask the community and conduct a private study of the issue, just as he does when he wants to close down a school. That is the way the Coalition Government acted in relation to the closure of schools and so on. We believe that it is an important principle that should be extended to TAFE colleges.

Liberal members from the northern beaches, such as the honourable members for the electorates of Wakehurst, Pittwater and Davidson, have spoken in this House and at many private meetings. The shadow minister for education, Patricia Forsythe, and I, when I was shadow minister for education in the previous Parliament, have spoken about the need to retain Seaforth TAFE as part of the mix available to students from the northern beaches. The Minister and his department have missed an opportunity to allow Seaforth TAFE to continue as part of the reorganisation of schooling on the northern beaches.

It is demonstrably silly that the Government closed down Seaforth TAFE then, because of pressure on enrolments and a range of issues including the shifting student numbers on the northern beaches, had the department conduct a review of the provision of education in that part of Sydney. The Government is now talking about opening up senior schooling so that students at high school can do part-time TAFE courses and potentially university entrance courses, and indeed spend time in industry—the kind of flexible pathways that began under the previous Coalition Government in New South Wales. The result of the review, with the department still working through how it will provide that mix of opportunities to students on the northern beaches, demonstrates how silly the Government was in closing Seaforth TAFE.

The Seaforth community clearly supports its TAFE college and my Liberal Party colleagues have lent their support. The honourable member for Manly, in whose electorate the facility is located, has also been a strong supporter of the college. The Government ought to take note of what the community thinks about this issue. The Coalition cannot agree to the third part of the motion. The honourable member for Manly has blinkered vision on this issue on some occasions. He has spent overly long on blaming the Federal Government for issues that have been a matter of public policy in Australia for 10 years. The New South Wales Government was a signatory to the Australian National Training Authority [ANTA] agreement, which provided for the funding of TAFE colleges and specified that the States had to improve the efficiency of the provision of vocational education and training.

Yesterday in the House, as the honourable member for Manly knows, the Minister for Education and Training, in speaking on another motion relating to education, said that he supports the principle of getting greater efficiencies in vocational education and training in New South Wales—the same words. It has been an important part of public policy, one that has been accepted by all governments and all States. No-one would disagree that there is a need to ensure that the delivery of vocational education and training is as efficient as it can be so that the dollars that all governments spend on vocational education and training are spent to the benefit of as many students as possible.

That is a different thing from what the honourable member for Manly is trying to put with this motion. He has implied that the closure of Seaforth TAFE is the result of Federal Government policies. The Federal Government had nothing to do with the closure of Seaforth TAFE; that was all the work of the New South Wales Minister for Education and Training. The Federal Government does not make decisions about individual TAFE colleges; they are decided by the individual States.

**Mr Orkopoulos:** They just cut the funding.

**Mr O'DOHERTY:** The honourable member for Swansea has had a bad day. He was forced to vote against what we believe was a very sensible provision in the public interest to change the law so that we could keep in gaol someone whose file is marked "never to be released". The constituents of the honourable member for Swansea clearly want that man kept in gaol but the honourable member was forced by the Leader of the House to vote against that bill coming on for debate.

Secondly, the honourable member for Swansea, who cares for the environment, was forced by the Leader of the House, by dint of the way the Government plays politics in this Chamber, to vote against an Opposition motion calling for expressions of concern about the hole in the ozone layer. So this environmentalist, whose constituents are concerned about law and order, has had to vote against both those motions this morning

because he is a caucus member and cannot vote according to his conscience. Now he interjects, saying that the Federal Government is cutting money from the TAFE system. That is not right. In fact, yesterday I demonstrated in the House that over the next four years the Federal Government will provide \$2 billion across Australia for new apprenticeships alone.

**Mr Stewart:** What about New South Wales? Talk about New South Wales.

**Mr O'DOHERTY:** The Parliamentary Secretary interjects that I should talk about New South Wales. I will do just that. A study released recently, and referred to yesterday in the debate by the Minister, shows that New South Wales, if it was as efficient as Victoria was during the Kennett years, would have 30,000 more new apprenticeships, that is, 30,000 more opportunities for senior students, such as those sitting in the gallery. The Parliamentary Secretary should tell those students why they cannot have 30,000 more opportunities for new apprenticeships in this State. That is 30,000 more opportunities for young people to enter the work force. If the Parliamentary Secretary and the honourable member for Swansea do not know, they should ask year 12 students, who will tell those members that they want an opportunity to enter the work force or to conduct further training to improve their opportunities later in life.

The processes and policies that have been put in place by the Federal Government, along with its increases in funding for education and training over the life of the Federal Government, have all been aimed at that kind of outcome: providing greater opportunities for young people to enter the work force, giving them better performance in literacy and numeracy and benchmarking that has been established to develop them for life-long education and as whole human beings so that they may engage fully in the life of the community. Those are great outcomes. It has to be said that there has been increased funding for schools and technical and further education institutions across the life of the Howard Government.

I will give the honourable member for Manly a figure that goes to the amendment that I have moved. In the last Federal budget direct Federal Government funding to State schools increased by 4.3 per cent. What was the increase in New South Wales? The State Government increase to government schools was less than 2 per cent. The honourable member for Manly is fair-minded and will understand the truth of what I am saying. That gives lie to the argument being put that the Federal Government is cutting moneys to these government sectors. It is not. Even in the Federal Government's first few years of having to work on the massive black hole that was left by the previous Labor Government and requiring some discipline of Ministers, one sector that did not have to suffer efficiency cuts was education and training. It, together with defence, was exempted by the Howard Government from efficiency gains that had to be made to compensate for the \$800 billion deficit left by Labor. Those two sectors were exempted from efficiency gains because both sectors are absolutely critical to Australia's future and security.

I ask honourable members to reflect on those few simple facts and to reject paragraph (3) of the motion. The Opposition supports Seaforth TAFE. It has been working together with the honourable member for Manly in trying to drive the point home to the Carr Government. Irrespective of anything else that the one might say about funding, Australian National Training Authority agreements or any of those things, it is quite clear that the decision to close Seaforth TAFE was made by the Minister for Education and Training. For that he deserves the condemnation of this House.

**Mr STEWART** (Bankstown—Parliamentary Secretary) [11.43 a.m.]: The Carr Government opposes the call to reverse the decision by the Northern Sydney Institute of TAFE to relocate courses from the Seaforth centre to Brookvale. It is the obligation and duty of this Government to ensure that the distribution of resources in TAFE New South Wales is planned and, most importantly, administered in the most equitable and cost-effective way. In that context, I am surprised by the tone of the background to the speech of the honourable member for Hornsby, who obviously has very little understanding of this issue.

The reopening of Seaforth TAFE would impose additional costs on TAFE New South Wales at a time when, thanks to the Commonwealth Government—a point that the honourable member for Hornsby cannot understand or refuses to acknowledge—TAFE can least afford it. It would also be detrimental to the provision of relevant vocational education and training in the rapidly changing VET environment as TAFE New South Wales would have to retain an uneconomic and underutilised site—and it certainly is underutilised compared with other sites.

TAFE has proudly played an important part in the development of skills and technical education in the northern beaches area for many, many years. Indeed, since the establishment of the Northern Sydney Institute of

TAFE, the northern beaches community has witnessed an enhancement of the provision of TAFE services within that area. In 1993 the Northern Sydney Institute established the Northern Beaches College. The major thrust of the service provision was directed to the Brookvale college, with both administration and some course offerings at Seaforth being relocated to Brookvale.

In 1996 the Northern Sydney Institute relocated secretarial studies programs from Seaforth to Brookvale without any indication of concern from staff, students or the community. In 1998 the institute relocated the human resources management section of business studies from Seaforth to Brookvale, again without any indication of concern by the affected parties. Since 1990 the Government has spent \$13.6 million on upgrading facilities at Brookvale. Those facilities are only 3.8 kilometres, or five or 10 minutes travel time, away from Seaforth. This year both staff and students at Seaforth have been relocated, with the majority of them going to Brookvale. Others may have chosen to attend North Sydney, Meadowbank or Hornsby campuses.

TAFE has ensured a continuation of fine arts opportunities, access for mature age Higher School Certificate students, and access to the Certificate of General Education for Youth at Risk for the people of the northern beaches, and that is moving quite well. This Government supports the institute's decision to relocate courses on the northern beaches to the Brookvale campus or, indeed, to campuses of the students' choice. This Government supports the decision of the Northern Sydney Institute of TAFE to take actions to improve its efficiency—the honourable member for Hornsby talked about efficiencies—and its competitiveness while delivering a quality service to the northern beaches area.

This Government deplores the action of the Federal Government in failing to support TAFE and the consequential affect that that has had on New South Wales students. The Federal Government has ceased allocating growth funds for public education provision, yet requires the States to provide more places. The Commonwealth, through the Australian National Training Authority, has directed that State governments must find efficiencies in their public vocational education and training systems in order to fund growth in enrolments.

New South Wales is required to meet Commonwealth imposed growth through efficiency targets. Those targets require a range of strategies to be implemented to make TAFE New South Wales more efficient, including improving management systems, increasing average class sizes, reducing attrition rates, improving module completion rates and rationalising facilities. The Federal Government has cut growth money to New South Wales, resulting in the loss of \$138 million over the past three years. On top of that, the Howard Government has reduced capital funding to New South Wales by around \$19.5 million since it came to office in 1996. This year the States and Territories are negotiating with the Commonwealth about future funding arrangements under a new ANTA agreement. At this stage it is not known what the future funding arrangements are likely to be. However, it is anticipated that there will be no increase in Commonwealth funding. That is a great shame.

Dr Kemp has written to Minister Aquilina demanding yet more growth through even greater efficiencies. Dr Kemp has threatened even further cuts to New South Wales should it not meet his demands. Clearly, there are concerns about the comments made by the honourable member for Hornsby. The Government supports an equitable provision of education but does not support the proposal put forward. Seaforth TAFE is getting a good deal. The Government does not agree with paragraphs (1) and (2) of the motion or the amendment moved by the honourable member for Hornsby. Accordingly, I will be submitting that Mr Speaker put the question on those paragraphs separately so that the Government may vote against them.

**Mr BARR** (Manly) [11.48 a.m.], in reply: This is the fifth occasion on which I have spoken in debate on the Seaforth TAFE closure and most of the issues have been well traversed. The motion was moved many months ago and, to a significant extent, events have moved beyond the issues that have been debated this morning. However, I shall make a couple of comments. First, I have never agreed with the original rationale for the closure of Seaforth TAFE. It has not been substantiated or justified and I do not believe it could withstand proper scrutiny. An upper House committee inquired into the matter. It recommended that Seaforth TAFE be reopened and that the TAFE Commission Act be amended to bring it into line with section 28 of the Education Act.

I do not know why the Government did not support those recommendations, which I regarded as housekeeping matters, but, unfortunately, it did not. In the period since this motion was moved the Government has unveiled the Horizons 2000 package, which created a new college with a number of campuses based at the Freshwater High School complex. It will include a business centre as well as a university of technology. I welcome that initiative. I have said all along that if at the outset the Government had included Seaforth TAFE in

its planning processes there would have been far less anger and concern generated in the community. It was the manner in which the decision was carried out and the failure to consult with the local community that caused so much anger.

Sunday 20 August will be the first anniversary of the announcement of the closure of Seaforth TAFE and a picnic will be held on the site on that day commemorating the TAFE. The Save Seaforth TAFE Committee is realistic about what can happen now, given the changed circumstances. At present the TAFE site is in mothballs and the Minister gave evidence before the Public Accounts Committee that no decision has been made as to the future of the site. However, there is a window of opportunity in that the site could potentially be used by a community college or high school and the Brookvale campus could use the art and design section at Seaforth. That would be a great win for the community and I am pushing for that matter to be further investigated.

I held a meeting with the head of Manly Warringah Community College, local Stella Marist Principal, Mr Allan Coman, members of the Save Seaforth TAFE Committee and representatives from the Teachers Federation in which the matter was further pursued. A couple of weeks ago a constructive meeting was held with the Minister, the committee and the federation, and the matter is to be further considered. It would be a great win for the community if the Seaforth TAFE site could be used for educational purposes. In conclusion, I am passionate about TAFE because of its importance to education in this country. It provides a level playing field for people and the number of outlets means that people can further their potential and gain employment, which is critical. We should value TAFE and fund it properly. I inserted paragraph (3) into the motion because the Federal Minister, Dr Kemp, is an ideological zealot who would privatise TAFE wherever possible.

**Mr STEWART:** In line with the comments I made on behalf of the Government I request that separate questions be put on paragraphs (1) and (2).

**Question—That the words stand—put.**

**The House divided.**

**Ayes, 49**

Ms Allan	Mr Gibson	Mr Newell
Mr Amery	Mr Greene	Ms Nori
Ms Andrews	Mrs Grusovin	Mr Orkopoulos
Mr Aquilina	Ms Harrison	Mr E. T. Page
Mr Ashton	Mr Hickey	Mr Price
Mr Barr	Mr Knowles	Dr Refshauge
Mr Bartlett	Mrs Lo Po'	Ms Saliba
Ms Beamer	Mr Lynch	Mr Stewart
Mr Black	Mr Martin	Mr Torbay
Mr Brown	Mr McBride	Mr Tripodi
Miss Burton	Mr McGrane	Mr Watkins
Mr Campbell	Ms Meagher	Mr Whelan
Mr Collier	Ms Megarrity	Mr Windsor
Mr Crittenden	Mr Mills	
Mr Debus	Ms Moore	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Face	Mr Moss	Mr Anderson
Mr Gaudry	Mr Nagle	Mr Thompson

**Noes, 30**

Mr Armstrong	Mr Merton	Mr Souris
Mr Brogden	Mr Oakeshott	Mr Stoner
Mrs Chikarovski	Mr O'Doherty	Mr Tink
Mr Collins	Mr O'Farrell	Mr J. H. Turner
Mr Debnam	Mr D. L. Page	Mr R. W. Turner
Mr George	Mr Piccoli	Mr Webb
Mr Hartcher	Mr Richardson	
Ms Hodgkinson	Mr Rozzoli	
Mr Humpherson	Ms Seaton	<i>Tellers,</i>
Dr Kernohan	Mrs Skinner	Mr Fraser
Mr Kerr	Mr Slack-Smith	Mr R. H. L. Smith



**Pairs**

Mr Hunter	Mr Glachan
Mr Iemma	Mr Hazzard

**Question resolved in the affirmative.**

**Amendment negatived.**

**Question—That paragraph (1) of the motion be agreed to—put.**

**The House divided.**

**Ayes, 34**

Mr Armstrong	Mr Merton	Mr Souris
Mr Barr	Ms Moore	Mr Stoner
Mr Brogden	Mr O'Doherty	Mr Tink
Mr Collins	Mr O'Farrell	Mr Torbay
Mr Debnam	Mr Oakeshott	Mr J. H. Turner
Mr George	Mr D. L. Page	Mr R. W. Turner
Mr Hartcher	Mr Piccoli	Mr Webb
Ms Hodgkinson	Mr Richardson	Mr Windsor
Mr Humpherson	Mr Rozzoli	
Dr Kernohan	Ms Seaton	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Kerr	Mrs Skinner	Mr Fraser
Mr McGrane	Mr Slack-Smith	Mr R. H. L. Smith

**Noes, 45**

Ms Allan	Mr Gibson	Mr Newell
Mr Amery	Mr Greene	Ms Nori
Ms Andrews	Mrs Grusovin	Mr Orkopoulos
Mr Aquilina	Ms Harrison	Mr E. T. Page
Mr Ashton	Mr Hickey	Mr Price
Mr Bartlett	Mr Knowles	Dr Refshauge
Ms Beamer	Mrs Lo Po'	Ms Saliba
Mr Black	Mr Lynch	Mr Stewart
Mr Brown	Mr McBride	Mr Tripodi
Miss Burton	Mr McManus	Mr Watkins
Mr Campbell	Mr Martin	Mr Whelan
Mr Collier	Ms Meagher	
Mr Crittenden	Ms Megarrity	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Debus	Mr Mills	Mr Anderson
Mr Face	Mr Moss	Mr Thompson
Mr Gaudry	Mr Nagle	

**Pairs**

Mrs Chikarovksi	Mr Hunter
Mr Glachan	Mr Iemma

**Question resolved in the negative.**

**Paragraph (1) of the motion negatived.**

**Question—That paragraph (2) of the motion be agreed to—put.**

**The House divided.**

**Ayes, 34**

Mr Armstrong  
Mr Barr  
Mr Brogden  
Mr Collins  
Mr Debnam  
Mr George  
Mr Hartcher  
Ms Hodgkinson  
Mr Humpherson  
Dr Kernohan  
Mr Kerr  
Mr McGrane

Mr Merton  
Ms Moore  
Mr Oakeshott  
Mr O'Doherty  
Mr O'Farrell  
Mr D. L. Page  
Mr Piccoli  
Mr Richardson  
Mr Rozzoli  
Ms Seaton  
Mrs Skinner  
Mr Slack-Smith

Mr Souris  
Mr Stoner  
Mr Tink  
Mr Torbay  
Mr J. H. Turner  
Mr R. W. Turner  
Mr Webb  
Mr Windsor

*Tellers,*  
Mr Fraser  
Mr R. H. L. Smith

**Noes, 45**

Ms Allan  
Mr Amery  
Ms Andrews  
Mr Aquilina  
Mr Ashton  
Mr Bartlett  
Ms Beamer  
Mr Black  
Mr Brown  
Miss Burton  
Mr Campbell  
Mr Collier  
Mr Crittenden  
Mr Debus  
Mr Face  
Mr Gaudry

Mr Gibson  
Mr Greene  
Mrs Grusovin  
Ms Harrison  
Mr Hickey  
Mr Knowles  
Mrs Lo Po'  
Mr Lynch  
Mr Martin  
Mr McBride  
Mr McManus  
Ms Meagher  
Ms Megarrity  
Mr Mills  
Mr Moss  
Mr Nagle

Mr Newell  
Ms Nori  
Mr Orkopoulos  
Mr E. T. Page  
Mr Price  
Dr Refshauge  
Ms Saliba  
Mr Stewart  
Mr Tripodi  
Mr Watkins  
Mr Whelan

*Tellers,*  
Mr Anderson  
Mr Thompson

**Pairs**

Mrs Chikarovksi  
Mr Glachan

Mr Hunter  
Mr Iemma

**Question resolved in the negative.**

**Paragraph (2) of the motion negatived.**

**Question—That the motion as amended be agreed to—put.**

**The House divided.**

**Ayes, 45**

Ms Allan  
Mr Amery  
Ms Andrews  
Mr Aquilina  
Mr Ashton  
Mr Bartlett  
Ms Beamer  
Mr Black  
Mr Brown  
Miss Burton  
Mr Campbell  
Mr Collier  
Mr Crittenden  
Mr Debus  
Mr Face  
Mr Gaudry

Mr Gibson  
Mr Greene  
Mrs Grusovin  
Ms Harrison  
Mr Hickey  
Mr Knowles  
Mrs Lo Po'  
Mr Lynch  
Mr Martin  
Mr McBride  
Mr McManus  
Ms Meagher  
Ms Megarrity  
Mr Mills  
Mr Moss  
Mr Nagle

Mr Newell  
Ms Nori  
Mr Orkopoulos  
Mr E. T. Page  
Mr Price  
Dr Refshauge  
Ms Saliba  
Mr Stewart  
Mr Tripodi  
Mr Watkins  
Mr Whelan

*Tellers,*  
Mr Anderson  
Mr Thompson

**Noes, 34**

Mr Armstrong	Mr Merton	Mr Souris
Mr Barr	Ms Moore	Mr Stoner
Mr Brogden	Mr Oakeshott	Mr Tink
Mr Collins	Mr O'Doherty	Mr Torbay
Mr Debnam	Mr O'Farrell	Mr J. H. Turner
Mr George	Mr D. L. Page	Mr R. W. Turner
Mr Hartcher	Mr Piccoli	Mr Webb
Ms Hodgkinson	Mr Richardson	Mr Windsor
Mr Humpherson	Mr Rozzoli	
Dr Kernohan	Ms Seaton	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Kerr	Mrs Skinner	Mr Fraser
Mr McGrane	Mr Slack-Smith	Mr R. H. L. Smith

**Pairs**

Mr Hunter	Mrs Chikarovksi
Mr Iemma	Mr Glachan

**Question resolved in the affirmative.**

**Motion as amended agreed to.**

**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE****Routine of Business: Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders**

**Mr WHELAN** (Strathfield—Minister for Police) [12.16 p.m.]: I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to enable General Business Notices of Motions (General Notices) No. 214, relating to the anniversary of the end of World War Two, and No. 225, relating to International Maritime Day, and General Business Order of the Day (General Orders) No. 5, relating to the CSIRO Energy Centre, to be called on forthwith.

**Mr O'DOHERTY** (Hornsby) [12.17 p.m.]: We oppose the suspension because it deliberately prevents the House continuing debate on my motion for a fair go for Hornsby. The *Hornsby and Upper North Shore Advocate* says, "We just want a fair go, Mr Carr". That was the response to the Premier's speech to business people in my electorate in February this year. It was a disgraceful display that would have embarrassed any member on the Government side. The Premier came to my electorate and refused to answer specific questions about capital works in Hornsby. The business people in Hornsby said, "Mr Premier, you are not investing in our area. The Government needs to invest in infrastructure to improve the amenity of our area and provide for the upgrading of schools, road networks, railway car parking and environmental protection."

The Premier tried to get away with telling the business people of Hornsby that the Parramatta to Chatswood rail line will help bring workers from the western suburbs to the industrial areas of Hornsby, Mount Ku-ring-gai and Asquith. They asked me afterwards, "Has the Premier ever been to Hornsby before? Does he know anything about the northern parts of Sydney at all?" His next suggestion was that the bus transit lanes being built by the Government in the western suburbs will somehow benefit constituents in the electorate of Hornsby. It is clear the Premier had nothing at all to say to the people of Hornsby despite specific promises made by the Australian Labor Party during the election that had been held less than 12 months previously. This event took place in February this year, and the election was held in March the previous year. Specific promises had been made to the people of Hornsby, none of which were funded in the first or second budgets of the Carr Government in its second term.

In May this House began debating the motion I moved at the earliest opportunity to call on the Government to give Hornsby a fair go. We are not asking for anything we are not entitled to. We are asking for a fair go for the electorate of Hornsby. The House began debating that motion in May but, because the Leader of the House continually did what he is doing now—cancelling the right of private members to conclude their orders of the day—the House has not been able to finish it. The Premier and the Leader of the House stand condemned for refusing to debate the truth of the matter as demonstrated by their actions. They do not care

about Hornsby; the Australian Labor Party has no interest in the electorate of Hornsby; it does not provide for the needs of the electorate. I remind the House that the headline in the *Hornsby and Upper North Shore Advocate* was "We just want a fair go, Mr Carr".

**Question—That the motion be agreed to—put.**

**The House divided.**

**Ayes, 45**

Ms Allan	Mr Gibson	Mr Newell
Mr Amery	Mr Greene	Ms Nori
Ms Andrews	Mrs Grusovin	Mr Orkopoulos
Mr Aquilina	Ms Harrison	Mr E. T. Page
Mr Ashton	Mr Hickey	Mr Price
Mr Bartlett	Mr Knowles	Dr Refshauge
Ms Beamer	Mrs Lo Po'	Ms Saliba
Mr Black	Mr Lynch	Mr Stewart
Mr Brown	Mr McBride	Mr Tripodi
Miss Burton	Mr McManus	Mr Watkins
Mr Campbell	Mr Martin	Mr Whelan
Mr Collier	Ms Meagher	
Mr Crittenden	Ms Megarrity	
Mr Debus	Mr Mills	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Face	Mr Moss	Mr Anderson
Mr Gaudry	Mr Nagle	Mr Thompson

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Mr Kerr	Mrs Skinner	Mr Fraser
Mr McGrane	Mr Slack-Smith	Mr R. H. L. Smith

**Pairs**

Mr Hunter	Mrs Chikarovksi
Mr Iemma	Mr Glachan

**Question resolved in the affirmative.**

**Motion agreed to.**

**ANNIVERSARY OF THE END OF WORLD WAR II**

**Mr GIBSON** (Blacktown) [12.27 p.m.]: Before I move the motion I remind the honourable member for Hornsby that had it not been for the sacrifices made during the Second World War, people would not have to worry about Hornsby at all. I am certain that the members of the Hornsby RSL would be interested to read today's *Hansard*. The comments of their elected member in reply to my motion will indicate what sort of a person he is. I move:

That this House commemorates the anniversary of the end of World War II on 15 August 1945 and remembers with respect and appreciation all those who fought and gave so much.

This is an important motion. I do not recall a more important motion coming before this House, because without the efforts of our service men and women during World War I and World War II we would not be able to freely debate matters in this Chamber. Emperor Hirohito announced the unconditional surrender of the Japanese forces on 15 August—known as VP Day—appropriately on the day of the Feast of the Assumption. The surrender was signed on 2 September on the USS *Missouri* in Tokyo Bay, putting an end to one of the greatest tragedies the world had ever known. Peace came at a very high cost. During six years of fighting some 24 million service personnel, Allied and Axis, were killed, and it is estimated that as many as 40 million civilians were killed—a total of 64 million people. It is appropriate to speak about this today: we should speak about it every year in every Parliament in the world to make sure that we never have a third world war.

Civilians died in bombing raids or in forced labour or extermination camps. In many cases people died of starvation or from disease. Many people died from execution as hostages or partisans. In 1939 the population of Australia was 7.1 million. We contributed a magnificent amount to World War II. Australians were there virtually from day one until it finished. Some 680,000 personnel left these shores to fight overseas for democracy and for this wonderful country. Some 34,000 Australians did not come home, and another 181,000 came home wounded, casualties of this unbelievable war. It is worth noting that the British Commonwealth lost 373,000 people; the United Kingdom lost 264,000; China lost 1.3 million; France lost 213,000; Greece lost 88,000; the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics lost 11 million; Germany lost 3.5 million; and Japan lost 1.3 million. It is difficult for us to comprehend those figures, but all those people died during World War II.

World War I was said to be the war to end all wars but it did not prevent World War II. Unfortunately, the world has not learnt much. We still see the ravages of war in some countries. The more we talk about the war, the greater chance we have of ensuring that there is never a third world war. I believe that a third world war would be fought in a totally different way and about such things as water and food. I hope it never happens. Australian servicemen fought in campaigns against Germany and Italy in Europe, the Mediterranean and North Africa, and against Japan in South-East Asia and in other parts of the Pacific.

The Australian mainland came under direct attack for the first time as Japanese aircraft bombed towns in north-western Australia and Japanese midget submarines attacked Sydney Harbour. The Royal Australian Navy participated in operations against Italy after its entry in the war in June 1940. A few Australians flew in the Battle of Britain in August and September of the same year, but the Australian Army was not engaged in combat until 1941, when the 6th, 7th and 9th Divisions joined the allied operations in the Mediterranean and in North Africa.

Following early successes against the Italian forces, the Australians suffered defeat with the Allies at the hands of the Germans in Greece, Crete and North Africa. In June and July of 1941 Australians participated in the successful Allied invasion of Syria, a mandate of France and ally of the Vichy government. Up to 14,000 Australians held out against repeated German attacks in the Libyan port of Tobruk, where they were besieged between April and August 1941. After being relieved at Tobruk, the 6th and 7th Divisions departed from the Mediterranean theatre for the war against Japan.

The 9th Division remained to play an important role in the allied victory at El Alamein in October 1942 before it, too, left for the Pacific. By the end of 1942 the Australians remaining in the Mediterranean theatre were airmen serving with either the Royal Australian Air Force, No 3 Squadron, or the Royal Air Force. Japan entered the war in 1941 and swiftly achieved a series of victories which resulted in the occupation of most of South-East Asia and large areas of the Pacific by the end of March 1942. Singapore fell in February with the loss of an entire Australian division.

After the bombing of Darwin in that same month, all Royal Australian Navy ships in the Mediterranean theatre, as well as the 6th and 7th Divisions, returned to defend Australia. In response to the highlighted threat, the Australian Government expanded the Army and the Air Force, and called for an overhaul of economic diversity and industrial policies to give the Government special powers with which to mount a total war effort at home. The threat of a Japanese invasion receded as the allies won a series of decisive battles in the Coral Sea, at Midway, on Imita ridge and the Kokoda track, and at Milne Bay and Buna.

Further allied victories against the Japanese followed in 1943. Australian troops were mainly engaged in land battles in New Guinea, the defeat of the Japanese at Wau and clearing Japanese soldiers from the Huon peninsula. This was Australia's largest and most complex offensive of the war, and was not completed until April 1944. Of course, the Australian Army fought the Japanese in a series of campaigns in 1944 against isolated Japanese garrisons stretching from Borneo to Bougainville. Australian troops were still fighting in Borneo when the war ended in August 1945.

While Australia's major effort from 1942 onwards was directed at defeating Japan, thousands of Australians continued to serve with the Royal Australian Air Force in the Middle East. Some 350,000 Australians were killed and Bomber Command's offensives against occupied Europe. This was one of the most costly offensives in the whole war so far as the number of people killed is concerned. More than 30,000 servicemen were taken prisoner in World War II and 39,000 servicemen—two-thirds of those captured—were taken prisoner by the Japanese during their advance through South-East Asia within the first few weeks of 1942.

While those who became prisoners of the Germans had a strong chance of returning home at the end of the war, 36 per cent of prisoners of the Japanese died in captivity. Women played a major role in the war effort both at home and on the front line. Many women joined the Australian Women's Army Service and the Women's Royal Australian Navy Service. Today we are, in a sense, passing in review not only those historic events but also their commemoration—the way the people of New South Wales and Australia express their remembrance and gratitude.

Officers of this Parliament served in the war effort, including Ron Ward, a former Clerk of the Legislative Assembly who served in the Air Force; Doug Wheeler, a former Clerk of the Legislative Assembly who also served in the Air Force; and Geoffrey Luton, a former Sergeant-of-Arms, who served in the Army. Also, many former members of this House served during the war, continuing the tradition of members of this House serving their country. They include George Braund, a former member for Armidale who served in World War I, and Edward Larkin, a former member for Willoughby.

Today we are commemorating those who served for us and those who died. We are talking about our history and the legacy left to us by those people. If Prime Minister Curtin had not overruled Churchill and brought our troops home, there is no way in the world we would be standing in this Parliament today. As honourable members know, Churchill said, "Let the Japanese take Australia; we will win Australia back." Thank God we defended Australia; otherwise, we would still be flying the Japanese flag, and we would not be debating the issues that we do debate in this Parliament. We all owe a great debt to those who fought for this country and what they fought for. They fought for democracy and to ensure that we have the life we enjoy in this wonderful country today.

**Mr McBRIDE** (The Entrance) [12.37 p.m.]: I congratulate the honourable member for Blacktown on moving this motion and on his continued concern in relation to the service of military persons during the wars this century. The honourable member has moved a number of motions that have been used as an opportunity to give credit and respect to those who served overseas on behalf of our nation. He referred to several former members of Parliament who served during the war. Many families have been touched by World War I and World War II. As Australia is such a small nation, and as we made such a major contribution in terms of military personnel, that would be the situation for many members of the House, including me. On 23 November 1995 this House debated a motion commemorating those who served in the war from 1939 to 1945, as part of Australia Remembers: 1945-1995.

I again take the opportunity to record some of the efforts of my own family. My grandfather, William Henry Murray, served in the First World War at Gallipoli and subsequently in France. He was awarded the Military Medal for acts of bravery at the battle of Bullecourt. He passed away in his middle age as a result of injuries he received in the First World War, particularly from gassing, which was one of the most vicious military actions in that theatre of war. His three sons volunteered for service in the Second World War. His son Reginald, who is still alive today and lives in country New South Wales, served in New Guinea. His younger brother Gordon served in the Northern Territory, and the youngest of the family, William, served in Europe with the RAAF. Unfortunately, William was killed over Germany in the last weeks of the war. Recently I visited the University of New England memorial to those who served from the campus who served in the war: one administrative officer, two lecturers and three students. The age of the students, only 19, 20 and 22, impressed upon me the commitment that these young people made to their country in the theatre of war.

Turning to World War II, which we are reflecting on today, Prime Minister R. G. Menzies had no hesitation in assuming that a British declaration of war in September 1939 committed Australians to war, as it had 25 years earlier in the First World War. Within two months, the Australian defence forces were committed to service overseas within the strategic framework of imperial defence. That commitment was not the product of the expeditionary force mentality that had existed in the Boer War and World War I, but was made with deep reservations about the growing Japanese threat in the Asia-Pacific region. Australians served overseas in a number of theatres. Following the model of World War I, Australia raised four volunteer infantry divisions, three of which—the sixth, seventh and ninth—were committed to the Middle East and Mediterranean theatres.

The Royal Australian Navy served with its British counterpart on virtually all oceans of the world, and in a remarkable display of imperial solidarity Australia sent more than 26,000 men to serve with the Royal Air Force through the Empire-Commonwealth Air Training Scheme.

Australia was indispensable to the British campaigns in the Middle East and the Mediterranean, contributing to the original dramatic victories against Italian forces in the north African desert in 1941, the catastrophic campaigns in Greece and Crete in April-May 1941, the occupation of Vichy-controlled Syria and the decisive defeat of the Axis forces at El Alamein in late 1942. As to the crisis created by entry of Japan into the war, which eventuated in late 1941, the only Australian land forces available for national defence was the eighth division, which was stationed in Malaya and the islands to Australia's north, and some poorly equipped conscript militia divisions that lacked combat experience. The eighth division was captured when the Japanese, in a phenomenal four-month campaign, captured Malaya, Singapore—the keystone of the imperial defence strategy—Burma and the Netherlands East Indies.

I worked with a surveyor who had been with the British forces during the capture of Singapore. Subsequently he went in an open boat all the way from Singapore to Colombo Harbour in what is now called Sri Lanka. He told me a fabulous story about how, as he sat in the bow of the boat, he thought, given that he was only a little person, that at some stage the others might consider devouring him. He tells the story of this great epic ocean voyage with great humour. That sort of heroism, which existed right throughout the war, largely goes unrecognised. When one has the opportunity to talk to people about their experiences, it is amazing to hear what they went through to defend their nation and that they survived.

In response to the crisis, the sixth and seventh divisions were recalled from the Middle East at the behest of the then recently appointed Labor Prime Minister John Curtin. In February 1942, in a celebrated incident which assured Curtin his place in nationalist Australian history, the Australian Government resisted Winston Churchill's wish to deploy some of our returning troops to Burma, where they would have faced certain defeat. The manifest inability of Britain to defend Australia left Australia no option but strategic dependence on the United States of America. From March 1942 onwards, with the arrival of the charismatic and egocentric General Douglas MacArthur as commander of the Allied forces in the south-west Pacific area, Australian strategy was increasingly dictated by the constraints of alliance diplomacy. After gruelling, sloggish campaigns along the northern coast of New Guinea in 1943-44, Australian troops were assigned to operations in Borneo, New Britain and New Guinea.

Despite its huge scale, World War II resulted in fewer Australian casualties than World War I. That is an important point in terms of the sacrifices that were made in World War I. The total death toll, including those who died from accidents and illnesses while on active service, was 39,000, from a population of more than 7,000,000. I contrast that with the more than 58,000 who died in the 1914-18 campaign, when our population was less than 5,000,000. Of those deaths, more than 8,200 were prisoners of the Japanese and 6,500 were air crew members serving in the Mediterranean and during the bombing offensive against Germany, where my uncle passed away.

From the perspective of the 1990s it seems that the dominant popular memories of World War II are not the battles or campaign victories, but the experiences of prisoners of war. One-third of Australians held in Japanese camps died in captivity, and names such as Changi, the Burma-Thailand railway and Sir Edward "Weary" Dunlop have an emotional resonance which even Tobruk and Kokoda can hardly match. My visit to the Australian War Memorial in Burma, which is associated with the loss of Australian troops in the construction of the Burma railway, was a moving experience. Although I focused on the Australian contribution, I was also moved by the enormous number of people from other countries who also died there and the brutality associated with the building of the railway.

In conclusion, I note the change in how we as a nation remember our servicemen who served in World War I and World War II. After the Australia Remembers commemoration in 1995 we have moved on. The remaining numbers of the generations who made those contributions are decreasing, and we have the opportunity to reflect on the contribution they made. That was a turning point in the way that we view these major events in Australian history, particularly the way that our young people have responded. The son of a friend of mine recently attended the Remembrance Day service at Gallipoli. He told me that many young Australians include the Anzac Gallipoli Remembrance Day as part of their itinerary when they travel overseas. Our young people's attitude toward the contribution of Australian servicemen in two world wars reflects a most important change.

**Mr WEBB** (Monaro) [12.47 p.m.]: I support the motion to commemorate the anniversary of the end on 15 August 1945, 55 years ago, of the Second World War. We need to remember with respect and with the fullest sense of appreciation all those who fought and those who gave their lives. We need to remember the contribution of members of the Australian air force, army and navy forces, the nurses, and other ancillary forces to the significant role that Australia played in the Second World War. I listened with interest to the contributions of the honourable member for Blacktown and the honourable member for The Entrance. They gave a concise rundown of Australia's commitment to the various theatres of war during World War II.

It is difficult to be precise about Australia's full commitment, but it is important that we remember as many as possible of those theatres of war in which Australians participated and made sacrifices, including the supreme sacrifice. The honourable member for The Entrance spoke of the humour among the members of the armed forces. Today we hear many stories about the humorous occurrences that took place in various theatres of war. I will never forget my great-uncle, Charlie Walker, who was a Rat of Tobruk during the Second World War, telling me stories of how they dealt with the Germans, the desert, and the local inhabitants in North Africa and around the Mediterranean during the Second World War.

I will never forget my uncle, Fred Ordish, who became a prisoner of war in the Second World War, telling me of his encounters with Edward "Weary" Dunlop. In fact, there is a photograph of Fred in Edward "Weary" Dunlop's book, which I have at home. Fred told me that they used humour to get them through and to get many of them home. I am sure members of the Australian forces who found themselves prisoners of war of the Japanese in the Asian arenas also used humour to get them through the day, to get them through the trials and the problems they encountered as prisoners, and, of course, to get them through the sadness that followed the loss of fellow prisoners during that terrible time. But the humour did not undermine the heroism of brave acts that occurred daily. The heroic acts of all members of our forces have been acknowledged. We must all remember that they supported their fellow Australians in seeking the objective of peace. We certainly appreciate those efforts.

Reference has been made to the Great War. Many more Australians perished during the 1914-18 Great War than during the Second World War. As I recounted recently in this House, my grandfather was gassed in France, but he did not die for some years after returning to Australia after the First World War. When peace was achieved after the Second World War the obvious objective was to prevent further outbreaks of war. Unfortunately, that has not occurred. There has been the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and the recent conflict in Timor, as well as peacekeeping efforts in which Australians have stood their ground. In fact they have led some of those peacekeeping forces. Part of the reason we remember and appreciate those who fought and gave their lives during those wars is to educate our children and to let others know that we still care. It is important that we remember all that happened during World War II, in the hope that that kind of world conflagration will never happen again, and that we can continue to live in peace.

**Mr NEWELL** (Tweed) [12.52 p.m.]: I commend the honourable member for Blacktown for moving this motion. I acknowledge the support of honourable members for the motion and their expressions of the importance of remembering the sacrifices that the ex-servicemen and ex-servicewomen made for the preservation of liberty and freedom in this country. I wish to approach the motion in a slightly different way from other speakers. Last Sunday I came into possession of a diary of my father, who served in the Australian Army in the Second World War. The diary was kept from 4 May 1940, when my father left Ingleburn army camp and boarded the *Queen Mary*, and covered the Christmas period into 1941. I want to highlight a few entries in the diary to indicate the nature of that service. In 1940 my father's unit, which was the 2/1 Australian machine-gun battalion, was based in England. It was one of the few army units to serve in England. [*Extension of time agreed to, by leave.*]

The diary entries for that year are as follows:

15/8/40—Thursday: Max air raid

16/8/40—Friday: Air raids over England. In trenches twice today.

17/8/40—Saturday: Air raid in morning. Played football in afternoon. ASC won 22 to 17. Gave me a trouncing and was carried off with crook arm.

18/8/40—Sunday: No leave on account of bad arm. Arm sore and bruised. 144 Germans today. Planes.

19/8/40—Monday: No air raids. No duty. Arm still sore.



The diary entries for 1941 are as follows:

15/4/41—Tuesday: Serva Pass. The works are on and had to bring truck back to [an undesirable place]. All night looking for same. Found same. Lost four trucks. Found same during day except one.

16/4/41—Wednesday: McSwan and I looking for lost track. A bit on the nose. Glad to get out of the place.

18/4/41—Friday: The last few days will be a memory not fit to write.

19/4/41—Spent all day on road west of Larrisa. Bridge blown up. Found tucker dump and beer. Had great day. 2100 hours set off for Larrisa. Arrived early morning.

20/4/41—All day on my stomach watching dive bombers give Larrisa hell. 1700 hours go for our life. Hun broke line. Taking up fighting positions.

23/4/41—All I can say is it is not fit to put in writing what went on for the last couple of days. The memory alone is enough. Camped night at Mt Olympus.

26/4/41—Saturday: Left Kalamora that 2.30 in morning on our way from Greece to goodness knows where—Costa Rica. 2500 troops on board.

The *Costa Rica* was the ship they were sailing on. The diary continues:

27/4/41—Sunday: Talk about air raids. All day. Ship to be abandoned. Destroyers to rescue. Hereward.

I understand that the *Hereward* was a British destroyer to which they were transferred at sea. The diary continues:

Lost everything except pistol. Everybody calm. A few lost in transfer. Arrived at Crete.

The entries are fairly brief, and one would need to know some of the history of what those soldiers went through, in Greece and Crete particularly, to understand the sacrifices that were made. However, the Australian soldiers undoubtedly excelled themselves and held up the great Australian fighting traditions. Fortunately, my father was also evacuated from Crete and returned to Australia before going to New Guinea, where he served at Milne Bay. In 1945 the unit continued on to Balikpapan in Borneo for the final action in which Australians were involved during World War II.

A unit history of the 2/1 Australian machine-gun battalion titled *The Long Carry* has been published. I also refer honourable members to the unit history of my father's original battalion, the 2/2 Australian infantry battalion, which is titled *Purple Over Green*. It was written some years ago by Stan Wick. Because of the way it was written it set the standard for many of the unit histories which followed. It is interesting to read the writings of Bean and the histories of the various wars that Australians were involved in. But Stan Wick made the running on unit histories. Apart from referring to the official history of the way things were done, he also interviewed and took reminiscences from soldiers about what happened and the way they saw things happen. He did not produce an official and standardised version but an illustration of the way the troops felt about things on different occasions.

Sometimes the troops' memories of discipline and the action in which they were involved were slightly different from the official version. Like many Australians, I have visited a number of war memorials overseas, particularly in Thailand and Singapore. The first thing that strikes you is the ages on the headstones: 18-, 19- and 20-year-old kids. In Singapore and Thailand in particular there was a jump then to the 40- to 45-year-olds who had probably served in the First World War and had come back for a second contribution.

The way we remember these dates, as referred to by the honourable member for The Entrance, was exemplified by the 1995 Australia Remembers ceremonies to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War. I agree wholeheartedly with the words of the honourable member for The Entrance: the ceremonies were an acknowledgement by our youth of the sacrifices made and an understanding of the history created by our young men and women who took part in the Second World War. Our youth now have a better understanding of what the people of this country had to go through during the 1940s.

I appreciate having the opportunity to address the House on this matter and put on record a serviceman's point of view. Most of us only ever read about these events in history books. Sometimes the impact of battle on the troops is a bit standardised and sterilised in the history books. Some of the unit histories, particularly *Purple Over Green*, the history of the 2/2 battalion, set a standard by giving a voice to the participants—those who were affected by the casualties and who did the hard work—that enables them to put on record how they reacted to the situation in which they were involved. I commend the motion to the House.

**Mr GIBSON** (Blacktown) [1.02 p.m.], in reply: I thank all honourable members who participated in this very important debate. In New South Wales the people and governments, sustained by the Parliament, were called upon to carry a disproportionate share of the civilian war effort at home. In the most perilous days of the war, in June 1942, Prime Minister Curtin wrote to Premier McKell in the following terms:

In this grave crisis in Australian history, the calls by my Government on the State Government increases hourly, and I am greatly heartened knowing that whenever an appeal has been made, your immediate response has always been forthcoming with such splendid results.

New South Wales is probably in that same category today. The 50 years since the end of the war have seen unparalleled changes in the world, particularly in Australia. The most astounding change since the war has probably been the liquidation of the Soviet Empire as we knew it. It is very important to talk about the matters raised in these sorts of motions because we must ensure that all governments speak about them as much as possible to tell the younger generation exactly how it was, to ensure that we never experience a third world war. We have all read different theories about the possibility of a third world war, but if there were another war it would not be about land and riches, but rather about water and food because of our increasing population. Let us hope it never happens.

**Motion agreed to.**

### INTERNATIONAL MARITIME DAY

**Mr GAUDRY** (Newcastle—Parliamentary Secretary) [1.04 p.m.]: I move:

That this House recognises Australia's maritime history and the contribution of Australia's merchant mariners to our nation in times of peace and war, and endorses and supports the observance of International Maritime Day on 24 September each year.

This motion is in response to a call by the Maritime Union of Australia for formal recognition of International Maritime Day, which was created by the International Maritime Organisation, a subsidiary of the United Nations, which was set up in 1958 and charged with fostering standards for maritime operation and safety. The call from the Maritime Union came via a letter from the National Secretary, John Coombs, and enclosed an article written by Mr Alan Oliver, a retired seafarer, on the need for more recognition of World Maritime Day. The letter states:

For the last ten years in Sydney the union has organised a march across the Pyrmont Bridge to the anchors outside the National Maritime Museum where a number of speeches identify the 1 in 8 seafarers who paid the ultimate sacrifice during the Second World War as well as identifying other issues in relation to the contribution of our merchant fleet.

I am sure there is no doubt that today in the minds of all members of this House and our nation is the tragic plight facing the Russian seamen who are currently entrapped on the bottom of the sea in a perilous situation. I am reminded of the *Seafarers Hymn*, which is sung on the occasion of the launch of every ship, the getting together of seamen, and the memorial service held each year in Newcastle for merchant seaman lost in times of war. The first stanza of the hymn is as follows:

Eternal father, strong to save,  
whose arm has bound the restless wave,  
who bids the mighty oceans deep,  
its own appointed limits keep:  
O hear us when we cry to thee  
for those in peril on the sea

This motion recognises and celebrates the importance of the maritime industry and maritime seafarers to the growth and development of this nation, particularly the contribution mariners have made in times of peace and war, and the ongoing activity that is necessary to secure for those mariners working conditions, wages and safety that will enable them to take their place as properly paid workers. As you know, Mr Deputy-Speaker, as a member who represents the Hunter, Newcastle is a port city. The wealth, prosperity and industry of the city are based around our maritime location and traditions. From the very beginning the port of Newcastle has played an extremely important role in the development of the wealth of New South Wales. In the words of the former member for Shortland, and Minister for Transport, the Hon. Peter Morris, spoken in 1998 on the Newcastle foreshore at the annual memorial service for merchant mariners:

Our region is rich in maritime heritage. Our nation and our wealth were borne out of shipping. They have developed on the shoulders of the shipping industry. Their future rests on shipping and I hope that it will be a future in which Australian shipping will play an expanding role.

For over 200 years we have crewed ships, serviced ships, designed ships, built and repaired ships in peace and war.

It is impossible to underestimate the role of shipping and merchant mariners in the prosperity, economic development and security of our nation. It is only right that a day should be dedicated to celebrate our maritime history, our traditions, and the importance of shipping to the economy and security of our nation; to recognise the contribution of merchant mariners in times of peace and war; to support the continued action by the Maritime Union of Australia and the International Transport Federation to ensure higher standards of operational safety, environmental protection and conditions for merchant mariners; and in particular, to continue to fight against the loss of Australian involvement in coastal shipping and the increasing use of flag-of-convenience ships to carry goods both along the coast of Australia and overseas.

A great contribution was made by Australian merchant mariners, particularly during war years, transporting equipment in very slowly moving ships—which was essential both for the nation and for the war effort. Those merchant mariners in ships that were easy targets were in great danger, but they nevertheless made an enormous contribution to Australia's war effort. In the Second World War alone, approximately 35,000 allied merchant seamen lost their lives. On a worldwide scale, that represented one in three of the total lives lost. Over the five years of the Second World War the statistical probability of a crew member surviving a sinking after enemy action was little better than even.

In Australia during the war, submarines attacked 75 vessels, of which 60 sank. Among the vessels that were sunk was the Australian hospital ship *Centaur*, which was torpedoed in May 1943, resulting in the loss of 268 lives, 45 of whom were crew members. Australians should remember and honour merchant mariners who did so much for this country during times of war. The Hon. Peter Morris, Jean Roggers and the late Captain Les Packman have been instrumental in developing a memorial to merchant mariners on Newcastle's foreshore. They dedicate 24 September each year to remembering mariners lost during wartime.

One should also bear in mind the working conditions of merchant crews who operate vessels on the open seas and the extreme danger they face because of their involvement with ships sailing under flags of convenience. There has been an increasing incidence of flags-of-convenience ships trading along the Australian coast, not only taking jobs from merchant mariners in this State but also exposing their crews to continuing problems associated with a lack of safety and poor working conditions. In many cases merchant crews are potentially exposed to the dangers of their ships being stranded or sunk, which could result in loss of life.

The Federal Government and the Maritime Union of Australia are addressing the issue of ships sailing under flags of convenience. In the House of Representatives in June this year the Hon. Carmen Lawrence noted the destruction of the Australian shipping industry; the axing of funding which had previously made the merchant fleet competitive; the legislation which revokes International Labour Organisation Conventions permitting foreign vessels to carry out Australia's coastal trade without mandatory safety checks; replacement of Australian ships by ships sailing under single-voyage permits; and the increasing proportion of ships sailing under flags of convenience. Flags-of-convenience ships already dominate world trade.

It will be important to acknowledge International Maritime Day on 24 September. International Maritime Day will give Australians the opportunity to celebrate Australia's maritime lifestyle and the importance of the maritime industry in Australia; to remember those merchant mariners who were lost during times of war; and to continue to advocate, together with the Maritime Union of Australia, the need for greater safety and better working conditions for those who are involved in the maritime industry. [*Time expired.*]

**Mr WEBB** (Monaro) [1.14 p.m.]: I also acknowledge Australia's maritime history and the contribution that Australian merchant mariners have made to this nation in times of war. I endorse and support the observance of International Maritime Day on 24 September each year. Recognition of Australia's maritime industry includes reflection on Australia's considerable maritime history. Australia as a nation was founded by maritime endeavours: With pun intended, without Cook and his *Endeavour*, we Australians may not have had the opportunity of living here. As an island continent, Australia is somewhat similar to other island continents, yet is antipodean to England. The histories of both countries show a reliance upon mariners. Australia owes much to mariners such as Dampier, Van Diemen, Matthew Flinders in the *Tom Thumb*, Cook, Bligh, and many subsequent captains, admirals, mariners and seamen, including those under commission from Her Majesty and from the Commonwealth of Australia and those involved in either a merchant or voluntary capacity.

Australia's maritime history is marked by achievement, drama and mysteries. The disastrous collision between HMAS *Melbourne* and HMAS *Voyager* will long be remembered by contemporary Australians, as will the ongoing mystery and search for the HMAS *Sydney*, which was sunk by the German raider *Kormorant* during the Second World War. We also must not forget the vigilant observation which uncovered the presence of

Japanese submarines in Sydney Harbour during the Second World War and acknowledge the cost, sadness and tragedy associated with the sinkings of many vessels in Australian waters. The honourable member for Newcastle referred to 60 of the 75 vessels attacked by Japanese submarines having sunk. Along the New South Wales coast and elsewhere many memorials commemorate sunken ships.

While holidaying on the South Coast I recall my father telling me that shortly before he joined up in the Second World War his father told him about the Japanese charging their submarine batteries in various bays along the coast when they were conducting their sorties and attacking Australian sea lanes. All honourable members should pay a tribute to merchant mariners who willingly accepted a volunteer defence role during the Second World War and other wars. These groups protected defence lines as well as transport lines, which simultaneously brought produce to Australia for sustenance and enabled Australia to contribute to other theatres of war and world peace through the export of greatly needed products.

The motion seeks to acknowledge the very important role played by merchant mariners during peacetime, and should be supported. The Australian navy will soon make Eden, which is situated in my electorate, one of its major ports. That decision will result in relief of congestion on Sydney Harbour and will bring much-needed economic activity to the Eden area. The Federal Government should be congratulated on its acknowledgement of the need to substantially upgrade and provide ongoing maintenance of the Australian navy's water- and land-based infrastructure. The contribution made by Australia to world peace through its participation in many theatres of war—namely, World War II, the Vietnam War, the Korean War, the Gulf War and more recently the war in East Timor—should also not be forgotten.

The development of Australia's maritime persona continues with production of fibreglass minesweepers. Recently I visited HMAS *Rushcutter* and her sister ship, in Eden. Larger state-of-the-art minesweepers will be provided together with proposed new navy patrol boats, which are very important for coastline surveillance. Sydney's recently commissioned police patrol boats and Australia's internationally renowned new technology, wave-piercing catamarans, are examples of Australia's outstanding contributions to the maritime industry. I will refer briefly to an article which was published on 16 August in the *Daily Telegraph*. It contains a photograph of one of our catamarans, the HMAS *Jervis Bay*, and states:

The catamarans this Tasmanian company make are in service right around the world; one of them holds the trans-Atlantic record. They have even caught the eye of the US Navy, which rarely looks beyond its own shores when purchasing military hardware.

The HMAS *Jervis Bay* is indeed a wonderful piece of engineering that demonstrates Australia's commitment to and reliance on things maritime. Of course, research in the great southern oceans to Antarctica, both past and ongoing, is another indication of Australia's colourful maritime history. Australia leads the world in many of these areas. Of course, we salute our Navy and the remainder of the military on Anzac Day, Volunteer and Reserve Service today on 1 July, Lon Tan Day and many other community days throughout the year. Many of the memorials along Anzac Parade in Canberra and the national war memorial pay homage to the contribution and sacrifice of Australian mariners and the role they played in the endeavour for world peace.

The celebration of International Maritime Day on 24 September each year honours all those brave men and women, past and present, who have contributed, and continue to contribute, so much to our country. It is important that we commemorate and acknowledge that contribution. The words of the *Seafarers Hymn*, which the honourable member for Newcastle read, certainly provide great solace. It acknowledges the camaraderie of those people in maritime endeavours and the sense that as they go about their business the sea is their home. It is important that we appreciate that for many—intentionally and, regrettably, unintentionally—the sea is also their final resting place. We should also acknowledge the important contribution of Australian mariners to world peace, world trade and world endeavours. I fully support the motion.

**Mr PRICE** (Maitland) [1.22 p.m.]: I support the motion and congratulate the honourable member for Newcastle on moving it. The International Maritime Organisation [IMO] is an agency of the United Nations. Its theme this year is building maritime partnerships. To understand how that will be done one has only to look at the composition of the organisation. The IMO began approximately 52 years ago, in 1948, as a result of a United Nations resolution, and currently has 158 member nations on its grand council. It covers a huge amount of maritime activity—in fact, I venture to say all maritime activity—although, like any progressive organisation with modern and improved structures, it continues to expand its influence wherever possible on member and non-member countries to improve the lot for maritime services within their nations.

Probably the most important topics it covers are safety, in times of both peace and war, shipbuilding, ship repair, education, and the environment. I shall speak briefly about several of those aspects. As a former

ship's engineer I shall place some emphasis on the shipbuilding industry and its unfortunate demise in this country. In 1976 the Federal Government withdrew the subsidy structures but did not replace them with anything special. The problem was that at that time we were persuaded to buy our ships overseas. Consequently, the bulk of our ships were bought from Korea and Japan. In the United States of America the Jones law ensures that every ship the Americans use will be built in America—even if it is somebody else's design!

We have a little to learn from that example. Whilst the honourable member for Monaro spoke of the benefit of some small shipbuilders with their international sales—and I support his comments—it must be remembered that a number of those shipbuilding companies these days provide for the luxury or ferry market. We no longer build major ships to transport Australian goods. In fact, in my lifetime the entire Australian fleet has disappeared. We have no flagships in cargo lines and we rely entirely on international conference lines to do our carrying. Whilst it is a Commonwealth responsibility it reflects badly on the States because they are held to ransom with whatever price the international cartel decides.

Sadly, shipbuilding in this country has gone. We only build special vessels and warships; we no longer build the cargo vessels that we need. It must be borne in mind that during our maritime history Australia built many innovative ships such as the *Princess of Tasmania* and the *Koojara*, which was the first container ship ever built and plied between Melbourne and Fremantle. Those innovations have gone, because losing the ships means losing the skills, technologists, tradesmen and interest. However, education on shipbuilding is at a high level. We adopted most of the British rules, regulations and examinations. They are still carried out at the Launceston Maritime College, which certifies all our deck and engineering officers and also looks after our fishing fleet. Of course, within our State we look after the coastal vessels that ply within the normal limits of our coastal requirements.

Another most important aspect associated with shipbuilding is the environment. The IMO has looked after the environment in a significant way. Honourable members may recall the *Torrey Canyon* disaster in Great Britain in 1967 and more recently the *Exxo Valdez* in 1989 in Alaska, when huge amounts of oil polluted coastlines of neighbouring countries and many marine birds and fish were killed. We have learned a lot from that episode. As a result of action taken by the IMO, oil spills over a similar period have been reduced by approximately 50 per cent and normal oil pollution from a vessel has decreased by 50 per cent through the use of oil and water separators. Tremendous steps have been taken to improve the lot of maritime officers and sailors through education and better and safer ships, and a conscious effort has been made to ensure that those who use the seaways keep them clean and useful and guarantee their future for our children. [*Time expired.*]

**Mrs GRUSOVIN** (Heffron) [1.27 p.m.]: I strongly support this motion as it recognises International Maritime Day, which is celebrated on 24 September each year. I take this opportunity to place on record my comments about the efforts of the Maritime Union of Australia and its national secretary, John Coombs.

**Mr Mills:** A legend!

**Mrs GRUSOVIN:** Absolutely. He is a big man. I acknowledge also the International Transport Workers Federation and the work of a retired seafarer in support of this campaign to recognise this day. It is important that through this motion the community is reminded of Australia's maritime history, the contribution of Australia's merchant marines in times of peace and war, and that we indicate our strong support in the observance of International Maritime Day on 24 September each year. As member for Heffron I have been pleased to know Mr Allen Oliver, a retired seaman and the author of an article that drew attention to a number of these matters. Earlier this year he gave me a copy of the article, and I know that John Coombs made the contents of the article known to other members of this House in the campaign to have this important day recognised.

Allen Oliver's article is thoughtful and reminds us that the European settlement of Australia was made entirely by sea and that many immigrants have braved treacherous ocean crossings, relying on the bravery and skill of seafarers, to bring them to this country. The infant New South Wales colony relied heavily on shipbuilding, whaling, sealing, the transport of commodities and shipping for communication with isolated communities. I am sure that most people would not realise that the world's first refrigerated cargoes were the invention of Australian engineers at Geelong in the late 1800s. The world's first designed and built container ship, the *Karinga*, was Australian. Today Australian shipbuilders, from Tasmania to Western Australia, lead the world in the construction of aluminium-content ferries.

New South Wales has always had a great dependency on merchant shipping, and the men and women who work in that industry should never be underestimated. To this day the vast majority of the nation's exports

are carried by sea. It is unfortunate that as a nation so reliant on shipping we have not nurtured a stronger national overseas fleet. Such a fleet could have been used to protect our mercantile, strategic and technical interests. Other honourable members mentioned the ships of shame: ships that ply our ports under flags of convenience and ships on which the good seafarers are forced to cope with intolerable conditions. We should never forget the enormous sacrifice paid by the Australian Merchant Navy in times of war. It has been estimated that one in eight Australian merchant seafarers lost their lives in World War II. The lives of many other Australians serving in foreign fleets were lost and unrecorded.

Australian mariners have served with distinction in many theatres of war on the high seas, from the straits of Malaya to the allied convoys crossing the Atlantic and to Archangel in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. There has been little recognition of the sacrifice of the merchant marine in the dark days of 1942-43 on the eastern seaboard. It was a time when Japanese submarines took a very heavy toll on vital shipping. Mariners on unguarded ships were particularly at risk. Those on the Whyalla iron ore carriers and on hospital transports were never far from the terror of torpedoes. The contribution of shipping in times of conflict continues to the present, with the feats of those involved in the United Nations intervention into East Timor. The success of that operation depended heavily on the contribution of Australian seafarers. I strongly support this motion today. I am proud of the efforts of John Coombs, the union and Mr Allen Oliver in having this House put on record the contribution of these many brave men and women.

**Dr REFSHAUGE** (Marrickville—Deputy Premier, Minister for Urban Affairs and Planning, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and Minister for Housing) [1.33 p.m.]: I strongly support the motion moved by the honourable member for Newcastle. Australia, and New South Wales in particular, is one of the great maritime societies in the world. The ocean and ocean travel have shaped our experience, our economy and our culture since early times. Nowhere is the history more dramatically and tangibly demonstrated than in the shipwrecks that dot our coastline. Some 1,800 historic shipwrecks are known to lie in the coastal and inland waters of New South Wales. They provide a fascinating insight into our maritime history. As honourable members will be aware, the character of our nation is very much defined by our relationship with the sea and the voyages across it. There is evidence of Chinese, Indonesian and other ships arriving on what we now know to be Australian shores well before Cook's arrival in 1770.

In fact, in 1622 the first Englishman came on to what are now known as Western Australian shores after his ship, the *Trial*, was wrecked on a reef near the Montebello islands. A history of landmark, lengthy shipping voyages is invariably interspersed with a history of tragic shipwrecks, and New South Wales is no exception. The wreck of the *Sirius* on Norfolk Island in February 1790 was a devastating loss to the struggling early colony. The wreck of the *Dunbar* off South Head in 1857 saw the loss of 121 lives. Only one crew member escaped death. He later became a lighthouse keeper in Newcastle and went on to assist in the rescue of the only survivor of the *Cawarra* in 1866. The *Keilawarra*, built in England in 1878, collided that year with another steamer en route from Sydney to Brisbane, with the loss of more than 35 lives. Its remains now lie somewhere off the coast near Coffs Harbour.

Understanding our maritime history is fundamental to understanding ourselves as a State—indeed, as a nation. Shipwrecks are the key to unlocking much of that history, bringing to light stories of trade and travel, hardship and triumph, human endurance and endeavour. The New South Wales Heritage Office has a maritime archaeology program which seeks to discover, assess, interpret and protect the valuable remains of ships wrecked during the years in waters off New South Wales. I am delighted that the program has seen much activity in recent months, with several initiatives working to give greater community insight into these fascinating remains. We want to bring these sites closer to the community, and the community closer to the sites, recognising their historic, educational, sheer enjoyment and entertainment value. Shipwreck signage and information along the New South Wales coast and riverways are one way of involving communities in their local maritime history. This material is in place across the State, including now on the mid North Coast.

In April the New South Wales Heritage Office supported the Greater Taree City Council in opening a viewing platform for the remains of the paddle steamer the *PS Manning* which was built in 1878 at Pyrmont. It was typical of the vessels that once dominated transport on our rivers. After some 60 years of service on the Manning River transporting produce, livestock and timber it was abandoned in its current spot in about 1937. Very few other examples of that type of vessel remain, particularly given that the iron hull is so well preserved. We also recently launched a program to involve local communities in sighting, reporting and researching shipwrecks in the area. The innovative Wreck Spotters program means that people with a keen interest in shipwrecks can become actively involved in detecting, documenting and promoting them.

I am pleased to inform honourable members that the community has responded with enthusiasm to this exciting program. Already 27 people from as far north as Tweed Heads and as far south as Eden have joined the

program. When a storm recently revealed the remains of the World War II Dutch submarine *K-IX* on the remote beach just off Seal Rocks a wreck spotter got word of its appearance back to the New South Wales Heritage Office. The wreck was last sighted in 1984, but in May this year part of the *K-IX* was exposed after king tides in the area. This submarine is of particular interest because of its association with the Japanese midget submarine raid at Sydney Harbour on 31 May 1942. A unit of the Royal Netherlands Navy was damaged when an enemy torpedo passed under it and destroyed the HMAS *Kuttabul*, killing 21 sailors on board. It was later commissioned into the Royal Australian Navy as a training vessel before becoming lost in a telling accident towards the end of the war.

As a result of this particular sighting, the Consulate General of the Netherlands has offered to financially assist in the establishment of interpretive material about the submarine. Numerous wrecks have been recently discovered. I recently announced the wreck of the *Wyong*, which was found off south Solitary Island. The ship carried, amongst other things, mail. Unfortunately, while it was waiting for the family of the lighthouse keeper to finish their letters, it succumbed to the weather and sank on the spot. New South Wales clearly has a strong maritime history. I strongly support the motion moved by the honourable member for Newcastle.

**Mr MILLS** (Wallsend) [1.38 p.m.]: I am pleased to support the motion of the honourable member for Newcastle to recognise Australia's maritime history and the contribution of Australia's merchant mariners to our nation in times of peace and war. I endorse and support the observance of International Maritime Day on 24 September each year. We should be proud and pleased to celebrate our maritime heritage in Australia. At the ceremony to mark merchant mariners lost in war, which was held in Newcastle in June, Peter Morris, the former Federal Minister for Transport, said, "We are of the sea." The indigenous people of this country had a maritime tradition long before the European invasion of 1788. Most lived near the sea—they fished, traded and travelled. I acknowledge that we are on the land of the Eora people. However, they were also seagoing people who fished and moved about in the harbour. Last night my daughter gave me an email she had received. It was an essay by Douglas Adams, the author of *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, entitled the "Confusing Country". I shall quote a couple of parts of it to emphasise the maritime nature of Australia. It reads:

Australia is a very confusing place, taking up a large amount of the bottom half of the planet. It is recognisable from orbit because of many unusual features, including what at first looks like an enormous bite taken out of its southern edge; a wall of sheer cliffs which plunge deep into the girding sea. Geologists assure us that this is simply an accident of geomorphology and plate tectonics, but they still call it the "Great Australian Bight" proving that not only are they covering up a more frightening theory, but they can't spell either.

He went on to talk about the other confusing things about Australia: the status of the place—whether it is a continent, island or country—and the animals. He then said:

The last confusing thing about Australia is the inhabitants. First, a short history: Some time around 40,000 years ago, some people arrived in boats from the north ... Then, around 200 years ago, Europeans arrived in boats from the north.

So we are a maritime country. I am proud to represent an electorate in the Hunter with a proud and long maritime tradition. The first coal in the colony of New South Wales was found by a party of sailors, led by Lieutenant Shortland, chasing escaped convicts. They found coal outcropping on the beaches at the mouth of what is now the Hunter River in 1797. The town of Newcastle developed by the sea. Coal and timber were exported. I live in the city of Lake Macquarie, which also developed by the sea. Timber was exported and villages grew up. In fact, this is the bicentenary of European discovery of Lake Macquarie. The Awabakal people knew about it for a long time. A Captain Reid, looking for Coal River, instead found the entrance to Lake Macquarie near Swansea, Swansea Channel. I note the presence in the Chamber of the honourable member for Swansea. The place was known for many years as Reid's mistake, because he came into Lake Macquarie instead of Newcastle.

Newcastle has exported coal since the 1810s. Coal was exported to California and the early power for San Francisco came from Australian coal exported across the Pacific during the gold rush days. Sailing ships brought Californian rock as ballast, which was dumped before the return journey on the shore opposite to the port, at Stockton. I well remember the ballast ground where I played cricket. A young fellow in my team bowled 10 overs, nine maidens, four runs and took nine wickets. I will always remember that feat from young Andrew Walker. Bullock Island in Carrington has bricks and rocks that came from the Californian earthquake of 1906. The international coal trade is still the strength of the Hunter economy—85 million tonnes last year. I pay tribute to John Coombs, the legend of the Maritime Union of Australia. The maritime unions have raised issues on behalf of all maritime workers on the shore and on the ships, in peace and in war. Mr Deputy-Speaker, I pay tribute to you as a former merchant mariner qualified in marine subjects and to your efforts on behalf of mariners in the Hunter region and other parts of Australia. I commend the motion to the House.

**Mr ORKOPOULOS** (Swansea) [1.43 p.m.]: I have great pleasure in supporting the important motion moved by the honourable member for Newcastle. I want to discuss briefly the considerable contribution merchant mariners played in times of war. Fifty-eight years ago just eight miles off the coast of New South Wales the stern of the MV *Nimbin* was blown away when it struck a mine which had been laid by the German raider *Penguin* a few weeks earlier. She sank in a few minutes taking seven of her crew, including Captain William Bysantson, to the bottom of the sea. *Nimbin* had become the first Australian merchant ship on Australia's east coast to be lost to enemy action in World War II. Some 18 months later BHP's *Iron Chieftain* was torpedoed by Japanese submarine I24 under the command of Commodore Hanabusa. On the evening of 3 June 1942 the I24 had been cruising on the surface recharging its batteries when it unsuccessfully attacked the Howard Smiths SS *Age* at about 9 p.m.

The *Age* made full speed and it reached Port Newcastle safely some four hours later. About 90 minutes later, with the I24 still on the surface, the lookout reported a ship heading south, the *Iron Chieftain*. The I24's first torpedo struck the *Iron Chieftain* amidships. She sank in a few minutes taking 13 crew members, including Captain Haddelsey, with her. Twelve survivors made it to rafts and were picked up the following day by HMAS *Wilcannia*. I am very pleased to report to the House that one of the survivors, Don Burchell of Belmont, is not only a good friend of mine but also a loyal member of the Australian Labor Party. I am pleased to give him that recognition. Let us recall that the war was happening in secret. Only the families and officials of those directly involved knew of the casualties. We lived in ignorance, oblivious to the attacks on Australian ships and lives lost just a few hours away. Approximately 14,000 Australian merchant mariners served during World War II, some under Allied flags. We know that 54 merchant ships were attacked in Australian waters and that 38 of them were sunk. We know that Japanese submarines wrought havoc on the merchant ships up and down Australia's east coast between June and August 1942.

Merchant mariners and naval personnel need each other in times of crisis for Australia's defence. We thank them for their contribution. We know not how many suffered. We know not how many made the ultimate sacrifice and we know not on which ocean beds they may rest. But we know that many merchant mariners gave their lives in defence of Australia that we might one day be free. I am filled with horror at the appalling political tactics of the Howard Government in attacking the rights of maritime workers in the Maritime Union of Australia dispute, with Peter Reith unleashing his dogs and men with balaclavas taking action against maritime workers and against the memory of merchant seaman who fought so hard and sacrificed so much in the protection of Australia. The motion should be supported. Regrettably, I note that there will be no speakers from the Opposition—indeed, there is not a single member of the Opposition in the Chamber. Be that as it may, the House should support the motion and each year we should commemorate National Maritime Day.

**Mr GAUDRY** (Newcastle—Parliamentary Secretary) [1.48 p.m.], in reply: As the author of the article referred to earlier, Mr Allen Oliver, said:

To a landsman the oceans divide the world; to a seaman they unite it.

That brings together the importance of the maritime industry and merchant mariners to the development of Australia. It also is relevant to the camaraderie between merchant mariners and the sacrifices they made in times of war. The Maritime Union of Australia and the International Transport Workers Federation continue to pressure for conditions of work and safety for mariners who work across the world, and continue to advocate against the increasing use of flag of convenience ships as a method of avoiding regulation and responsibilities so that operators can cut costs to the detriment of crews and of the people who are dependent upon them. I quote from an article that appeared in the *Independent* of 26 February 1996, for it demonstrates the difficulties in pursuing these flag of convenience groups in respect of their responsibilities when crew members or the environment suffer as a result of their actions. The *Independent* article, talking about catastrophic oil pollution following the grounding of the *Sea Empress*, noted:

It was built in Spain, owned by a Norwegian, registered in Cyprus, managed from Glasgow, chartered by the French, crewed by the Russians, flying a Liberian flag, carrying an American cargo, and pouring oil onto the Welsh coast. But who takes the blame?

That highlights the importance of this issue for all of us. The establishment of International Maritime Day and its recognition on 24 September each year give us the opportunity not only to celebrate our merchant mariners and to note their contributions in times of war, but to continue, along with the Australian Maritime Union, to advocate for improvement in shipping working conditions and a return to a position in which Australia has a place as a national merchant mariner. I thank the Deputy Premier and the honourable members representing the electorates of Monaro, Maitland, Heffron, Wallsend and Swansea for their contributions to the debate and for broadening the discussion of issues regarding heritage and history, the role of the international maritime organisation and the enormous sacrifices of our merchant mariners in times of war. I commend the motion to the House.

**Motion agreed to.**

[Mr Acting-Speaker (Mr Mills) left the chair at 1.52 p.m. The House resumed at 2.15 p.m.]



## MINISTRY

**Mr CARR:** I advise the House that, in the absence of the Minister for Public Works and Services, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Citizenship, the Minister for Transport, and Minister for Roads will answer questions on his behalf. In the absence of the Minister for Local Government, Minister for Regional Development, and Minister for Rural Affairs, the Minister for Small Business, and Minister for Tourism will answer questions on his behalf.

## SELECT COMMITTEE ON SALINITY

### Establishment

#### Motion, by leave, by Mr Amery agreed to:

That:

- (1) a select committee be appointed to inquire and report with the following terms of reference:  
to examine:
  - (a) business opportunities created by salinity that contribute to the improved management of groundwater recharge and discharge areas;
  - (b) the options for salinity management that are available to local councils, including but not limited to, planning instruments, building codes, urban water management plans, differential rating, development of local council expertise and resource-sharing between councils;
  - (c) any barriers to adoption of salinity management strategies by local councils, and means to overcome the barriers;
  - (d) the adequacy of the Commonwealth's response and contribution to addressing salinity;
- (2) That such committee consist of Ms Allan, Mr Martin, Mr Black, Mr Hickey, Mr Anderson, Mr Windsor, Mr McGrane, Mr Maguire, Mr D. L. Page; and
- (3) That the committee have power to make visits of inspection within the State of New South Wales and other States and Territories of Australia.

## BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

### Routine of Business

*[During notices of motions]*

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! If Government members object to the notice of motion being given by the honourable member for Lismore, they are at liberty to give notices of motions which shed a different light on the issue. It is discourteous to complain about notices of motions being given by members of the Opposition.

## PETITIONS

### North Head Quarantine Station

Petition praying that the head lease proposal for North Head Quarantine Station be opposed, received from **Mr Barr**.

### Willoughby Paddocks Rezoning

Petition praying that the Legislative Assembly will advocate for the retention of all vacant land in the area historically known as the Willoughby Paddocks and its development as public parkland for the enjoyment of the community, received from **Mr Collins**.

### McDonald's Moore Park Restaurant

Petition praying for opposition to the construction of a McDonald's restaurant on Moore Park, received from **Ms Moore**.

**Surry Hills Policing**

Petition praying for increased police presence in the Surry Hills area, received from **Ms Moore**.

**Redfern, Darlington and Chippendale Policing**

Petition praying for increased police presence in the Redfern, Darlington and Chippendale areas, received from **Ms Moore**.

**Kings Cross Policing**

Petition praying for increased police presence in the Kings Cross area, received from **Ms Moore**.

**East Sydney and Darlinghurst Policing**

Petition praying for increased police presence in the East Sydney and Darlinghurst areas, received from **Ms Moore**.

**Paddington Policing**

Petition praying that the House prevent the closure of Paddington Police Station and praying for increased police presence in the Paddington area, received from **Ms Moore**.

**Kings Cross and Woolloomooloo Policing**

Petition praying for increased police strength at Kings Cross local area command and police foot patrols in Woolloomooloo, received from **Ms Moore**.

**Manly Hospital Paediatric Services**

Petition expressing concern at the decision of the Northern Sydney Area Health Service to discontinue paediatric services at Manly Hospital and praying that full services at Manly Hospital be maintained, received from **Mr Barr**.

**Wallsend After Hours Primary Care Service**

Petition praying that assistance be provided to enable the continuation of after hours primary care services to residents of Wallsend and surrounding districts, received from **Mr Mills**.

**Macksville Hospital Funding**

Petition praying that sufficient recurrent funding be allocated to Macksville and District Hospital to enable restoration of hospital services to the level that existed prior to cutbacks instituted by the Mid North Coast Area Health Service, received from **Mr Stoner**.

**Seaforth TAFE Closure**

Petition praying for opposition to the closure of Seaforth TAFE, received from **Mr Barr**.

**Pittwater Road, Narrabeen Speed Limit**

Petition praying that a speed limit of 60 kilometres per hour be introduced on Pittwater Road, Narrabeen, received from **Mr Brogden**.

**Windsor Road Upgrading**

Petitions praying that Windsor Road be upgraded and widened within the next two financial years, received from **Mr Merton**, **Mr Richardson** and **Mr Rozzoli**.

**Oxford Street Pedestrian Crossing**

Petition praying that an additional signalised pedestrian crossing be installed on Oxford Street, Paddington, received from **Ms Moore**.

**Moore Park Light Rail**

Petition praying that consideration be given to the construction of a light rail transport system for Moore Park, received from **Ms Moore**.

**Eastern Distributor Tunnel Ventilation**

Petition praying that air purification systems be installed on the Eastern Distributor and cross-city tunnel, received from **Ms Moore**.

**Moore Park Landscaping**

Petition calling for the permanent removal of car parking from Moore Park east, and praying that Moore Park be landscaped to meet the increased need of local communities for passive recreation space, received from **Ms Moore**.

**Redfern Bus Services**

Petition praying for an urgent increase in the reliability and adequacy of Redfern bus services, received from **Ms Moore**.

**Woolloomooloo Wharf Redevelopment**

Petition praying that the Woolloomooloo wharf redevelopment project include provision for a ferry wharf, received from **Ms Moore**.

**Old-growth Forests Protection**

Petition praying that consideration be given to the permanent protection of old-growth forests and all other areas of high conservation value, and to the implementation of tree planting strategies, received from **Ms Moore**.

**Animal Experimentation**

Petition praying that the practice of supplying stray animals to universities and research institutions for experimentation be opposed, received from **Ms Moore**.

**Animal Vivisection**

Petition praying that the House will totally and unconditionally abolish animal vivisection on scientific, medical and ethical grounds, and that a new system be introduced whereby veterinary students are apprenticed to practising veterinary surgeons, received from **Ms Moore**.

**White City Site Rezoning Proposal**

Petition praying that any rezoning of the White City site be opposed, received from **Ms Moore**.

**COMMITTEE ON THE OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN AND THE  
POLICE INTEGRITY COMMISSION****Report**

**Mr Lynch**, as Chairman, tabled the report entitled "Follow-up on the Review of Schedule 1 of the Ombudsman Act 1974", dated August 2000.

**Ordered to be printed.**

## QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

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### MICHAEL JAMES RYAN PRISON SENTENCE

**Mrs CHIKAROVSKI:** My question is directed to the Premier. Why is it that more than a month after Michael James Ryan was sentenced to a minimum period of five years and 10 months for killing Arthur Wong and Susan Barnes the Wong family is still waiting not just for the Premier to reply to its representations but for the Director of Public Prosecutions to decide whether to seek leave to appeal the sentence and ensure that justice is done?

**Mr CARR:** I will seek advice from my colleague and report back to the House.

### PRISON DRUG SEIZURES

**Ms BEAMER:** My question without notice is to the Minister for Corrective Services. What is the latest information on drug seizures in New South Wales prisons?

**Mr Hartcher:** And prison escapes.

**Mr Tink:** They are so high they jump over fences.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I place the honourable member for Gosford on two calls to order. I call the honourable member for Epping to order.

**Mr DEBUS:** At present, prison escapes are running at the lowest level since the Coalition was in office. I can today report to the House the results of a major drug operation last weekend targeting visitors to one of the State's largest corrective services complexes. This operation was carefully planned and executed at the Silverwater correctional complex. The exercise was the responsibility of the department's highly trained and effective Drug Dog Detection Unit. This unit is at the front line of the unceasing battle to fight drug trafficking in our State's prisons. In the first seven months of this year officers of this unit searched thousands of visitors, vehicles, inmates, cells and prison buildings and grounds. The total amount of drugs seized across the system in this period includes almost 1½ kilograms of cannabis, 545 prescribed tablets, 89 grams of heroin, 5.8 grams of amphetamines and almost 450 syringes. A total of 109 visitors have been charged by police.

This strike force is evidence of the good work that has flowed from the Drug Summit. The work of the unit has been significantly boosted with \$3.725 million allocated over four years from the Drug Summit funding to recruit, train and employ additional specialist staff. The recent graduation of a further eight dog handlers has taken the number of detection teams in this statewide unit to 33. By the end of this financial year this will have risen to a total of 40 teams. I am proud to say that the unit has proved to be so efficient that its officers and dogs are now assisting the police in a number of drug operations. This year they have supported operations in Coffs Harbour, Lithgow, Newcastle and, most recently, at Bathurst and Peak Hill, where police smashed a major truckies' amphetamine ring. Of course, Corrective Services will continue to provide any assistance possible to the police in their work to break up drug production and distribution networks.

The results of the drug detection unit's work at Silverwater last weekend is staggering. In the course of an intensive two-day operation more than 400 visitors to the complex were screened for drugs by passive alert dogs. After positive indications by the dogs, more than 60 property searches were conducted and 67 vehicles were searched. This operation was responsible for the largest single haul of drugs ever seized in a New South Wales prison. In a record bust, a male visitor's vehicle was searched, revealing that his Holden Commodore contained all the ingredients for a mobile amphetamine factory. When officers opened the boot of the vehicle they found 2,520 pseudoephedrine tablets, 1,260 Sudafed tablets, a set of digital scales, glass containers and a test tube catalogue, a syringe and an open bottle of Bacardi rum. I am advised that these drugs and implements are consistent with the manufacture of amphetamines, or speed. I understand that this quantity of tablets can be distilled to produce amphetamines with a street value of more than \$200,000. In gaol currency this could be worth up to three times as much. The matter is now in the hands of investigating police.

While all drugs are a danger in a prison environment, inmates high on drugs, known as uppers, present a particularly serious management problem. Prisoners who use them are pumped up with nowhere to go. Their

bravado is artificially boosted and their capacity to reason is reduced. They pose a significant threat to themselves, to each other and, of course, to the officers. I am advised that as a result of this operation and smaller similar operations at Junee, Lithgow and Grafton gaols police have so far charged a dozen individuals with drug possession, trafficking drugs in prison, and knife and vehicle offences. As a result of these operations a substantial cache of drugs—including 30 grams of cannabis, 3,786 tablets, including pseudoephedrine, Sudafed, Valium, ecstasy and methadone, and almost 50 syringes—was seized before it could get anywhere near an inmate.

I take this opportunity to formally commend the officers for a job well done. As a direct result of their efforts a large body of drugs, other contraband and weapons have been taken off the streets and kept out of our prisons. This again demonstrates the effectiveness of government strategies to fight the scourge of drugs in the prison system. This financial year the Government will spend more than \$4 million on drug detection—double the \$2 million that was spent at the end of the period of the previous Coalition Government. This operation illustrates that every day of the week somewhere in the State a mother, a partner or a best mate of an inmate has been convinced to try to smuggle drugs into a prison. Often, unfortunately, they are shamelessly manipulated and coerced by inmates for this purpose.

Having exhausted all the obvious possibilities, visitors are now resorting to trying to smuggle drugs inside the handles of babies' prams, inside nappies, in bras and hairbands, in dentures and behind an eye patch, in the tongues of sneakers and in false pockets. They have gone so far as to soak cigarette filters in heroin. I again warn these people that it is just not worth it. The Drug Dog Detection Unit is in the gaols around the clock, searching visitors, inmates, vehicles, cells, buildings and prison grounds. If people are caught trying to bring drugs, alcohol, syringes or other contraband into gaol, they are handed over to police. Then they are subject to the full force of the law. The Government has introduced and enforced the toughest laws in the country to penalise people seeking to smuggle drugs or implements into prison, increasing the penalty from six months to two years imprisonment. Of course, I am aware of the pressure inmates can place on their visitors to do the wrong thing and break the law. I assure them that unless they want to end up in the next cell, the risk is not worth it.

### OLYMPIC GAMES RAIL SERVICES

**Mr J. H. TURNER:** My question is directed to the Premier. As he has repeatedly conceded that rail services cannot be guaranteed during the Olympics, will he now give an undertaking that the thousands of families across the State who have saved for months so they can buy their Olympic tickets will be compensated if they miss their chosen events due to rail disruptions?

**Mr CARR:** Soon there must come a time when the Opposition starts being positive about the Olympics. I recall vividly in September 1993 members on the other side of the House going to Monte Carlo to support the bid. John Fahey, Bruce Baird, the whole team, made the pitch for Sydney to the International Olympic Committee. As Opposition leader, I said if we were not to get the Games, if we were to lose to Beijing, I would make no criticism of the bid process because I fully supported it. I give Rod McGeoch, Nick Greiner, Bruce Baird and John Fahey credit for the success of the bid. I have said that publicly, and I have said it without any inhibitions of any kind.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I call the honourable member for Hornsby to order.

**Mr CARR:** But there must come a time when the former Coalition Government, who put the bid together, starts getting positive about the Olympics.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I call the honourable member for Oxley to order for the second time.

**Mr CARR:** I concede that it took a Labor Government to build the facilities, because apart from the Aquatic Centre, which opened in 1994, nothing stood at Homebush Bay when the Labor Party came to government. We put it all together. As a subtheme, I give a bit of credit to the bloke who took ministerial responsibility for making it happen. Nothing stood at Homebush Bay when I appointed him as the Minister, apart from the Aquatic Centre.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I call the honourable member for North Shore to order.

**Mr CARR:** The Minister for the Olympics made the hard decisions.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I call the honourable member for North Shore to order for the second time.

**Mr CARR:** He made hard decisions that resulted in, effectively, a new city at Homebush Bay.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I place the honourable member for Murrumbidgee on two calls to order.

**Mr CARR:** The Olympic Village, the stadia, the multiuse arena, the Superdome and all the rest were built under a Labor Government.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I call the honourable member for Hornsby to order for the second time. I place the honourable member for Myall Lakes on two calls to order.

**Mr CARR:** Why does the Coalition not start saying positive things about the Olympic Games?

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! There is far too much interjection from both sides of the House. I place all members who have been called to order on three calls to order.

**Mr CARR:** Even with the torch now in New South Wales they cannot bring themselves to say a positive thing about the Olympics. Honourable members would recall that on Tuesday in this House I said that the transport system will, of necessity, be under enormous pressure when we have, as will happen during the Olympics, no fewer than an estimated 700,000 visitors from interstate and overseas to our city. Precisely because of those concerns we appointed Ron Christie as Co-ordinator General. Because we anticipated the pressure that the transport system would be under as people travel to the great cluster of facilities at Homebush Bay, we found the money to build the new rail link to that centre, and designed and built an award-winning railway station, so that people could be moved as they are moved into and out of that area during great sporting events or the Royal Easter Show.

Platforms as good as the Olympics and Paralympics to promote not only New South Wales and the great city of Sydney but also Australia to the world should at this stage invite bipartisan support. Surely the Opposition can get behind this. The Opposition is so lacking in any sense of corporate responsibility for this great event that there has not been one occasion on which the Leader of the Opposition, or her deputy, has found—

[Interruption]

**Mr Yeadon:** Peter would have been behind us.

**Mr CARR:** Yes. By the way, yesterday I gave his book a little bit of promotion. However, the latest news is that the Leader of the Opposition is to print a book in reply. It will be a his-and-her edition on the Liberal Party, like the works by Zachariah and Maggie. It will be rather like Gough Whitlam and Sir John Kerr, in *The Truth of the Matter* and *Matters for Judgment*. I open the competition for the title for her book. Today someone in my office suggested *My Brilliant Career*.

**Mr Hartcher:** Point of order: The Premier's response is totally irrelevant to the question. There was no interjection from this side of the House.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I uphold the point of order.

**Mr CARR:** The transport system will be under enormous pressure. There will be congestion, of necessity, with 700,000 extra journeys.

[Interruption]

The Leader of the Opposition interjected again. Another suggested title for her book is *Silence of the Lambs*, except that we know that some of them are sensitive about animal references. Of course, other suggested titles are *Chicka Chicka Bang Bang*, or *Kamikaze Kerry* subtitled *The Nogarotto Touch: Anatomy of a Massacre*.

#### RURAL AND REGIONAL HEALTH SERVICES

**Mr MARTIN:** My question without notice is to the Minister for Health. What is the Government doing to enhance aeromedical retrieval and other health services for families in rural and regional New South Wales?

**Mr KNOWLES:** The honourable member for Bathurst knows, as do all members from country electorates, that over the past 12 months there has been a substantial move in providing new medical services in rural and regional New South Wales. Following the Sinclair report there has been a raft of new multipurpose services, increases in funding for the isolated patients travel accommodation and assistance scheme, and many other things.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I remind the honourable member for Oxley that he is on three calls to order.

**Mr KNOWLES:** Today I report that we are just two off the magic 100 overseas-trained doctors who have been appointed to areas of need in rural and regional areas, in towns that have not had a doctor for years.

**Mr Scully:** What about Wellington?

**Mr KNOWLES:** I was in Wellington the other day with Cabinet. We received a rousing reception from the community. I met with the community about Dr Ferrari, who has the support of the New South Wales Medical Board to stay in that town for as long as he likes. It might help if the Leader of the National Party would write to the Commonwealth Government asking it to issue a visa enabling Dr Ferrari to stay, so that that town can keep its doctor. The Leader of the National Party should not talk about Dr Ferrari unless he knows the facts. The medical board wants him to stay. When the Premier and I were in Wellington we also launched the new NRMA CareFlight helicopter service for the Central West. We went to Orange and celebrated the opening of the base in that town, along with the honourable member for Orange and other people from the town.

That terrific new service received the backing of the community through fundraising. The service will fill in some of the blanks that have been the hallmark of aeromedical services in New South Wales over the years. Next Friday week the honourable member for Tamworth, the honourable member for Northern Tablelands and the Parliamentary Secretary for Health will be launching the New England north-west service supported by the Westpac Surf Lifesaving Association. We are putting aeromedical services into country regions around the State—last Monday in Orange, next Friday week in Tamworth. We are covering the State and filling in the black holes.

I point out that the aeromedical services plan is based on high standards of accreditation and medical excellence. For example, the NRMA CareFlight has a track record of more than 8,500 missions. It is the only non-hospital organisation in Australia to hold teaching accreditation and it holds accreditation in the United States of America. Its pilots have a minimum of 5,000 flying hours. The service employs highly trained clinical staff who are eminently fit for the purpose. As a consequence of that terrific track record I was saddened to learn that following Monday's launch a non-accredited organisation trading as Central West Rescue Helicopter Service or Rotorlink or Central West area medical association had the gall to be critical of CareFlight and, by implication, the Government's Statewide plan.

Rotorlink seems to be making a habit of trying to whip up local support in an effort to put pressure on governments to give it a contract to run independent retrieval services. Over the past year regional members would be aware that in Bathurst, Lithgow and Dubbo it has been stirring up locals, raising money and support to run what would be effectively an independent service. We would all agree that just because one owns a helicopter does not mean that one is competent to run an aeromedical retrieval service. The contracts that the Government has with organisations such as CareFlight, Surf Life Saving, Child Flight and South Care have regard to competency, training, clinical capacity, accreditation and an ability to be part of an integrated Statewide network co-ordinated centrally by the Adult Medical Retrieval Unit, which operates out of St George Hospital. There is no room for loose cannons or cowboys in this complex, highly professional and at times life-critical business.

I am advised that most recently Stuart Caton, the public face of Central West Rescue Helicopter Service or Rotorlink, may be in the process of shifting his attention away from New South Wales and trying to establish a similar operation in Tasmania, rural Victoria or Emerald in Queensland. Apparently, Mr Caton has been in Devonport whipping up the locals, telling them that he intends to relocate his operations from Dubbo. I understand that Mr Caton may have asserted that he has an authorised service in New South Wales and an accreditation agreement with a Victorian university. He certainly indicated that he had a close relationship with Dubbo Base Hospital.

For the record, Rotorlink does not operate an authorised service in New South Wales. It certainly does not have any retrieval contracts with the Government. Rotorlink or, for that matter, Central West Rescue

Helicopter Service has never been assigned a retrieval task by the medical retrieval unit. I can advise the House that the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission is currently investigating misleading representations in the Rotorlink or Central West Rescue Helicopter Service brochure regarding its claim to have specialist doctors. Earlier this year its principal sponsor, Westfund Health Insurance, pulled out of its sponsorship agreement because of Rotorlink's refusal to allow a confidential audit of its safety and medical protocols.

There is no way that I, the Government or, more importantly, the professionals in the field could vouch for the quality, and subsequently the safety, of any activities Rotorlink or the Central West Rescue Helicopter Service may undertake. The people in rural and regional New South Wales will be pleased that there is now an aeromedical services plan operated by some of the best people in the business anywhere in the world to cater for their needs. The plan operates on the principles of quality, safe practices, clinical excellence and risk minimisation. Of course, Rotorlink does not form part of that plan. For what it is worth, given that Mr Caton is apparently trying to set up business in at least Tasmania, and it seems Victoria and Queensland, I am sure the many central west residents who may have contributed funds to Rotorlink have a legitimate right to ask what has happened to their money.

### TAMWORTH SHEEP ABATTOIR

**Mr WINDSOR:** My question is addressed to the Premier. Can the Premier inform the House of any progress relating to Peel Valley Exporters' proposal to establish a sheep abattoir in Tamworth?

**Mr CARR:** I am delighted to say that I have received representations from the honourable member for Tamworth and his local council on this matter.

**Mr O'Farrell:** What have you done about them?

**Mr CARR:** The Deputy Leader of the Opposition has asked me what I have done about those representations. That is the nature of my answer.

*[Interruption]*

Members opposite should not worry about my answer. Let us get to the substance of my answer. Let us work together to get jobs for the people of New South Wales. I answer this question on the platform of, first, the lowest unemployment rate in Australia; secondly, the Government having achieved its job creation targets for the State; and, thirdly, a veritable boom in apprenticeships and traineeships, as I demonstrated in the House yesterday. In that context, I said to our bureaucrats, "Let us take the proposal, about which the honourable member made representations, backed by his local council, and see if we can make it a case study in prompt consideration by local and State authorities."

I am pleased to report that both this proposal and another proposal have resulted in a new employment base for the great city of Tamworth. These two projects—and I am about to report them to the House—represent investment of about \$12.5 million in the local economy and will create 235 full-time jobs. Members opposite are all feeling blue, they have all gone into a deep depression. The Minister for Health should give them some antidepressants. I know the honourable member for Tamworth will be very pleased because the first project is the one he raised specifically.

Peel Valley Exporters, part of the J. S. A. Jackson and Sons group of companies, is a small stock processing facility producing lamb and sheep products. This processing and boning operation processes 2,500 lambs and sheep per day, five days a week, and specialises in lambs for the domestic and export markets. Representations were made on this project, but it can now be ticked off. The other Tamworth project is the first phase of an expansion program by the American giant Cargills, which is leasing the former council abattoir. Further stages will see the company double its operations within the next 18 months.

*[Interruption]*

If the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is a vegetarian, that is a matter between him and his chef. If he thinks that I will discriminate against projects that process meat because of his reservations, he is wrong. It is a matter for consumers to determine for themselves. What an extraordinary interjection! This company is a major supplier of beef products for the Woolworths chain. The expansion will see the creation of 65 jobs and an increased focus on value adding to products in the domestic and export markets. These two projects are a great win for the people of Tamworth. They will expand the jobs base and economic foundation of this important regional city.



I take this opportunity to announce—and honourable members will be pleased to hear this—that one of Europe's largest financial institutions, Scandia, the global Swedish funds management company, after looking at all the cities in Australia, has chosen to base its headquarters in Sydney. Sydney has 65 per cent of the nation's financial industry. Why would that company not come here, given that under this Government our total liabilities have been reduced by almost \$7 billion? The Coalition Government—that appalling economic manager—chalked up \$6 billion in budget deficits. Even with the sale of GIO and the State Bank the Coalition Government could not reduce the State's liabilities.

When the Coalition was in government, total State liabilities rose by \$4 billion. Under this Government total State liabilities have gone down by \$7 billion. Honourable members know how reluctant I am to make partisan points in such exchanges. However, that comparison demonstrates that this is continuing the great New South Wales Labor tradition of good, sound financial management. We know that it is a burden for Liberal members to attend Liberal Party branch meetings, where there are more people at the official table out front than in the body of the hall. I know it is hard to have anything to talk about at these gatherings, so I have produced a check list, a bookmark, of the State's economic and financial indicators.

The check list is written in simple language so that Liberal members will not have trouble using it. I would not make the same claim about their National Party colleagues who sit with them. Members opposite can carry the bookmark in their pockets. They can pull it out and refer to it, and tell their branch members that New South Wales has 75 per cent of the headquarters of domestic and foreign banks in Australia, 70 per cent of the information technology industry, 41 per cent—our share—of information technology professionals, and 44 per cent of Asia and Pacific international call centres. All these indicators have emerged, strong as they are, in the past 5½ years.

#### **RAIL SYSTEM GRAFFITI AND RUBBISH REMOVAL**

**Miss BURTON:** My question without notice is addressed to the Minister for Transport. What is the latest information on the Government's efforts to clean up graffiti and rubbish on the rail system?

**Mr SCULLY:** Unfortunately, it is a fact of life that public spaces like the railways attract rubbish and graffiti. Most people do not leave their rubbish next to railway tracks. Most people do not spray graffiti around public places. Unfortunately, a small minority of people treat the railways like a public dump. They make some places along the railway tracks into eyesores, and it is very unfair to commuters and to local residents. Removing graffiti costs our transport agencies millions of dollars every year. The State Rail Authority spends \$5 million a year on graffiti removal, while the Rail Access Corporation has a \$2 million annual budget to remove graffiti. The Rail Access Corporation endeavours to remove abusive and offensive graffiti within 24 hours of it being reported. In addition, it removes all other inner metropolitan graffiti within one week and outer metropolitan graffiti within a month.

In recent times the Government has undertaken a range of fresh initiatives to clean up graffiti in public places. The Rail Access Corporation provides \$500,000 corridor improvement grants to councils and property owners to clean up the rail corridor. Last year's program funded clean-up operations in co-operation with a number of councils, including Ryde, Kiama, Campbelltown, Fairfield, Liverpool, Blacktown, Newcastle, Wyong, Penrith and Shellharbour. The scheme provides matched funding for a range of beautification and restoration activities: graffiti removal, tree planting, landscaping, mural work, weed control and rubbish removal. The rail agency is also implementing the 72-hour rapid removal program, as announced by the Premier in April this year. This \$2.5 million project will include the rail corridors.

State Rail has also developed a strategy to make the stabling yards more secure to prevent attacks on train carriages. This strategy involves security patrols, fencing, lighting, motion detection and camera upgrades. As all honourable members are well aware, next month Sydney will be putting on the greatest sporting event in the world. The rail system will be busier than ever before in the history of this State. During the Games period 32 million people will take the train, either as commuters or Olympic spectators. Normally, CityRail would take just 12 million people. With the eyes of the world on Sydney and New South Wales, it is an opportune moment to take our anti-graffiti initiatives one step further.

Honourable members would be interested to hear that a total of 320 cleaners have begun an intensive two-month clean-up of the rail corridor, and a further 15 workers in three teams are removing graffiti. The initial work is focused on removing graffiti and rubbish along the main Olympic corridors. I am pleased to be able to report that this program will be extended to all metropolitan rail lines after the Olympic Games. This is part of a

\$6.5 million campaign to clean up rail property throughout the entire electrified network. The clean-up teams have been contracted by rail services. Until September the workers will be eliminating graffiti on the western and Cumberland lines to Carlingford, and removing rubbish from across the network bordered by Waterfall, Emu Plains, and Cowan.

Earlier this month three anti-graffiti teams began work between Penrith and Central stations. The first team removes the graffiti, and the second team prepares the site for the application of a special protective wax-based coating. Each anti-graffiti team works from 8.00 a.m. until sunset painting and protecting between four to five kilometres of corridor each day. They are removing graffiti from retaining walls, signal boxes, substations, small buildings and fences. They are picking up litter, cans, bottles and papers and removing vegetation and weeds as they go. Honourable members on both sides should be aware of the concern that they are filling up about 20 dumpsters of rubbish each day from our rail corridors. I am sure that all honourable members would agree that is absolutely disgraceful. We should not have to employ that number of people to do the job, but a very small minority of inconsiderate people are using our rail network as their personal dump site.

I remind honourable members that this rubbish is on the corridors, not on the stations or the trains. Every night the equivalent of four backyard swimming pools of rubbish are removed from our trains. In addition, every day 20 dumpsters full of rubbish are being taken off our rail corridor. That situation is appalling. My message to commuters is: I thank the vast majority of commuters who are doing the right thing and taking their rubbish with them. But to the small number of inconsiderate commuters I ask that you please do the right thing by your fellow commuters and take your rubbish with you. The teams are currently located at Mort Street, Granville, cleaning graffiti off a large retaining wall, and at Penrith clearing rubbish from railway tracks. This work will continue after the Olympics.

The graffiti task force will continue to operate after the Olympics. During the September Olympics period a graffiti task force of approximately 20 staff will remove graffiti from around the rail network as it appears. In addition, a clean-up task force of 40 staff will clean the network as required every night, including city underground stations. That is 320 staff engaged for that two-month period up to the Olympic Games, 60 during the Olympic games to remove graffiti and rubbish as it appears, and a further \$2.5 million is being allocated post-Games to ensure that we continue a process of keeping our network as clean as we possibly can.

### PRISON SECURITY

**Mr HUMPHERSON:** My question is directed to the Minister for Corrective Services. Did two prisoners escape from Long Bay gaol yesterday using doonas—

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I call the Minister for Transport to order.

**Mr HUMPHERSON:** Did two prisoners escape from Long Bay gaol yesterday using doonas in broad daylight to scale a security fence because of the inadequate security systems provided by Advanced Security Systems, the same company whose relationship with former Commander of Security David Owens led to his removal over corruption allegations?

**Mr DEBUS:** A question about an escape that actually occurred is better than last week's allegation about the cost to the Department of Corrective Services of thousands of dollars for the purchase of McDonald's hamburgers for hunger strikers. Apparently the Opposition is unaware that hunger strikers do not eat. Each year 16,500 people serve a sentence in New South Wales prisons and about 50,000 people come under the supervision of the department in court complexes. There are 100,000 inmate movements under the supervision of Corrective Services between courts, gaols, hospitals and so on. Every one of those moves involves a potential for an escape bid. In spite of those figures and the recent increase in the prison population, the escape rate last year was the lowest level since the keeping of reliable records commenced in the early 1970s. For this financial year the rate is even lower than at the same time last year.

The Government regards every escape as serious. Therefore, I am pleased to report to the House that approximately 90 per cent of escapees are recaptured almost immediately. The figures, small as they are, include offenders who escape from the dock and are caught before they leave the courtroom. The fellow who climbed the fence at Cessnock gaol, got to the barrel on top of the fence, fell off on the other side and broke both his ankles was counted as an escapee in these figures. Despite all the increases in the responsibility of the Department of Corrective Services, the number of people who escape or abscond each year is 100 less than it was at the end of the Coalition Government's term of office, which suggests that the department's security systems are working pretty well.

### INTERNET ALCOHOL SALES

**Mr GREENE:** My question without notice is to the Minister for Gaming and Racing. How is the Government working to restrict the sale of alcohol to minors via the Internet?

**Mr FACE:** I thank the honourable member for Georges River for his very timely question and his continued interest in matters concerning the liquor industry. The New South Wales Government has real concerns about minors gaining access to alcohol. The secondary purchase of alcohol for minors is one of our great problems. In the United States a worrying trend has emerged, and no doubt it will emerge here. Young people have been found to be ordering large quantities of liquor, including beer, through the Internet. They are able to arrange home deliveries to their homes and under-age parties via the Internet. As I have said, New South Wales could face a similar problem unless we act now.

Prior to the explosion of new technologies it was relatively simple to prohibit young people from obtaining liquor over the counter. A retailer simply asked for proof of age and it was possible to recognise that the voice on the phone was a young voice. But how does a retailer know who is ordering over the Internet? The Government regards the sale of liquor to under-age young people as a very serious offence—so serious that it now attracts a gaol sentence. Anyone convicted of this serious offence faces a fine of \$11,000 and/or 12 months imprisonment.

The problem with Internet sales of liquor is that it is extremely difficult to identify the buyer, as evidenced in the United States of America. Honourable members will be pleased to hear that the Government proposes to combat this problem through a number of measures. From 1 September licensees will be required to include a notice on their Internet sites warning purchasers not to buy liquor for minors. I will be consulting with the industry, but I propose to bring in new regulations to the Liquor Act later this year. Any person purchasing liquor over the Internet will be required to provide his or her date of birth, and the information will be recorded with his or her order. The date provided will be matched with proof of age when the liquor is delivered. Proof-of-age documentation must be sighted by the person delivering the liquor. Liquor will only be delivered to the person who placed the order and there will be no deliveries to empty residences or offices, a problem that has emerged in the United States.

It will be illegal to leave deliveries outside premises, even if the order is prepaid with credit card. Most importantly, minors who purchase liquor via the Internet will face fines of up to \$2,200 and people caught delivering liquor to minors will face fines of up to \$5,500 and/or, in cases of large quantities, a fine of \$11,000 and/or 12 months gaol. The Carr Government has worked with the industry to strengthen the under-age drinking laws in this State, and deserves congratulations. The problem of young people obtaining liquor inside licensed premises has been much reduced; however, it is a more serious problem outside licensed premises. It is important that the Internet approach to liquor sales does not erode these worthwhile efforts. I can assure the House that the Government will be watching this development and will take further action if necessary to control Internet liquor sales.

### ELIZABETH BAY MARINA DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION

**Ms MOORE:** My question is addressed to the Minister for Urban Affairs and Planning. Following the Minister's announcement yesterday that he will take over marina planning powers, will he inform the House what that will mean for the Elizabeth Bay marina development application which is presently before South Sydney Council?

**Dr REFSHAUGE:** The honourable member for Bligh has raised a very important issue about the marina development. As I announced to the House yesterday, from now on any marina developments in Sydney and the waterways will have to come to me as the consent authority. We want to be very careful that any marine development is seen not only in the context of the local government area but also in the context of the whole of the harbour and Sydney's waterways. With regard to the marina that the honourable member has highlighted, the process was commenced before my announcement. However, the Government has made the position very clear, and the Premier has said that he will ensure that every agency involved will oppose the development of that marina. We are very keen that the development should not go ahead.

### DARNICK TRAIN SERVICE

**Mr BLACK:** My question without notice is addressed to the Premier. What is the Government's response to claims that families in Darnick, in western New South Wales, have been denied access to the passing train service?

**Mr CARR:** It is a very interesting point that members would not fail to notice that this week the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party has not asked a question. After the blunders of past weeks, there have been no questions from him this week. We had a question today about transport, and on Tuesday there were two questions about transport asked by the Leader of the Opposition, but there have been no questions from the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party. Remember when you were in kindergarten and the kid who soiled himself was put down the back of the classroom? This is something like that. *ABC News Online* reports a nervous little bite by the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party. He is back into the news bulletins today. He is putting his toe into the water to see whether it is possible to come back out. He criticised the Government because trains are not stopping in the little town of Darnick in the State's Far West. The temporary station installed there is considered by the operators of the train to be unsafe. *ABC News Online* reports:

He says an alternative rail service refuses to stop at Darnick station because it deems the platform unsafe.

"Darnick only has a temporary railway platform built by—"

[*Interruption*]

This is the Opposition's surrender. The white flag is flying. *ABC News Online* reports the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party as saying:

Darnick only has a temporary railway platform built by the local community.

The private operators of the replacement train service believe it could be unsafe and believe they may not be legally indemnified if a problem occurred.

If that's the case, the Carr Government should consider indemnifying the service and fulfilling its commitment to these people to provide a replacement rail service ...

I want the House to understand his position and his criticism of the Government perfectly. I have done a little research. His implication is right: there was once a proper railway station at Darnick. According to Countrylink, it was a railway station that had a waiting room, a dirt or gravel top platform, and a timber face on the track side of the platform. That used to be there, it is no longer there, and as a result all the town has is a temporary or makeshift platform. I know what members of the House are thinking. They are thinking: Why and when? What happened to the old platform, a proper platform where trains could stop? What happened in this little town, where there had been only 127 alighting passengers since March 1996, that there is now only a fragile, temporary station?

The answer is that when the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party was chief of staff to former transport Minister Bruce Baird the station was accidentally demolished! It could not even be a serious intentional demolition with Barry—it had to be a blunder! The station was accidentally demolished. It was not demolished as part of the former Coalition Government's money-saving cuts to rail services; it was an accidental demolition. It was a blunder. They were sent out there after he signed the chit, and they bowled over the railway station. I have all the figures, the photographs, and the advice from the State Rail Authority. We will cop criticism from a shadow Minister who can sustain his case, but the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party is not even trying. Everyone deserves a good opposition. I deserve a good opposition, and my team deserves a good opposition. For goodness sake, give it to us!

**Mr HARTCHER:** I seek leave to move a motion to suspend standing and sessional orders to allow two more questions to be directed to the Premier.

**Leave not granted.**

**Questions without notice concluded.**

## CONSIDERATION OF URGENT MOTIONS

### Unpaid Work Statistics

**Ms MEAGHER** (Cabramatta—Parliamentary Secretary) [3.20 p.m.]: My motion is of the utmost importance to all policy planners at local, State and Federal levels, and I therefore commend it to the House.

### Grafton Dialysis Services

**Mrs SKINNER** (North Shore) [3.20 p.m.]: My motion should be given priority because it is more urgent than the motion proposed by the honourable member for Cabramatta. My motion deals with the plight of

15-year-old Nyree Manning, who has been forced to live in the Children's Hospital at Westmead since March because she needs dialysis three times a week and because this Government has failed to provide sufficient funds for her to receive treatment at Grafton hospital, in her home town. Today I received a copy of a letter from Nyree that she sent to the Minister for Health—so he cannot say he does not know about this matter. What makes it even worse for this young girl is that three years ago she lost her older sister in a car accident, eight weeks ago her father died, and her mother, two younger sisters and younger brother have not been able to visit her since Easter. It is an absolutely appalling situation!

The Minister for Health had the nerve to say he was putting extra money into the health system, yet he cannot find sufficient funds to enable this girl to receive dialysis at Grafton. Where is the honourable member for Clarence? This matter has been a problem for a long time, but he has done nothing to help this family, which is very well known and respected in the local community. This morning, when I spoke to this young girl, she said, "Please help me. Please help me to go home so that I can see my mum, my sisters and my brother." I have spoken to people in the town. Today the nursing manager of the renal unit told me that she has the qualified staff and the equipment but she does not have enough money to employ an extra shift to enable Nyree to be treated.

The Government is appalling if it fails to debate this issue! The people of this State should not condone the Government giving priority to debating Australian Bureau of Statistics figures rather than the wellbeing of a child who has been separated from her mother, and brother and sisters since March, whose father died eight years ago, and who has not had a visit from her family since Easter. The Government can solve the problem overnight by providing funds to Grafton hospital. Nyree has been sick for long time. She had a kidney transparent that failed, and that is why she has been in the Children's Hospital since March. She needs dialysis treatment three times a week, but there are insufficient funds to provide one at Grafton. As I said, the machines are there, the staff are there, and they would love to treat her. They want to treat her, but they do not have enough money to put on an extra shift.

Nyree is on a waiting list, along with other people, because this Government and this Minister have failed to provide money for patients to be treated close to their homes, which is where they should be treated. Members of the Government are sitting in silence; they are as shocked as I was when I received this letter today from this young girl. Why is the Minister not here talking about this letter that he received from this girl? He does not care. He boasts about an extra \$2 billion of funding. If he has an extra \$2 billion, where are the few thousand dollars to treat Nyree Manning? Where is the money to enable country patients to get treatment in country hospitals close to their homes and families? Where are all the members of Country Labor? I trust they will vote with us to give priority to this motion for urgent consideration rather than any other motion. Where is the honourable member for Clarence?

The Minister for Health walked out of the Chamber. He is not even in the Chamber as we speak. It will disappoint me enormously to have to ring Nyree's mother and Nyree at the Children's Hospital, as I did this morning, to say that the Minister for Health did not even have the courtesy to be in the Chamber when this matter was being considered, to tell them that the Government, the Minister and the Premier all walked out when this matter was called on, and to tell them that none of the Government members had the decency to vote with us to enable this matter to be debated. So much for the caring, so much for the compassion, so much for the genuine interest of the Labor Party in the needs of sick people, and so much for the hypocrisy and arrogance of so-called Country Labor members. Where is the honourable member for Clarence?

**Mr Martin:** Stop picking on us.

**Mrs SKINNER:** The honourable member for Bathurst interjects. He makes fun of a motion about a very sick young girl who cannot get treatment. He is laughing!

**Question—That the motion for urgent consideration of the honourable member for Cabramatta be proceeded with—put.**

**The House divided.**

**Ayes, 46**

Ms Allan  
 Ms Andrews  
 Mr Aquilina  
 Mr Ashton  
 Mr Bartlett  
 Ms Beamer  
 Mr Black  
 Mr Brown  
 Miss Burton  
 Mr Campbell  
 Mr Carr  
 Mr Collier  
 Mr Crittenden  
 Mr Debus  
 Mr Face  
 Mr Gibson

Mr Greene  
 Mrs Grusovin  
 Ms Harrison  
 Mr Hickey  
 Mr Knowles  
 Mrs Lo Po'  
 Mr Lynch  
 Mr McBride  
 Mr McManus  
 Mr Martin  
 Ms Meagher  
 Ms Megarrity  
 Mr Mills  
 Mr Moss  
 Mr Nagle  
 Mr Newell

Ms Nori  
 Mr Orkopoulos  
 Mr E. T. Page  
 Mr Price  
 Dr Refshauge  
 Ms Saliba  
 Mr Scully  
 Mr Stewart  
 Mr Tripodi  
 Mr Watkins  
 Mr Whelan  
 Mr Yeadon

*Tellers,*  
 Mr Anderson  
 Mr Thompson

**Noes, 33**

Mr Armstrong  
 Mr Brogden  
 Mrs Chikarovski  
 Mr Collins  
 Mr Debnam  
 Mr George  
 Mr Hartcher  
 Ms Hodgkinson  
 Dr Kernohan  
 Mr Kerr  
 Mr McGrane  
 Mr Merton

Ms Moore  
 Mr O'Doherty  
 Mr O'Farrell  
 Mr Oakeshott  
 Mr D. L. Page  
 Mr Piccoli  
 Mr Richardson  
 Mr Rozzoli  
 Ms Seaton  
 Mrs Skinner  
 Mr Slack-Smith  
 Mr Souris

Mr Stoner  
 Mr Tink  
 Mr Torbay  
 Mr J. H. Turner  
 Mr R. W. Turner  
 Mr Webb  
 Mr Windsor

*Tellers,*  
 Mr Fraser  
 Mr R. H. L. Smith

**Pairs**

Mr Hunter  
 Mr Iemma

Mr Glachan  
 Mr Hazzard

**Question resolved in the affirmative.**

**UNPAID WORK STATISTICS****Urgent Motion**

**Ms MEAGHER** (Cabramatta—Parliamentary Secretary) [3.34 p.m.]: I move:

That this House:

- (1) notes the importance of unpaid work in our community, which is equivalent to 58 per cent of Australia's GDP;
- (2) expresses its alarm at the decision by the Federal Government to downgrade the Australian Bureau of Statistics' measurement of this activity from five years to 12 years;
- (3) recognises that the new regime would mean that the data is at least 15 years out of date and will severely impact on policy planning and other government activities such as community services, industrial relations and transport; and
- (4) urges the Federal Government to commit to five-yearly measurements.

Over half the work performed in Australia each day is done by unpaid workers. This constitutes 55.5 million hours of work per day in the running of families, households and voluntary community work. Similarly, family members and volunteers—predominantly women—spend 1,215 million hours each year in the unpaid care of

older people, children with disabilities and welfare groups. We know this because of a critical profile on this important segment of Australian society that has been created by data collected from national time-use surveys. Presently the national census does not include a measure for unpaid work in the community but, thanks to time-use surveys, we know that if unpaid work were given equivalent monetary value it would constitute 58 per cent of Australia's gross domestic product [GDP].

Time-use surveys have brought into focus for the first time that vast section of the Australian community who work for no monetary reward, either because they work voluntarily or because it is work for which there is no compensation other than satisfaction. The time-use surveys were an initiative of the Hawke Government and were announced as part of that Government's national agenda for women. Under that scheme, time-use surveys were conducted every five years to assess how people in the unpaid workforce use their time. The introduction of time-use surveys provided a method of quantifying what most women, and some men, already know—that unpaid household work, caring for children and family members and working in a voluntary capacity makes a real contribution to Australian society and to Australia's economy. This is work of real value to the individual, the family and the community at large.

In effect, the time-use surveys make visible more than half the economic activity of our nation—the previously invisible unpaid work of the household. The information provided by time-use surveys is of great value to policy planners primarily because of its timeliness and accuracy. I regret to inform the House this afternoon that the Australian Bureau of Statistics recently announced that the frequency of the time-use survey will be downgraded from every five years to every 12 years. It will take the Australian Bureau of Statistics an additional three years to analyse and publish the results of those surveys. That will mean that all statistical information about volunteer workers, the division of labour within households and, indeed, key information about the Australian economy will be 15 years out of date—that is, so out of date as to be meaningless. That is absurd.

There would be little disagreement with me in this House if I were to suggest that the world in which we live now is considerably different to the world in which we lived in 1985 and that the world in which we will live now will be radically different to the one in which we will live in 2015—in ways that we can only just begin to understand. The rate of technological change will guarantee that the way we approach tasks and the time we allocate to them in 15 years time will bear little resemblance to the lives we lead today. So how meaningful will present measures be to planners in 2015? The importance of accurate measurements of what is actually happening in our society and in our economy cannot, and must not, be undervalued.

Accurate information about unpaid work provides important information for planning, service delivery and policy programs. To highlight that, I draw attention to community services, especially background information on support services for the elderly, people with disabilities, and children and their carers; industrial relations, particularly the impact of who does the work in the home and the acceptance of flexible work practices; and the assessment of reasons why policies that are designed to help women in the workforce either succeed or fail. But outside government, this information is also relevant to researchers for the value it has in developing education and research in sociology, social welfare, gender studies, industrial relations, economics and children's services.

The decision by the Federal Government to reduce the frequency of time-use surveys is an insult to all unpaid workers because it virtually says, "We don't value what you do." A decision to virtually ignore such a large and vital section of Australian society should alarm every member of this House. By the time the information is collected and collated, it will be 15 years out of date and it will be of absolutely no use to anyone who needs to know about the division of work within our community.

Downgrading the frequency of these surveys is a scandal, and if they are conducted every 15 years they will simply become a waste of resources. That decision has already been met with strong opposition from a number of women's lobby groups around the nation. But their protests to the Minister for Financial Services and Regulation, the Hon. Joe Hockey, have been met with arrogance and indifference. In a letter to the National Secretary of the Women's Action Alliance dated 2 June the Minister justified his decision in this way:

Priorities for different surveys and topics to be included in the program were assessed on the basis of their relative importance for describing and monitoring the social wellbeing of the population and supporting the development and implementation and evaluation of policies of the Commonwealth and State Government agencies.

There we have it: the Federal Government does not consider the unpaid workforce, which represents more than 55½ million hours of daily work, to be a priority. It simply does not consider it to be a sufficient priority to be

measured regularly. The bulk of unpaid workers in our community, of course, are women. The contribution of women carers to the community is the equivalent of a full-time work force of 600,000 people worth \$16.8 million a year. But the Federal Government does not consider them a priority. When approached on this issue the Federal Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Status of Women, Senator Jocelyn Newman, could only mouth the same tired words about priorities despite her department being reported in today's *Daily Telegraph* as admitting that it needs more research to implement its welfare reform plan, which would take "another five or 10 years to require research and evaluation of a range of strategies".

The Federal Government proposes in its reforms to reduce the number of people dependent on government welfare by encouraging those who are able to work to do so. How many of those people, especially women, already do unpaid work? When these reforms are complete in the expected five or 10 years, how will we know what impact the changes will have on the unpaid sector of the community? It will not be through the time-use surveys because they will not be available for another five years.

The Federal Government's system of values is strange. It seems to place emphasis on home and family, yet it has no interest in the real contributions of women, carers and other unpaid workers in our community. The time-use surveys have provided a window into a segment of our society that, while it is largely unseen, is equally as vital to our nation's health as any major industry. To close that window is a clear statement by the Federal Government that it does not value women or the unpaid work force in our community. I urge the Federal Government to commit itself to five-yearly measurements of that section of our community that equates to more than half of our gross domestic product. I commend the motion to the House.

**Mr HARTCHER** (Gosford) [3.42 p.m.]: The honourable member for Cabramatta has moved a motion that is extraordinarily ill researched. Either she is not aware of or is ignoring the letter sent by the responsible Minister to the Minister for Community Services, Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability Services, and Minister for Women on 10 August, one week ago. I shall read the relevant paragraph to the honourable member for Cabramatta in response to her comments about 12yearly surveys. The letter stated:

The ABS will continue to include time use surveys in its household survey program. This timing of future time use surveys reflects the fact that most time use patterns change slowly over time and our assessment that the data is used more for descriptive and research purposes than to support policy analysis and development. My chief of staff wrote to Mrs Smit on 2 June 2000 regarding this issue. His letter noted that the ABS is prepared to reconsider the timing and frequency of future time use surveys based on specific advice as to the key issues and policy questions that the survey would address as well as the particular decisions the data needs to inform.

The honourable member for Cabramatta has misled the House. Her motion deliberately misleads the House and she has been caught out. Her research tool is an article in the newspaper. She cannot even do the most mediocre and minimal research. What a tragic commentary on the way she represents Cabramatta with all its problems! All she can do is grandstand. She says nothing about Cabramatta and its problems. She says nothing about the thousands of exploited immigrant women in Cabramatta that her party ignores. We all know how exploited they are, but we have never heard a single word about that from the honourable member for Cabramatta.

The honourable member for Cabramatta is the one person who should be doing something for immigrant women in this State. She can only grandstand on issues about which she misleads the House. I lay upon the table of the House the letter from the Hon. Joe Hockey dated 10 August 2000, which blows out of the water the entire argument we heard from the parliamentary secretary. She chose a quiet Thursday afternoon when she thought nobody who knew anything about the issue she wanted to broadcast would be in the House. She then hoped to send it to all of the women's alliance groups and say, "This is how I fight for women, this is what I am doing for women in this State." Of the thousands of women in Cabramatta and western Sydney who are so ruthlessly exploited and about whom the Carr Government has done nothing because it is too hard, she says, "I don't talk about them but I want to talk about this issue." If ever a parliamentary appointment should be reviewed, it is the appointment of this parliamentary secretary. I move:

That the motion be amended by leaving out paragraphs (2), (3) and (4) with a view to inserting the following:

- (2) calls upon the Carr Government to recognise the thousands of volunteers and carers in our society and provide a statutory framework for their work and extend to them the benefits of a proper insurance program; and
- (3) condemns the Carr Government for its failure to protect surf life savers from civil litigation and notes the recent case involving Elanora Surf Life Saving Club.

Thousands of volunteers in our society work for the benefit of the common good. Many are women, many are men and many are carers who look after elderly people, sick people or people with disabilities. Many volunteers



merely give up their own time to help a myriad of community organisations. Those people have no statutory protection and the Carr Labor Government has ignored requests from the Volunteer Centre, the head body, to provide some statutory protection for them. They have no properly funded insurance program to protect them against public risk or injury claims. Once again the Carr Labor Government has done nothing to protect them. The Parliamentary Secretary said nothing in her address about the more pressing issues of insurance or legal protection. All she could talk about was how to gather statistics. She was blown out of the water when the letter was produced which showed that she had deliberately misled this House in what she had said. Our research is based on a letter.

**Ms Meagher:** Table it!

**Mr HARTCHER:** Her research was based on a newspaper article.

**Mr O'Doherty:** She wants you to table it. Table it.

**Mr HARTCHER:** The answer to the interjection of the honourable member for Hornsby, who takes a great interest in volunteer matters, is that I have laid that letter upon the table. The surf life saving movement is one of the great volunteer organisations in this State. It has now been exposed to the risk of civil litigation. In a recent court case involving members of the Elanora Surf Life Saving Club it was held that the club was liable for damages amounting to \$60,000. We have not heard anything about that issue from the responsible Ministers in this House either by way of a ministerial statement, the introduction of legislation or an ex gratia payment to assist the members of that club. They have been abandoned to the mercy of the civil litigation process.

If that situation is allowed to continue, the State will lose volunteers, especially those in the surf life saving movement, because people will walk away rather than be exposed to the risk of civil litigation when they conscientiously and voluntarily carry out their duties for the good of the community. The Government has said nothing about that matter. A motion has been moved that relates merely to the collection of statistics by the Federal Government. The motion has been blown out of water and the honourable member for Cabramatta has been shown to be ill researched and ill prepared. She came to this Chamber with a speech prepared by somebody else.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member for Cabramatta has five minutes in which to reply.

**Mr HARTCHER:** In her defence the honourable member for Cabramatta could only present a newspaper article. The Opposition has raised the serious issue of volunteers, which the honourable member for Hornsby will address in greater detail. We want volunteers to be given a statutory framework in which they can undertake their work knowing that they will be shielded from public liability claims, knowing that if they are injured in the course of their work they will receive some benefit. We believe that the insurance premiums necessary to ensure them against public liability and general accidents should be addressed by the Government with financial grants. That is not a lot to ask.

If our society continues to be dependent upon the hundreds of thousands of volunteers who do so much, the very least we can do is to protect them from civil litigation or from the disastrous consequences of personal injury. Our society has always treasured the work of its volunteers, be it our volunteer army in the First World War, the only army in history to go to war wholly comprised of volunteers; our extraordinary bushfire brigades; our Rural Fire Service; our great surf life saving movement and all the hundreds of other organisations that members of Parliament come into contact with so frequently. Our parents and citizens associations—

**Mr R. H. L. Smith:** Meals on Wheels.

**Mr HARTCHER:** Meals on Wheels, police officers and those voluntary organisations that provide the cement or the glue that holds our society together. The Coalition sends the message to volunteers that we admire, applaud and support their work. When the Coalition is elected to government it will always provide volunteers with the shield of public liability insurance when they act in good faith in the conscientious discharge of their duties. The Opposition will also provide them with financial assistance with insurance premiums so that if they are injured in carrying out their duties there will be some form of proper recompense for those injuries. This is a Coalition that cares. That is the distinction between the Coalition and the Government, which simply wants to worry about statistics. The honourable member for Cabramatta ignores the plight of women in Cabramatta and western Sydney, the most depressed women in Australia, and merely grandstands in this Parliament. She has a lot to learn about the plight of women in our society.

**Ms SALIBA** (Illawarra) [3.52 p.m.]: The response of the Opposition is a joke. The honourable member for Gosford talked about the importance of volunteers. By the time the information that the Opposition talked about is gathered and produced, things will have changed so much in the community that the information will be outdated and will not relate to current volunteers. The attitude of the Opposition is rather amusing. It is important to have statistics to identify the impact on society of, for example, child care services and services for our disabled and the elderly. Earlier this year I went to the National Volunteer Day celebration of the Dapto Neighbourhood Centre. That centre would be lost without the work of its volunteers. A whole range of people in the community would not receive the daily assistance they require to survive. Volunteers are very important to the Government, in the same way as the work that is done by women at home.

The Prime Minister, Jack the Ripper, is slashing funding to child care and aged care services. That forces women back into the home to look after their children and the elderly. While doing that, the Federal Government is taking away the statistics that show what people do in their homes. Those women play a very important role in our community: They raise the next generation and look after the last. We are debating this urgent motion because we need these kinds of statistics to provide the required services in our community. This motion is not about which volunteer service is doing more and which service is doing less. It is not about who does what. It is about having vital information that is necessary to provide services to our community. It has already been stated that 58 per cent of our work force is unpaid. Women are the unpaid work force, the unsung heroes. They make the real contribution. A worker is rewarded for work done. The Federal Government puts a housewife away in a corner, barefoot and pregnant. That is absolutely disgusting in the year 2000.

**Mr O'DOHERTY** (Hornsby) [3.57 p.m.]: The Government is confused. The motion seems to be about nothing more than a whipped-up pavlova. The Opposition has a letter from the Hon. Joe Hockey, the Minister for Financial Services and Regulation, that clearly says, among other things, that the Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS] has discovered over time that collecting data about this kind of activity by the inclusion of a couple of questions in a broad census survey is not the most efficient way of getting the best picture about the true nature of volunteering in Australia.

**Ms Saliba:** Every 15 years?

**Mr O'DOHERTY:** The honourable member interjects "Every 15 years?" She would be interested to know that there is a survey on volunteering being done by the Commonwealth Government during the current year. The results will be released in 2001, the International Year of the Volunteer. The Government has changed the nature of its research, from a couple of questions in that long census form that it found unreliable, to household surveys conducted by trained interviewers. Other surveys are the ABS time-use survey, the 1999 child care survey, and the 1998 survey of disability, ageing and carers, which collected data on people assisting in those activities. In 2000 there has been a move to specifically designed household surveys using trained interviewers, a method of data collection that has become extremely reliable; the ABS is becoming very good at it. Far from winding down, the Federal Government is winding up the amount of information it has about volunteers. I do not intend to devote any more of my contribution to the matters raised by the Government because, quite frankly, they are little more than fairy floss. As soon as they are attacked they completely disintegrate.

I want to concentrate on what the honourable member for Gosford said was the Coalition's commitment to people in volunteering and to talk about the way in which volunteering builds the community. At this stage of Australia's development, at the start of the twenty-first century, if we do not do everything we can to support volunteers forming relationships and conducting activities together, thereby achieving a greater sense of community, we will lose the essence of what it is to be Australian. With changing work patterns in Australia the ability of people to be volunteers is undoubtedly under great pressure. The generation that has done a great deal of volunteer work—it is part of what that generation has done traditionally, and traditionally the volunteers have been women, as the honourable member for Cabramatta rightly said—is becoming older. In some cases those volunteers are frail and less able to do what they did in the past. Their commitment to our community is no less strong than it has been; one might say the spirit is willing but the flesh is a little weak.

Coming in behind that generation is a new generation of people who have very different work patterns. Indeed, it is much more likely that women will work, particularly after their children have reached their teenage years. It is much more likely that there will be different types of work, not just nine-to-five jobs that readily allow for volunteer activity after work such as sports coaching. As the lights are turned on at Mills Park in Asquith out come all the volunteer parents—mothers and fathers—to train the mighty Asquith under-eights and under-sixes, which my boys are involved in. That is volunteer effort and that is true community. We have a

fantastic time as we gather together around our common interest of developing the boys and girls who play soccer in our area. Every Thursday afternoon that is just a tiny microcosm of what happens every day across New South Wales, throughout Sydney and in our rural areas, to build community.

But those things are coming under pressure because of the changing nature of the work force and society and because people are under great pressure. We need governments that are prepared to do everything they can to support that effort. The Coalition believes that the issues raised by the honourable member for Gosford are extremely important. They have been raised by the Volunteer Centre of New South Wales and people who have spoken to us over the years. They have been completely ignored by the Carr Government. It has no policy for volunteers. It does not provide significant support to the Volunteer Centre, the pre-eminent agency that organises programs such as the Student Community Involvement Program [SCIP], and many others. It has done nothing about proper insurance and other arrangements for people on volunteer service. It has done nothing to assist lifesavers, which the honourable member for Gosford mentioned earlier. The motion ought to condemn the Carr Government for not taking seriously its need to support volunteers.

**Mrs GRUSOVIN** (Heffron) [4.02 p.m.]: I support the honourable member for Cabramatta in moving her motion for urgent consideration. The issue should concern all members of the community who undertake unpaid work. The Federal Government has made the decision to downgrade the Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS] national time-use study from intervals of five years to intervals of 12 years. This decision will mean that the data collected by the ABS will be out of date, and therefore of lesser value for policy planning and government activity. Not only will the decision to downgrade the national time-use study hinder planners in providing resources and effective programs for the community; it will also serve to pay less attention to the vital contribution of those who do unpaid work.

I could spend the remainder of my contribution discussing the games that are being played by the other side about dates of letters and what is being said, but on examination of the various pieces of correspondence with the Federal Government and the office of the Hon. Joe Hockey, MP and the ABS letter signed by the Acting Australian Statistician, it is interesting to note that so many of the paragraphs in the letter of the Acting Australian Statistician are repeated word for word in the letter from Joe Hockey's office to the National Secretary of the Women's Action Alliance (Australia) Inc. What a joke!

The Federal Government is all about grand motherhood statements and white picket fences. But when it comes to ensuring a proper understanding by policymakers of what is happening in the community, the Federal Government is all about saving dollars. It has no interest in proceeding with the research that is so important for future planning. The honourable member for Hornsby referred to volunteer workers involved in sports coaching. Let me talk about another sort of volunteer worker. I am referring to policies which ignore the links between unpaid work and the macro-economy and thus risk inducing unforeseen burdens for families and the economy.

For example, an early discharge from hospital saves money in the health care sector but it may require a mother, daughter or spouse to give up paid work to assume a caring role. Of course, this results in a loss of income, a loss of taxation revenue, lower investment in superannuation and increased welfare transfers in the form of a carer's allowance, and possibly other payments resulting from decreased family income. Regular monitoring of unpaid work makes it possible for policy makers to anticipate the effects of their policy over a wider scope.

The second time-use survey was performed in 1997 but the valuation still has not been published. When the Women's Action Alliance inquired why the figures were taking so long to produce, it was told that more important things had taken precedence. It was also told by officers of the ABS that the next time-use study will not be conducted five years after the last study but nine years after, and thereafter will occur on a 12-year cycle. That is highly unsatisfactory. And who does it disadvantage? In the majority of cases it disadvantages women because most unpaid work in Australia is done by women. They do that unpaid work in a myriad of ways—unpaid work in small family-owned businesses, for voluntary organisations, for sporting groups, for religious organisations and for a whole galaxy of other community organisations. They also do large amounts of unpaid work caring for their children, partners and parents, those with disabilities and other family members and friends.

The history of recognition for unpaid workers in Australia is not good. Women have struggled for years for recognition of their efforts, an acknowledgement in official statistics and legal recognition of their contributions. The decision by the Federal Government again indicates that it does not have the role of women

in our society as a top priority—unless we are talking about women in their traditional role of being in the kitchen and running the family household. The decision of the Federal Government will result in inaccurate statistics and bad planning and will impact adversely on women, the primary unpaid workers. It seems to me that the Federal Government is abrogating its responsibilities in allowing this decision to go forward. I call upon the House to support the motion of urgency to send a message loud and clear to the State Opposition and the Federal Government that they ought to get their act together.

**Ms MEAGHER** (Cabramatta—Parliamentary Secretary) [4.07 p.m.], in reply: I was greatly bemused by the contribution of the honourable member for Gosford. Given that honourable member's record on accuracy, coupled with the record of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, the Leader of the Opposition will be safe for the duration. The honourable member for Gosford waved around a piece of paper that he said was a letter by Joe Hockey dated 10 March. The honourable member for Gosford has questionable research abilities because the letter of interest in this debate dated 10 March is actually from Tim Skinner, the Acting Australian Statistician. It is addressed to the Assistant Secretary of the Office of the Status of Women, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet. In paragraph 3 it states:

The program currently has the next Time Use Survey 'pencilled in' for 2005 and, with other pressures on the program ... I consider the survey should not be brought forward.

That is a fairly clear indication from the Australian Bureau of Statistics on its view of the importance of time-use surveys. That was also reflected in a letter from the Hon. Joe Hockey, the Minister for Finance and Regulation, to Mrs Smit, the National Secretary of the Women's Action Alliance. That letter was dated 2 June, some time after the letter referred to by the honourable member for Gosford. I note that he did not table it, despite advising the House on several occasions that he did. In that letter the Hon. Joe Hockey stated that "priorities for different surveys ... in the program were assessed on the basis of their relative importance". What the representative of the Federal Government is saying is that the Howard Government does not consider the vast bulk of the Australian economy, creating 58 per cent of our gross domestic product, to be of relative importance. The honourable member for Gosford throws his arms around in this Chamber as a great pretender on research capacity. I suggest that he go back to his office and have a close look at some of the information that is available for the purposes of this debate.

I would like to take issue with the contribution of the honourable member for Hornsby, who seemed to have a problem with definitions. That member tried to defend the Federal Government on the basis of the volunteer survey to be released next year. The problem is that the volunteers do not come within the definition of unpaid work force. All of the women in our community who look after families, wash, cook, help children with their homework, help in their partners' businesses and care for older people are not considered volunteers and will not be part of the statistics in the Howard Government's survey to be released next year. The honourable member for Hornsby tried to blur the definitions relevant to this debate by saying that the unpaid work force equals volunteers, equals workforce, equals the survey done, and therefore misled the House. He should be pulled into line for doing that.

The contribution of the honourable member for Illawarra was extremely valid. The whole policy of the Howard program and the whole agenda of the Howard Government have been to force women out of the work force. Women who are forced out of the work force are forced into welfare. The point I was making today about the announcement by Senator Jocelyn Newman is that this Howard Government policy will make it even harder for many people to receive welfare. Those who are not in the work force and do not receive welfare are either volunteers or primary carers, and now the Howard Government says, "We are not even going to measure you." They will become Howard's forgotten people, Howard's forgotten tribe; they will not show up anywhere. That is an absolute disgrace.

Policy planners can only plan for the delivery of appropriate services to our people when the planners know what is going on in our society. For the Opposition in this Chamber to say that it is not really important for us to know what is going on in the community because at the end of the day it is only a matter of definitions, misleading the House with respect to research, is absolutely disgraceful. The bulk of the unpaid work force in our community, including carers and volunteers, should be recognised and measured so that their needs can be accounted for in policy planning and future service delivery. I commend the motion to the House.

**Question—That the words stand—put.**

**The House divided.**

**Ayes, 45**

Ms Allan  
Ms Andrews  
Mr Aquilina  
Mr Ashton  
Mr Bartlett  
Ms Beamer  
Mr Black  
Mr Brown  
Miss Burton  
Mr Campbell  
Mr Collier  
Mr Crittenden  
Mr Debus  
Mr Face  
Mr Gibson  
Mr Greene

Mrs Grusovin  
Ms Harrison  
Mr Hickey  
Mr Knowles  
Mr Lynch  
Mr Martin  
Mr McBride  
Mr McManus  
Ms Meagher  
Ms Megarrity  
Mr Mills  
Ms Moore  
Mr Moss  
Mr Nagle  
Mr Newell  
Ms Nori

Mr Orkopoulos  
Mr E. T. Page  
Mr Price  
Dr Refshauge  
Ms Saliba  
Mr Scully  
Mr Stewart  
Mr Tripodi  
Mr Watkins  
Mr Whelan  
Mr Yeadon

*Tellers,*  
Mr Anderson  
Mr Thompson

**Noes, 34**

Mr Armstrong  
Mr Barr  
Mr Brogden  
Mr Collins  
Mr Debnam  
Mr George  
Mr Hartcher  
Ms Hodgkinson  
Mr Humpherson  
Dr Kernohan  
Mr Kerr  
Mr Maguire

Mr McGrane  
Mr Merton  
Mr O'Doherty  
Mr O'Farrell  
Mr Oakeshott  
Mr D. L. Page  
Mr Piccoli  
Mr Richardson  
Mr Rozzoli  
Ms Seaton  
Mrs Skinner  
Mr Slack-Smith

Mr Souris  
Mr Stoner  
Mr Tink  
Mr Torbay  
Mr J. H. Turner  
Mr R. W. Turner  
Mr Webb  
Mr Windsor

*Tellers,*  
Mr Fraser  
Mr R. H. L. Smith

**Pairs**

Mr Hunter  
Mr Iemma

Mr Chikarovski  
Mrs Glachan

**Question resolved in the affirmative.**

**Amendment negatived.**

**Question—That the motion be agreed to—put.**

**The House divided.**

**Ayes, 45**

Ms Allan  
Ms Andrews  
Mr Aquilina  
Mr Ashton  
Mr Bartlett  
Ms Beamer  
Mr Black  
Mr Brown  
Miss Burton  
Mr Campbell  
Mr Collier  
Mr Crittenden  
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Ms Harrison  
Mr Hickey  
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Mr Lynch  
Mr Martin  
Mr McBride  
Mr McManus  
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Mr Price  
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Mr Scully  
Mr Stewart  
Mr Tripodi  
Mr Watkins  
Mr Whelan  
Mr Yeadon

*Tellers,*  
Mr Anderson  
Mr Thompson

**Noes, 34**

Mr Armstrong	Mr McGrane	Mr Souris
Mr Barr	Mr Merton	Mr Stoner
Mr Brogden	Mr O'Doherty	Mr Tink
Mr Collins	Mr O'Farrell	Mr Torbay
Mr Debnam	Mr Oakeshott	Mr J. H. Turner
Mr George	Mr D. L. Page	Mr R. W. Turner
Mr Hartcher	Mr Piccoli	Mr Webb
Ms Hodgkinson	Mr Richardson	Mr Windsor
Mr Humpherson	Mr Rozzoli	
Dr Kernohan	Ms Seaton	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Kerr	Mrs Skinner	Mr Fraser
Mr Maguire	Mr Slack-Smith	Mr R. H. L. Smith

**Pairs**

Mr Hunter	Mrs Chikarovksi
Mr Iemma	Mr Glachan

**Question resolved in the affirmative.**

**Motion agreed to.**

**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE****Sitting Days: Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders**

**Mr WHELAN** (Strathfield—Minister for Police) [4.24 p.m.]: I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to provide that:

- (1) the House at its rising this day do adjourn until Wednesday 30 August 200 at 3.00 p.m. for the purpose only of attending a joint sitting with the Legislative Council to elect members to fill vacancies in the Legislative Council;
- (2) having returned from the Legislative Council, the Speaker shall report the result of the joint sitting and the House shall immediately adjourn without a question being put until Tuesday 10 October 2000 at 2.15 p.m.; and
- (3) should the Speaker be requested by the Leader of the House to call the House to meet for a stated specific purpose at other times the Speaker shall act on such advice and advise members accordingly.

On Wednesday 30 August there will be a joint sitting at 3 p.m. for the purpose of electing members to fill the vacancies in the Legislative Council. The scheduled sittings for Tuesday 29 August, Wednesday 30 August, Thursday 31 August, Tuesday 5 September, Wednesday 6 September, Thursday 7 September and Friday 8 September were contingent upon the Olympics and dependent upon whether the Minister for the Olympics was of the view that legislation was required. It has been revealed and is public knowledge—

**Mr Hartcher:** When?

**Mr WHELAN:** Try Sunday 26 March 2000—8 August, 9 August, 10 August, 15 August, 16 August and 17 August were shown in the parliamentary sitting days as being tentative. The Government took the opportunity to sit on those tentative dates and it has now completed its legislative program. I indicate to honourable members that under no circumstances should they remove from their diaries those scheduled dates because the House may be required to come back. I shall use an example I have used in the past: The House may have to sit if a member of the public takes out an injunction to restrain Greg Norman or someone else from running across the bridge or from running through various electorates as part of the marathon and if a judge of the court grants that injunction, or if there is an environmental issue.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Since the Leader of the House moved the motion the Chair has extended a degree of latitude to members. However, I now ask members to remain silent. The honourable member for Gosford will have an opportunity to speak in reply to the Leader of the House. If members of the Opposition want to raise particular matters I suggest they liaise with the honourable member for Gosford.

**Mr WHELAN:** I remind honourable members that the House will sit on Tuesday 10 October, Wednesday 11 October, Thursday 12 October and Friday 13 October. The House will then adjourn during the Paralympics, which will be held from 18 October to 29 October. The House will return on Tuesday 31 October. I know that when the honourable member for Gosford speaks to my motion he will suggest that the House should have more question times. When he sought to suspend standing orders in that regard earlier today, it was not Government members who remarked, "Why the hell did he do that?" The fact is that the Opposition has received an absolute flogging in the past few weeks.

**Mr HARTCHER** (Gosford) [4.30 p.m.]: I move:

That the motion be amended by leaving out all words after "3.00 p.m." with a view to inserting instead the following:

"and answer questions directed to the Premier in accordance with the dates already published by the Leader of the House."

Only one person wants to avoid question time: the Premier of this State. He cannot handle it, and the Leader of the House is trying to protect him. In question time today Opposition members asked only three of five questions directed to the Premier. When we asked to be allowed to direct two more questions to the Premier, the Leader of the House said no. He suspends standing orders at the drop of a hat, but he is not prepared to allow two extra questions to the Premier, who likes to come into the Chamber, wave money around and say, "Ask me a question." The Premier reads German books conspicuously during question time so that *Daily Telegraph* reporters can see and he shows his contempt for Parliament. When he is finally asked a question, he gives his prepared Bob Ellis answer, does his little dump and then cannot answer any further questions. That is what happened in question time today. The Premier said, "I'll refer that on", "I'll get back to you" or "Look at the Deputy Leader of the Opposition" or some other honourable member. He gave not a single answer.

More importantly, the Leader of the House is prepared to recall this House to intimidate the judges of the Supreme Court and to dissolve an injunction granted by that court but he is not prepared to recall this House to debate the Baker bill—the Crimes (Sentencing Procedure) Amendment (Life Sentence Confirmation) Bill. Baker will be able to walk free under this Government, which will introduce no legislation to prevent that outcome. The Government will not recall this House and will allow that murderer to go free but, if some judge grants an injunction to prevent someone running across the Sydney Harbour Bridge, this House will be recalled at the snap of a finger. That is an example of the State Government's priorities. It cares only about intimidating the Supreme Court by saying, "Don't grant an injunction because we'll recall Parliament to dissolve it", while Baker walks free.

The Leader of the Opposition has asked on four separate occasions that the standing orders be suspended to allow debate on the bill. The Leader of the House refused those requests each time. When the matter was raised again today, the Leader of the House forced the debate to be adjourned because he is frightened—just as the Premier is frightened of answering questions during question time. The Premier may put on a brave face and wave around money and German language books, but at the end of the day he will not answer questions unless Bob Ellis has prepared his answers and a few silly jokes. As the honourable member for Epping said, this is tentative democracy. Parliament will sit only if it suits the Government's purpose, regardless of what decisions must be made. I urge honourable members to vote for the amendment that states that the Premier must answer questions during question time on the dates scheduled.

I give the Leader of the House this undertaking: if he recalls this House on the scheduled dates, every question at question time will be directed to the Premier. If the Premier believes he knows what is going on and can handle the affairs of this State, the Leader of the House will recall this House on every date scheduled so that the Opposition can ask every question of the Premier. That is a clear and open challenge: either the Premier can answer the questions or he cannot. This motion is not about the Olympics; it is about trying to protect a man who, in the past two weeks, has been exposed as a charlatan. This motion has even greater significance. A list of dates that was published for the guidance of members will now be torn up. This House will not sit for the two weeks scheduled and honourable members will return for a joint sitting of only half an hour. This House will then adjourn until 10 October unless the Supreme Court defies the Government and grants an injunction that the Government does not like. We reject that plan entirely. We believe this House should sit on the scheduled dates and that question time should be held each day at which we will ask every question of the Premier. We will then see whether he has the courage to come before this House and answer our questions.

**Question—That the words stand—put.**

**The House divided.**

**Ayes, 44**

Ms Allan	Mr Greene	Ms Nori
Ms Andrews	Mrs Grusovin	Mr Orkopoulos
Mr Aquilina	Ms Harrison	Mr E. T. Page
Mr Ashton	Mr Hickey	Mr Price
Mr Bartlett	Mr Knowles	Dr Refshauge
Ms Beamer	Mr Lynch	Ms Saliba
Mr Black	Mr McBride	Mr Scully
Mr Brown	Mr McManus	Mr Stewart
Miss Burton	Mr Martin	Mr Tripodi
Mr Campbell	Ms Meagher	Mr Watkins
Mr Collier	Ms Megarrity	Mr Whelan
Mr Crittenden	Mr Mills	Mr Yeadon
Mr Debus	Mr Moss	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Face	Mr Nagle	Mr Anderson
Mr Gibson	Mr Newell	Mr Thompson

**Noes, 35**

Mr Barr	Mr McGrane	Mr Slack-Smith
Mr Brogden	Mr Merton	Mr Souris
Mrs Chikarovski	Ms Moore	Mr Stoner
Mr Collins	Mr O'Doherty	Mr Tink
Mr Debnam	Mr O'Farrell	Mr Torbay
Mr George	Mr Oakeshott	Mr J. H. Turner
Mr Hartcher	Mr D. L. Page	Mr R. W. Turner
Ms Hodgkinson	Mr Piccoli	Mr Webb
Mr Humpherson	Mr Richardson	Mr Windsor
Dr Kernohan	Mr Rozzoli	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Kerr	Ms Seaton	Mr Fraser
Mr Maguire	Mrs Skinner	Mr R. H. L. Smith

**Pairs**

Mr Hunter	Mr Glachan
Mr Iemma	Mr Hazzard

**Question resolved in the affirmative.**

**Amendment negatived.**

**Question—That the motion be agreed to—put.**

**The House divided.**

**Ayes, 44**

Ms Allan	Mr Greene	Ms Nori
Ms Andrews	Mrs Grusovin	Mr Orkopoulos
Mr Aquilina	Ms Harrison	Mr E. T. Page
Mr Ashton	Mr Hickey	Mr Price
Mr Bartlett	Mr Knowles	Dr Refshauge
Ms Beamer	Mr Lynch	Ms Saliba
Mr Black	Mr McBride	Mr Scully
Mr Brown	Mr McManus	Mr Stewart
Miss Burton	Mr Martin	Mr Tripodi
Mr Campbell	Ms Meagher	Mr Watkins
Mr Collier	Ms Megarrity	Mr Whelan
Mr Crittenden	Mr Mills	Mr Yeadon
Mr Debus	Mr Moss	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Face	Mr Nagle	Mr Anderson
Mr Gibson	Mr Newell	Mr Thompson



**Noes, 35**

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Mr Debnam	Mr O'Doherty	Mr Torbay
Mr George	Mr O'Farrell	Mr J. H. Turner
Mr Hartcher	Mr D. L. Page	Mr R. W. Turner
Ms Hodgkinson	Mr Piccoli	Mr Webb
Mr Humpherson	Mr Richardson	Mr Windsor
Dr Kernohan	Mr Rozzoli	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Kerr	Ms Seaton	Mr Fraser
Mr McGrane	Mrs Skinner	Mr R. H. L. Smith

**Pairs**

Mr Hunter	Mr Glachan
Mr Iemma	Mr Hazzard

**Question resolved in the affirmative.**

**Motion agreed to.**

**QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE****Supplementary Answer****ELIZABETH BAY MARINA DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION**

**Dr REFSHAUGE:** During question time today, in answer to the honourable member for Bligh, I referred to my decision to declare marina development a State significant development. I indicated to the honourable member that such a declaration by me would not necessarily affect the current arrangements for the Elizabeth Bay Marina. I have sought further legal advice and wish to advise the House and the honourable member that upon gazettal of my declaration South Sydney council will be required to refer the Elizabeth Bay Marina proposal to me for my consideration.

**PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS****MAITLAND ELECTORATE CAR THEFTS**

**Mr PRICE** (Maitland) [4.47 p.m.]: I raise a matter of concern to the electorate of Maitland—the Crimes Act and how it relates to car thefts and the illegal use of motor vehicles. Mr Norman Burton of Maitland Toyota recently visited my office and expressed grave concern about the sections of the Crimes Act that relate to people being prosecuted for car stealing and for the illegal use of motor vehicles. His concern stemmed from experience within his own organisation, which has been experiencing a number of thefts from his car yard. Fences have been cut with bolt cutters and vehicles have been removed. Some vehicles have been returned; some have not. Those that were returned were in a damaged condition. There has also been a theft of component parts such as hubcaps and wheels. I understand wheels are stolen primarily so that new tyres can be removed.

There seems to be a serious discrepancy in how the law applies to thieves who mean to deprive the owner of a vehicle and how it applies to people who may be joy-riding. The penalty for car theft, if it is imposed by a judge, is 10 years in gaol. The penalty that may be imposed by a magistrate is two years. The penalty for taking a conveyance without the consent of the owner is a maximum of two years gaol or a \$5,000 fine. This has caused considerable angst and concern for the Toyota company in Maitland. Staff of the company are concerned about the application of the law to people apprehended in this situation.

I am advised that the number of car thefts from this yard are increasing, and that is causing more than the average level of concern. I am worried that even if the police apprehend more young people—and it does

seem to be young people involved—the illegal use of motor vehicle prescription will be used and that will excuse these people from answering to the more serious crime of car stealing. The booklet "Key trends in crime and justice" put out by the New South Wales Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research shows that in 1998-99 more than 1,000 motor vehicles were stolen. These statistics also show that in 1998 there were more than 2,880 vehicle theft charges.

Those are fairly frightening figures. I am sure they are fairly widespread within the State and do not apply only to Maitland. In the same 1998 statistics, in excess of 1,200 people went before the courts but only 410 actually received imprisonment and a further 197 received a fine. Various people received periodic detention, community service orders, or recognisance with or without supervision. In percentage terms, 34 per cent received prison terms and 16 per cent received fines. The remainder received various penalties.

I have discussed this major problem with the Attorney General, who has agreed to undertake a review of the sections of the Act in the hope that something can be done to make sentencing provisions for the two crimes a little more compatible. The intent is there and in almost every instance the damage to a vehicle which is stolen for joy-riding is quite considerable. Whether the intention is to deprive the owner of his vehicle is beside the point. Certainly the owner is deprived for a considerable period, because repairs have to be made and quite often compensation is not covered by the courts. The owner of the vehicle must pay for the damage either through his insurance or privately. In this case the insurance premiums for the company involved were doubled in a 12-month period.

### **PICTON HIGH SCHOOL TOILET FACILITIES**

**Ms SEATON** (Southern Highlands) [4.52 p.m.]: I bring to the attention of the House raw sewage pollution problems and the lack of capital upgrade work at Picton High School. The Minister for Education and Training clearly broke an election promise when he rejected local community concerns about and advocacy for a second high school between Picton and Bowral. He refused to believe the demonstrated need for a new high school, but he said that he would authorise the expenditure of around \$80,000 for upgrade work, which would include the upgrading of the school toilets and canteen. That is not much compensation for people living between Picton and Bowral, who truly believe that a new high school is required.

I commend the work of the Wingecarribee-Wollondilly Advocate for a second high school, the local community committee, which is lobbying the Government and preparing a case on merit for the new school. Today a meeting is being held at Picton High School to discuss the raw sewage and upgrade issues. It is disgraceful that it took a year before any work was done on the toilets at the school—work that did not go close to meeting the demands of 1,400 students. The Department of Education and Training advised the school that the Department of Public Works spent \$30,000 on upgrading those toilets. Those parents to whom I have spoken are unaware of how that money was spent.

All that was achieved was the adjusting of toilet doors, painting and the replacement of a few tiles. Most practical people would say that a job of that magnitude would cost about \$6,000 if it had been carried out by local contractors. I am calling for a full account of the expenditure of that \$30,000. What happened to the other \$50,000? The local parents and citizens association raised \$35,000—that is a lot of sausage sizzles—which was spent on extending the canteen. That work was not done by the Department of Education and Training. The department is trying to account for that \$35,000. That is just not on! The department should not be let off the hook. It should invest the amount of money that was promised for upgrading the school's facilities.

I now refer to the problem of raw sewage at Picton High School. Once a week the toilet pipes back up and raw sewage spills onto the floor. That is partly due to the inadequate pump-out capacity of the septic system. Apparently the school cannot hook up to the Picton regional sewerage scheme because of collapsed sewer lines underneath the school. The department is still desperately trying to find a solution to this problem. In the meantime, students are forced to use toilets that regularly spew raw sewage, which can be walked onto any area of the school and cause contamination. The school must solve this problem urgently. The sewerage pipe problem should be fixed properly so that the school can connect to the sewerage system.

In the meantime the school is paying not only a connection fee for the Picton regional sewerage scheme, which it cannot use, but also septic pump-out costs. The President of the Picton High School Parents and Citizens Association, Mrs Narelle Stoker, has been given some assurance that that money will be refunded to the school. Whether or not that occurs, taxpayers are still paying money that is being wasted—money that could be used for schools, hospitals and other public facilities. We desperately need a second high school in our

region but we also must ensure that Picton High School is a safe, positive learning environment. We must ensure that the Principal, Kevin Garrick, and his staff are supported in the best possible way to perform their job—educating the young people in the Picton area. We must also ensure that the issues raised by Mrs Narelle Stoker are taken seriously by the Minister for Education and Training, that everything possible is done as urgently as possible to ensure that the school is made safe, and that the money raised by the association is spent by the Department of Public Works on school capital facilities.

### FAIRFIELD OLYMPIC CELEBRATIONS

**Ms MEAGHER** (Cabramatta—Parliamentary Secretary) [4.55 p.m.]: As we wind down for this parliamentary session, this is a great opportunity to sit back from the argy-bargy in which we have engaged in relation to various aspects of the Olympics and embrace the Olympic spirit that will captivate the community over coming weeks. I am pleased to advise that Cabramatta, the community I have the honour of representing in this place, will have an opportunity to embrace that spirit and come together in a celebration of our diversity. The city of Fairfield is fortunate to host two Olympic events: the mountain bike event and equestrian events.

Being host to a couple of events has encouraged the city to embrace the spirit of the Olympic torch relay with a great deal of enthusiasm and goodwill. The torch will be run along John Street, the main street of Cabramatta, at 3.30 p.m. on 12 September. To celebrate its arrival Cabramatta will also host the Lunar Festival, a festival of significance in the Chinese calendar. The Chinese and Asian communities in Cabramatta celebrate the festival on a scale that is not undertaken in other parts of Sydney. The *Sydney Morning Herald* estimated that 40,000 people attended last year's Lunar Festival. The festival is a great opportunity to push aside for the time being some issues that we confront on a daily basis and to celebrate our diversity, our cultural richness and the hard work of the men and women of the Cabramatta community. It is an opportunity to come together in a spirit of goodwill, enthusiasm and celebration.

The arrival of the Olympic torch will be an important day in Cabramatta. I congratulate Fairfield City Council on the work it has done with various communities to ensure that the Lunar Festival is one that will be remembered. The community has taken other initiatives to promote Cabramatta as a regional destination for daytrippers and to enhance the buoyancy of its business people. Night markets have been established in an attempt to spice up life for the community in the evenings.

The night markets will commence on Friday 8 October at 5 p.m. and go through to 9.30 p.m. They will be an opportunity for people in and around the local community to slow down and come together in a street atmosphere of goodwill, which will be suitable for families. People will be able to experience some of the great shopping opportunities and variety of cuisines that exist in Cabramatta, to which I have often referred in the House. Two important events are coming up for the Cabramatta community. These events are a great opportunity for us to look at the highlights of our community and to talk positively outside Cabramatta about our community. They are an important way for us to sell our message of cultural enrichment through media outlets.

I encourage the local community to work together to make these events positive ones. Let us talk about Cabramatta positively to attract people for the long-term benefit of the community. As this session of the Parliament is winding up, this is a great opportunity for me as the representative of Cabramatta to say that our community has an opportunity to be part of the greatest show on earth. The Olympic Games will create an enormous boost for Sydney, for our self esteem, for our standing in the eyes of the world, and for our pride in what we have to offer. I am glad that the Olympics will have important and long-lasting spin-offs for the people of Cabramatta, and I urge them to embrace the opportunity wholeheartedly.

### NORTHSIDE STORAGE TUNNEL FILTRATION SYSTEM

**Mr COLLINS** (Willoughby) [5.02 p.m.]: First, I thank my colleague the honourable member for Monaro for his courtesy. I am pleased that the Minister responsible for Sydney Water is in the Chamber because the matter I raise on behalf of my constituents in Willoughby, particularly the residents in the area surrounding the Scotts River vent currently under construction, and Glenaeon School students, pertains to this Minister's portfolios. I am alarmed that things have reached this stage. My comments to the Minister are not addressed to him in any partisan way. I would make the same case within government. Were I a member of a government I would put precisely the position I am putting on behalf of my constituents.

I do not believe that the Minister or the Premier, who spoke on this issue in the House yesterday, is acting maliciously or malevolently. However, I believe that the Government, the Minister and the Premier are

being given old, outdated information by their bureaucrats, particularly Sydney Water, which is masqueraded under the term "the Sydney Alliance". The Sydney Alliance has given assurances to the people of Scotts Creek and representative of Glenaeon School that if there is any risk the project will not go ahead. Indeed, the Minister used the same words when speaking to me. He said that if there is any risk, this project will not go ahead. The Premier gave the same assurance on 13 August when, on the Luke Bonner program on radio 2GB, he said:

... the scientific data is overwhelming and if there were the remotest chance, I mean, talk about what the Government has done we would have been cut-off by the Land and Environment Court.

The Premier said that he will not be bullied on the issue, that there is no risk and that he accepts what the bureaucrats tell him. In a week when he has expressed grave concern about saving dolphins, he should show the same concern about saving the health of children at Glenaeon School. The emerging evidence shows the Government's failure to prepare for this project and to provide the safeguards on which local residents have rightly insisted. Alex Walker, the Managing Director of Sydney Water, said that he places his reliance on the Health Department. Mr Woodward from the Environment Protection Authority said that he places his reliance on the Health Department. What did the Health Department say through its spokesman Dr Corbett? Dr Corbett said:

The NSW Dept was never formally invited until the mediation. We were by-passed in the deliberations that occurred in the development of this.

In other words, the Health Department has been brought in well and truly after the horse has bolted. The project is verging on completion, and now the Health Department is saying that it was brought in pretty much as an afterthought. The fact is that there is no round-the-clock measurement of the pollution that will be emitted from this vent. The vent will only filter odours, it will not filter pathogens. This evidence is emerging clearly during the inquiry currently being conducted by the Legislative Council's standing committee. On behalf of my constituents, including the students at Glenaeon School, I plead with the Minister and the Premier to look at the worrying evidence which is emerging. There is a strong risk. Ian Kiernan told the committee that the promises were gutted out of the project. He said:

... any trust we had in Sydney Water has been destroyed in this process.

Professor Ray Kearney, the expert to whom everyone looks on this issue, has made it clear that pathogens will not be screened through the filtration system, the construction of which the Minister is allowing to proceed. Professor Kearney said that he is extremely concerned about the preoccupation with legionella, because other organisms are even more important. In other words, pathogens will not be removed by the filtration system. Legionella, golden staphylococcus and other unknown contaminants will be emitted 90 meters from the playground at Glenaeon School. That is a matter of extreme concern. The disaster unfolding before us is foreseeable and preventable. There is a solution, and it would not involve a ridiculous amount of money. The Government can find the money to modify this project and protect the children and local residents.

**Mr YEADON** (Granville—Minister for Information Technology, Minister for Energy, Minister for Forestry, and Minister for Western Sydney) [5.07 p.m.]: It is fortuitous that I am in the Chamber and can respond to the honourable member for Willoughby. The honourable member indicated that his criticism was not personal. I accept that. He also indicated that he is genuine. I have some difficulty with that, because obviously I have looked at this issue closely. The risk involved in the northside storage project is absolutely negligible. In fact, it is so negligible that it cannot be quantified.

There is no doubt that the northside storage tunnel will provide extraordinary benefits to the people of Scotts Creek and to Sydney Harbour in general. At present, on about a dozen occasions or more each year raw sewage flows from overflow points and deposits itself alongside Scotts Creek 20 meters from Glenaeon School. That has been the case for many years. This project will ensure that the incidence of raw sewage overflowing into the creek will be reduced by 85 per cent to 90 per cent. Therefore, on only one or two occasions a year, at most, raw sewage will overflow into the creek. For the rest of the time only air will be exhausted from the vent in Scotts Creek.

It should be noted that because of the design of the tunnel and the incidence of stormwater run-off and the like, on four or five occasions a year the vent in Scotts Creek will be an exhaust vent and for the rest of the time it will be an induction vent. Therefore, the incidence of raw sewage flowing into the creek will be reduced from more than a dozen times a year to four or five times a year, with only air being exhausted. Those involved with the project have a lot of experience in such matters, and the risk is negligible. It is the language of scientific caution. None of us can guarantee that the sun will rise tomorrow, but we all get up, feeling confident and comfortable that that is what will occur. That is the level of protection being provided by the northside storage tunnel.

### WALLSEND PRIMARY CARE SERVICES CLOSURE

**Mr MILLS** (Wallsend) [5.09 p.m.]: This week, on behalf of the Wallsend and Hunter community, I presented petitions bringing to the attention of the House that Wallsend Primary Care Services Ltd, an after-hours bulk billing service at Wallsend hospital campus, was likely to close at the end of September 2000 through lack of support from general practitioners to assist and relieve the service. Closure of the service would place a great burden on emergency services at John Hunter and the Mater hospitals in particular. The petitioners sought that the Hunter Area Health Service and the Hunter Urban Division of General Practice negotiate with general practitioners and State and Federal governments to assist Wallsend Primary Care Services to remain open in the short term. The petitioners ask that in the longer term a model of after-hours primary care, delivered by general practitioners, be implemented at Wallsend to provide the best of health care services to the people of our district.

On 17 August Dr Bruce Raffan and Dr Paul Collett, who operate Wallsend Primary Care Services, advised the community that they would have to cease offering the service because they had reached the end of their tether. In 1991, when the Greiner Government wrongly closed Wallsend District Hospital, the community suffered a distinct loss of service. The Wallsend picketers—people who had been maintaining a picket line for 18 months—negotiated with the chief executive officer and administrator who was appointed, Dr Tim Smyth, for the restoration of health services to the hospital. The outcome was the Wallsend Primary Care Service. Although it is a private medical service, it has effectively provided a public service and an acute medical service at no cost to the consumer.

On behalf of the Wallsend community, I thank Dr Raffan and Dr Collett, who have maintained the service for seven years, and the general practitioners who have helped them sustain that important service for the community. Both Dr Raffan and Dr Collett have worked in rural areas and at John Hunter Hospital in primary care as staff specialists. I also thank the Wallsend Hospital Guardians, who have kept the faith since 1991 and have helped mobilise public opinion in the Hunter to assist the retention of this service. In particular, I thank Mrs Barbara Hardes, the Guardian spokesperson, and the dozen or so members of her team who have written and distributed thousands of letters, collected thousands of petition signatures in the past few weeks, and negotiated with health figures.

The Wallsend community has been lucky to have had this after-hours general practitioner service for the past seven years. I believe that with this service we have been ahead of the nation. In the past 12 months a new model of after-hours primary care and minor casualty service by general practitioners has been implemented at Maitland Hospital. The Maitland model was organised by the Hunter Urban Division of General Practice, together with the Hunter Area Health Service, using combined Federal and State government funding. There is some hope that the trial will be extended to other areas of the Hunter, in particular, to Wallsend. I thank the Minister for Health, who is present in the Chamber, for his comments last month that he supported the retention of the service in the Wallsend district.

I have some good news to give to my local community. I spoke with Dr Raffan today and he has advised me that he has received sufficient indications of support from other general practitioners in the Hunter which will, hopefully, allow the Wallsend Primary Care Service to continue operation until the end of the present financial year. The service will continue at reduced hours: 5.30 p.m. to 9.30 p.m. Monday to Friday, 2.00 p.m. to 6.00 p.m. Saturday and 11.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m. Sunday, to achieve the following objectives. Firstly, all peak times for accident and emergency departments at the big hospitals in the Hunter will be covered, so that Wallsend Primary Care Services will continue to take pressure off hospital emergency departments. Secondly, these times avoid any semblance of competition against general practices in the Wallsend and surrounding districts.

I thank Professor McGrath of the Hunter Area Health Service and Dr Arn Sprogis of the Hunter Urban Division of General Practice for their willingness to negotiate with the community. Both major political parties in Canberra are moving towards provision of after-hours general practitioner primary care services. We are all heading in the right direction. The Wallsend community is resilient, tough, resourceful and successful. Those characteristics are equally evident in the Newcastle Knights rugby league team, who I am confident will defeat the Sydney Roosters this Saturday and go on to win the grand final on 27 August. Go the Knights!

**Mr KNOWLES** (Macquarie Fields—Minister for Health) [5.14 p.m.]: I congratulate the honourable member for Wallsend on raising this matter in Parliament on behalf of his constituents. I know that he has moved heaven and earth over recent weeks, personally writing to general practitioners in his electorate, to try to

bring about the win which he proudly announced a few moments ago. A month ago I gave a commitment to retain general practitioner services at Wallsend. I restate that commitment today. I also pay tribute to the general practitioners who have come together to assist the service. Their assistance will allow us time to develop a lasting and long-term solution, to which I am also committed.

The Health council initiatives that were announced in March reinforce at every turn the need for greater integration between general practitioners, primary and community-based care models and the acute areas of the hospital system. One could not find a better model of integration than those found in the Hunter, such as the Maitland service, which was developed in part by the Hunter Urban Division of General Practice, led by Dr Arn Sprogis. Yet again we see a group of clinicians willing to work together to maintain a service for their community. It is good news, but it is interim good news. The Government remains committed to a long-term solution. I know that the honourable member for Wallsend will continue to press for health services on behalf of his constituents, and the Government will support him. We will go wherever necessary, and we will work collaboratively with Dr Wooldridge to ensure a lasting and long-term solution to the health care needs of the Wallsend community.

### **MONARO ELECTORATE NOXIOUS WEEDS INFESTATION**

**Mr WEBB** (Monaro) [5.16 p.m.]: I wish to make a statement about noxious weeds infestation and its effect on people working on the land in the Monaro region. Many complaints and inquiries to my office relate to noxious weeds. The matter is particularly relevant at this time of the year, preceding spring, and particularly when much of New South Wales and some areas of the Monaro have received good rainfalls. Unfortunately, the tenacity of weeds results in their spreading across regional and State boundaries. Lines drawn on maps will not stop the spread of weeds. In many cases, differing approaches to weed control on either side of a boundary can help spread them.

The Monaro Regional Weeds Committee, an initiative of the Bombala, Cooma, Monaro and Snowy River shires, chaired by John Hood, a Bombala councillor, is proving effective in the eradication of weeds in the greater Monaro. The shires of Yarralumla, Tallaganda and Bega Valley on the coast have done what they can. Unfortunately, government funding is not sufficient to do the job. Earlier in the year I indicated that the \$6 million-plus budget does not go anywhere near to addressing the problem of weed infestation. It has been estimated that \$20 million is needed to address serrated tussock alone in Monaro.

Many farmers are leaving the land and the average age of farmers is 62. The cost and work burden on farmers is getting to the point where many of them are not able to satisfactorily carry out their weed control obligations. An ageing farming population that has seen government authorities and absentee landlords completely ignoring their obligations cannot be forced to solve the problem. Education on control measures for the many different weeds is vitally important. I would like the Government to play a greater role in education about weed control. The weeds of major concern are nodding thistle and other thistles such as serrated thistle, Scotch thistle, serrated tussock—the subject of recent media releases—coastal fireweed, Scotch broom, blackberries, St John's wort, African love grass, Paterson's curse and its cousin, viper's bugloss.

Willows, particularly the black willow, are regarded as weeds of major importance, and a considerable amount of National Heritage Trust money has been expended in eradicating those weeds. I would like to see the same bipartisan effort from all levels of government to aid landowners, land-holders and land managers in eradicating the weeds I referred to earlier. Some years ago there was talk of sectioning off some lands in the Monaro as bad land, abandoning them and letting the weeds go. Of course, that is no solution. Difficulties have been experienced with regard to education and controlling regrowth. The use of plantation forestry to control weeds, and to provide a windbreak for airborne seed and a blanket for lands that are inundated with weeds at an uncontrollable level is a tool that I have promoted on other occasions and it should certainly be looked at.

The problems associated with rural lands protection boards and local government and their feral animal and weed control anomaly needs to be urgently addressed by the State Government. Many tools are available, including chemicals and stock and pasture improvement. The rules relating to native vegetation and threatened species, make it difficult for farmers to implement proper stock control and pasture improvement using chemicals such as Task Force, Glyphosate, MPCA, Grazon, Touchdown, and the many other chemicals and tools that are available to farmers and land managers for weed control. We need to look at this problem together. I believe that the State Government needs to do more, and I would like to see more funding allocated to weed control in the State budget next year. Local government needs all the assistance it can get to control weeds, which seriously threaten agricultural production and the viability of agricultural industries in the Monaro, the State and the nation.

## CONTAINER DEPOSIT LEGISLATION

**Ms ALLAN** (Wentworthville) [5.21 p.m.]: I have a particular interest in the issue of packaging because a major packaging organisation, Cromford Packaging, which is responsible for the recycling of two-litre plastic milk bottles, is based in the electorate of Wentworthville. Those of us for whom plastic milk bottles become a waste item are very appreciative of the fact that we can put such items out for recycling. Unfortunately, a recent Government announcement has upset industry, particularly the packaging industry—as evidenced by the number of phone calls I have received in the last couple of days. Last Sunday, as a result of Clean Up Australia Day in preparation for the Olympics due in less than a month's time, the Minister for the Environment announced a review of container deposit legislation [CDL]. It is not a new concept.

Many of us when we were youngsters had the pleasure of taking bottles to the local shop to claim the deposit. The refund was sixpence, or a penny or tuppence. We got very excited about our ability to collect and return the empty bottles. Unfortunately, that system has long gone and this State now has one of the most successful kerbside recycling systems in the entire country. The Government's decision regarding a CDL inquiry is disappointing for the various packaging industries and local councils which already have kerbside systems in place. Container deposit legislation exists successfully, albeit in a very limited way, in only one State in Australia—that is, South Australia. Despite the fact that the legislation exists only in South Australia, some local councils as well as the conservation movement have shown tremendous interest in having CDL introduced in this State.

The Minister for the Environment has stated that Dr Stuart White of the Institute for Sustainable Futures will conduct the inquiry, and that he hopes to receive Dr White's report by the end of November. Despite the fact that only a limited inquiry is proposed, the announcement has set alarm bells ringing in the packaging industry. I take a particular interest in this, because I chair the State's Kerbside Recycling Group, which, under the national packaging covenant, is preparing a plan for New South Wales and other States of Australia to achieve massive waste reduction in the packaging area. One of the objectives of the group is to ensure that a sustainable kerbside recycling system is in place. The group's next meeting promises to be very interesting, because the introduction of container deposit legislation would have major consequences for kerbside recycling systems in New South Wales.

I also served on the Public Accounts Committee, which conducted an inquiry into the waste service. One of the findings of that committee related to the committee's concern about the number of inquiries currently taking place in this State in relation to the management of waste. The announcement of yet another inquiry into waste management increases the number of such inquiries to about five or six. I believe that is about four or five inquiries too many. Later this year the Government will be obliged to completely review the Waste Management Act in this State. The Act was passed by Parliament five years ago, and has been operating with varying degrees of success since that time. However, the legislation contained a requirement that it be reviewed comprehensively, and that review will take place later this year. I believe that another inquiry at this stage would confuse the objectives of the principal inquiry.

If container deposit legislation in this State is to be reviewed yet again—and it certainly has been looked at various times during the past 10 to 15 years—an inquiry as part of that broader inquiry would be more appropriate. I hope that this does not send too many confusing messages, particularly to the private sector and local government, who are attempting to operate within the national packaging covenant at the present time. Currently there are 91 signatories to the covenant, including all State governments and 65 private sector companies. Those companies are looking for leadership from the respective governments, including the New South Wales Government, which has already signed the covenant. I would not like to think that the proposal to conduct a further inquiry into container deposit legislation suggests to those people that we are confused about our overall objectives. [*Time expired.*]

## TUMUT HEALTH SERVICES

**Ms HODGKINSON** (Burrinjuck) [5.26 p.m.]: I wish to speak about health services in Tumut and the surrounding districts. I thank the Minister for Health for making a special effort to be in the Chamber this evening to listen to my private member's statement. Tumut is encountering a crisis in the provision of medical care for its citizens. At present Tumut has three doctors' surgeries and seven practising general practitioners. However, we have been informed that over the next few weeks and months one senior practitioner will retire and another will close his practice and relocate to Canberra for family reasons. A third general practitioner has indicated that his practice will also close, also for family reasons. There are further indications that another

general practitioner will also leave the district, and it is likely that over the next few months Tumut will have only three general practitioners working from one practice to service Tumut, supported by single-doctor practices in Adelong and Batlow. This will mean that Tumut will have five general practitioners for a population of more than 11,000 people—and growing.

The situation is further exacerbated by the fact that one of the general practitioners to leave the town is also a specialist obstetrician. This means that Tumut will no longer have a specialist in that area of medicine, which calls into question the viability of Tumut as a birthing centre. At present Tumut is also the birthing centre for patients from Tumbarumba and Gundagai shires. Doctor numbers is not the only medical problem facing Tumut, however. This beautiful town, which is rapidly growing due to its expansion in industry, plantation, horticulture and tourism, urgently requires a new hospital. Richard Couche is the chairman of the Tumut hospital planning committee, which is a community committee formed in 1999 after a public meeting was called to consider the replacement of the existing Tumut hospital with a new facility. The committee has worked hard to get through to the cash-strapped Greater Murray Area Health Service that a new facility is needed in Tumut because the hospital's main structure is more than 90 years old and has been heavily added to. The facility therefore has many deficiencies, it is inefficient in itself, and does not meet current standards.

The Greater Murray Area Health Service has acknowledged the need for a new hospital in Tumut. Whilst this need has been allocated a high priority it is still competing for funds with other high-priority projects at Wagga Wagga, Griffith and Junee hospitals. It is expected that a new facility at Tumut will cost of the order of \$8 million. At this stage the Tumut hospital committee understands that no commitment has been made to construct the new hospital, and that the Greater Murray Area Health Service has many competing needs throughout its area for capital funding. However, this does not mean that Tumut hospital should miss out.

Planning work needs to proceed for a new facility and, in particular, a procurement feasibility plan must be prepared at the earliest opportunity so that the project can proceed, should capital funding become available. There is a growing divide between medical officers and medical services in country areas compared with those in metropolitan centres. Recently, this was highlighted through cutbacks in operating theatre hours, which has resulted, in some cases, in patients who had been prepared for theatre regrettably having their operations cancelled for another day. It should go without saying that it is equally important for country people to have the same access to medical services in a decent hospital as it is for city people.

We have seen what happens when hospitals are allowed to deteriorate: doctors leave the towns. We have seen it happen in many country towns and we are continuing to see it. It is vitally important that the Greater Murray Area Health Service is given a funding boost to run its country facilities properly, humanely and with local population growth in mind. It is crucial for the future of our area. Currently Tumut hospital has about 140 births per year. We cannot afford to lose an obstetrician. Similarly, we cannot afford to lose any services that will impede the health of our citizens. The Government must take urgent steps to resolve the crisis in doctor numbers, retain theatre services and accept the urgent need for a new hospital in this growing town.

**Mr KNOWLES** (Macquarie Fields—Minister for Health) [5.30 p.m.]: I thank the honourable member for her comments, and recognise her very strong commitment to the residents of Tumut and to their health services. I can make some brief, general comments. The malaise she describes—the declining number in, and departure of, general practitioners—is something we experience Australiawide and, as a nation, something we need to do much more about. In that regard I commend the Commonwealth Government for the collaborative efforts undertaken between States, Territories and the Commonwealth to seek to revitalise, through a whole range of initiatives, medical services in the bush.

I note, however, that the Australian Medical Association and the Rural Doctors Association recently had cause to criticise some of those initiatives because the initial idea and its implementation are two different things. Nonetheless, I give an undertaking to the honourable member that I will ask the Greater Murray Area Health Service for some detailed information about any proposals for a procurement feasibility plan. But let us also understand that, as was highlighted in the Sinclair report that I published earlier this year, many things in rural New South Wales have been neglected for generations.

It is not possible to fix all those things overnight, nor is it feasible, because the best and brightest new hospital at Tumut will lay idle unless we have the medical services and the professional expertise to operate out of it. The honourable member has my commitment, as I give to any rural community, to work with her and with anybody who wants to participate in revitalising medical services in rural communities. I cite as exhibit 1 Sinclair, a bipartisan approach; restocking through a series of additional funding to rural health services; and a commitment to see that work continue.



**TODD CLEWETT, DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF TO THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH**

**Mr KNOWLES** (Macquarie Fields—Minister for Health) [5.33 p.m.]: As we were notified earlier in the day that this would be the last week of sitting prior to the Olympics, I seek the indulgence of the House for a brief period to place on record my thanks and farewell to my Deputy Chief of Staff, Todd Clewett, who leaves my office in two weeks to attend the John F. Kennedy School in Harvard for the next two years to undertake his Masters of Public Administration. Todd, you have come a long way from Goulburn, and it is a long way from Goulburn to Harvard. I can only say to you, in all sincerity: I am so glad and grateful that you have come my way. You know just how proud of you we are, your colleagues and your family. On behalf of my office I take this unusual step of recording in *Hansard*, the history of Parliament—something you are deeply interested in—our thanks for your efforts over the past five years.

To come from a researcher to my deputy chief of staff and handle one of the toughest portfolios, and play the integral role you have in the Health Council reports, particularly the financial aspects, is a tribute to your skills, ability and intelligence. My dad used to say that there are two options in public life: you can surround yourself with fools and look good by comparison, or you can surround yourself with the best and look good as a consequence. Todd, you have been the best of the best. I am really proud of you. You have been not only a great colleague, but a terrific mate. I will see you when you get back. You will come back, and I will see you fulfil my often-claimed prediction of your becoming Senator Clewett for the Australian Labor Party.

**KOGARAH FAIR AND CHARITY BED RACE**

**Miss BURTON** (Kogarah) [5.35 p.m.]: I wish to inform the House of the wonderful community spirit that exists in my electorate. It makes me very proud to be the member for Kogarah. I want to pay special tribute to those in our community who work tirelessly to support the St George Hospital. In particular, I want to make mention of the Lamrock Committee, which was established in 1991 by Lorna Stone who, at that time, was the chairperson of the Southern Area Health Service. The committee was established to raise funds for the St George Hospital. It is named after Dr James Lamrock, the first doctor to work at the St George Cottage Hospital more than 100 years ago.

The committee is involved in a range of different kinds of charity work from fashion parades, art shows and trivia nights to assisting groups such as the Hurstville Rotary Club. The committee began with eight members and now has 14 active and committed members who devote much of their time to organising these activities. The Lamrock Committee is very well known in Kogarah. The major event in the committee's year is the Kogarah Fair and Charity Bed Race, which has been held annually for the past nine years. Its success has grown in that time.

The bed race centres around hospital beds that have been sponsored by a business or community organisation in the area. Each team must have five members, four of whom push the bed and one person in the bed. The races are held in heats and the four fastest beds go through to the final. Novelty awards are given to those with the best decorated bed. Last year the day raised \$10,000 and this year the committee aims to raise even more. The program for the day starts with a parade of the beds, vintage cars, police and bands from the area.

Since my election in March of last year I have sponsored a bed in the race, and this year my sponsorship has allowed a year 10 team from St George Girls High School to participate in the day. The girls in the team are Kristine Manalak, Vanessa Magher, Annette Lovat, Kristy McGowan and Sieu Lim. I wish them the best of luck, and I thank them for giving their time to support such a wonderful cause. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Lamrock Committee, which has worked with the State Emergency Service, Kogarah police, Kogarah Municipal Council and the community relations department at St George Hospital to again organise the Charity Fair and Bed Race.

In particular, I would like to mention Mrs Toni Horsey, President and founding member of the Lamrock Committee. The committee is instrumental in the organisation of the Kogarah Fair and Charity Bed Race. It has established an excellent relationship with the community. The fair also includes a number of stalls rented by small businesses to showcase their skills. The major sponsors of the day are L J Hooker Kogarah, the Kogarah Inn and the *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader*. These sponsors allow the Lamrock Committee to buy the awards and provide financial assistance to run the day.

I must also mention our local radio station 2NBC, which is extremely supportive of the day, and which provides much-needed assistance to the Lamrock Committee. The stage and sound system are supplied by Phil

Bates, who donates his services free of charge. Many people are involved in the running and organising of the Kogarah Fair and Charity Bed Race. These different groups and organisations will come together this Saturday to participate in what will be another very successful fundraiser for the St George Hospital. Special mention must go to the community relations department of St George Hospital.

I would also like to mention Penny Glezellis and Maria Savvides, who work tirelessly for the hospital, the staff and its patients. It is that sort of commitment that makes our hospital, the St George Hospital, unique. I would like to recognise the continued support of the Kogarah Rotary Club, the Kogarah Lions Club, the Hurstville Rotary Club and the Oatley Lions Club, which will help out on the day. I wish the Lamrock Committee the best of luck. I recognise its commitment, dedication and courage in undertaking such a huge task. I look forward to being there on Saturday. I also urge anyone in our community who is not sponsoring a bed or who is not participating to support the local community and come down to Railway Parade in Kogarah to join in supporting the bed race.

### YOUNG DRIVER EDUCATION AND TRAINING

**Mr O'FARRELL** (Ku-ring-gai—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [5.40 p.m.]: A matter of concern to me are media reports on the death last month of seven young people as a result of motor accidents over the space of a few days. In common with most honourable members of this House, I viewed those deaths with great shock and great pity about the loss of life. Such an occurrence causes one to think seriously about the issues involved. I have to say that I am concerned about the effectiveness of the Government's response that was reported in the *Sun Herald* in July. The response included a program beginning this month for parents or any inexperienced driver who proposes to teach young drivers to be able to attend three two-hour lessons on getting the safety message across. I must say that that is a fundamentally wrong response to the problem. A lot of money is spent in this State and throughout this country on medical costs associated with deaths caused by accidents on our roads. A lot of money is spent on the enforcement of road rules. However, very little money is spent on the prevention of accidents and the elimination of bad driving habits in the first place.

I take this opportunity to express an unusual thought. Given that most driver education or training is conducted by parents for their children, perhaps bad habits and aggressive driving habits are being passed on to young people. As a Liberal, I rarely argue that governments should step in and take the place of individual responsibility or, indeed, parental and family responsibility. But I believe that this matter is crying out for Government action. Situated within my electorate is the Honda Australia Roadcraft Training [HART] centre, which is located at the former St Ives police driver training centre. The HART centre provides high-quality driver training to people who either want to obtain motorbike licences and are required to undergo that type of training or people who want to obtain extended training in the use of vehicles. I believe it is time the Government began diverting money away from the outcomes of accidents involving young people and towards funding and introducing up-front appropriately costed programs at centres such as HART to train young people in schools about good driving habits before they obtain their licences.

I also believe that the Government should consider trying something that has been recommended by the Ku-ring-gai Community Safety Committee. The idea is an initiative of the Ku-ring-gai Municipal Council and the current Mayor, Tony Hall. Courts should be given the power to send repeated young offenders to centres such as HART to undertake remedial driving courses. Those powers currently do not exist. If a magistrate is confronted with persons in that category, he or she cannot send them to HART because there is no funding. Both the Mayor of Ku-ring-gai and I have written to the Attorney General urging him to make such funds available and trial such a program. The global roads budget includes a medical component arising from the cost of road accidents, the cost of enforcement by police, and myriad government-funded road safety programs through the Roads and Traffic Authority involving expenditure of tens of millions of dollars each year. If some of that money were diverted up-front to driver education for young people before they obtain their licences or, indeed, when they are picked up after having done something wrong, a repetition of the type of publicity surrounding the death of those seven young people may well be avoided.

I commend this initiative to the Carr Government. There is no question of politics involved here because most honourable members are parents and would not want to go through what the families of those seven young people experienced during the past six weeks. No member of Parliament would want their constituents to become road statistics. Members of Parliament should be encouraging the development of better driving patterns. I do not believe that the current network of largely parent-based driver training is providing the required level of skill for young people. The Government should get serious about this issue and fund appropriately devised courses for young people in schools and for other young people in the wider community.

**DEATH OF LOU COOREY**

**Mr NAGLE** (Auburn) [5.45 p.m.]: I participate in this debate in remembrance of Lou Coorey on behalf of his family and friends. Lou died recently in Concord Repatriation Hospital. He was a great friend of mine and of everyone he met. I cannot recall his ever having said a bad word about anyone—except, probably, Bob Menzies. Lou Coorey extended to me and to many people something that was his greatest love and most useful characteristic—his most noble and heartiest counsel, which is a quality that was extremely important to me and is something that there could be much more of in the world today. It could be said about Lou Coorey, this religious man, that he did things that were common to all of us in the most perfect manner, and this is indeed true. He journeyed through life touching our persons, souls and minds. His marriage to his wife, Martha, was a happy one, although that does not mean they did not have their ups and downs or their arguments. It was once said:

How shall I sufficiently describe the happy state of that couple who the church have joined, prayer and thanksgiving have confirmed, angels in heaven have proclaimed and the parents on earth approved?

Indeed, that was the marriage of Lou Coorey and Martha Coorey. The offertory procession at his requiem mass included some of his young descendants who carry on his life: Anne, David, Jason, Paul, James, Paul, Catherine, Amy, Christopher, Elizabeth, Peter, Anthony, David, Steven, Louis and Patrick. Who, and what, was Lou Coorey? In the real world, he was the sum total of the Coorey family's entire history from its very beginnings until today. Just as he was the sum total of the very existence of that family, in turn his descendants are now the sum total of Lou Coorey.

In times when I experienced personal difficulties, particularly in the 1987 preselection and in more recent times, Lou Coorey would attend to help and to cast his vote in favour of me. In May this year there was a rumble at the Auburn State Electoral Council of the Australian Labor Party [ALP], and Lou Coorey was there to support me with his vote, even though he was very ill—in fact, he was dying. He accepted his ALP life membership from the Minister for Police, Paul Whelan, at the opening of my 1991 election campaign. Lou Coorey was in the ALP for more than 50 years. I shall cite some of the things that his son had to say about Lou during his eulogy:

Lou and Martha were married in 1943 at St Anthony's church at Orange, which is the very same church at which Lou's parents had been married some 40 years earlier. Dad would be the first to admit that his life would not have been as successful or happy without the unselfish commitment, loyalty, love and devotion of his wonderful wife ... Martha. . . .

Dad regarded total honesty as absolutely essential and, of course, he was a person of the highest ethical standards. He was a person of unblemished moral character whose word was his bond and he was never doubted. He and Martha never indulged themselves with anything at the expense of their children. He knew the value of good education and he instilled in us the same work ethic which had been instilled in him by his own parents. As with Mum, I don't think I ever heard him tell a lie. Nor did a malicious word pass his lips, except when discussing politics or football ...

Dad also loved his football, the Labor Party and politics generally. He was a great South Sydney supporter. He was a life member of the Labor Party and he was thrilled to receive congratulatory telegrams from Gough Whitlam, Bob Hawke and Paul Keating when he and Martha celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary in 1993. He was also an acolyte at this church for 20 years. His detailed knowledge of the hierarchy and the workings of the Catholic and Maronite churches was impressive.

He was proudest of being Catholic, of Lebanese origin and an Australian citizen—in that order. He would be glad to know that, when he died, Australia was still a monarchy but he was looking forward to seeing the Olympic Games on TV. He also had a fabulous memory for dates, events and people. He was well known as one who attended the funerals of famous people and we were always looking for a shot of him of the TV news. His knowledge of who his cousins were and how they were related to him was wide.

Indeed, the Coorey family is quite widespread. Sometimes on occasions when funerals of famous people were televised, Lou could be seen—and, naturally, that had nothing to do with politics. This is what I could say about Lou Coorey:

Behold a friend ...  
A smile among dark frowns ... a beloved light ...  
A Solitude, a Refuge, a Delight ...

That was Lou Coorey. Lou, rest in peace: a job well done.

**Mr WHELAN** (Strathfield—Minister for Police) [5.50 p.m.]: As the honourable member for Auburn said, I had the honour of presenting Lou Coorey with his life membership of the Australian Labor Party at the 1991 campaign launch for the honourable member for Auburn. Lou Coorey was a wonderful man, as the honourable member so beautifully stated. He certainly lived life to the fullest and has left us with many legacies

about commitment to family and to the Australian Labor Party as well as the example of someone with integrity on which we should model our lives. The honourable member for Auburn said that Lou Coorey was a great help to him and was always in his corner of support.

Lou represented so much of the early settlement by the wonderful Lebanese community in Australia. He was born in Redfern, where so many members of the Lebanese community were born. His family moved to Goondiwindi in rural New South Wales and looked after communities by working assiduously and honestly for them. I am sure that whilst there is great sadness at his passing, his children and relatives, and the honourable member for Auburn, will remember a father and friend who not only lived life to the fullest but gave us the model on which we can justify and model our own lives. I assure the honourable member for Auburn that it is a sad day but Lou Coorey always had an impact on me whenever I met him. His memory will live on for many years. Hopefully his moral character and the example he set will remain for every one of us to abide by.

### SCHOOL STUDENT TRANSPORT SCHEME

**Mr J. H. TURNER** (Myall Lakes—Deputy Leader of the National Party) [5.52 p.m.]: I draw to the attention of the House a matter raised by two constituents of mine, Mr Alan Brown and his daughter Megan, about the school student transport scheme. Megan is 12 years of age and resides just inside the school transport scheme eligibility distance. However, because of the area in which she lives her father was concerned that she may be placed in dangerous situations if she was required to walk to school. He sought to have Megan included in the school transport scheme system. The initial application was lodged and on 17 March Mr Brown received a reply from the Department of Transport which stated:

Your application was made on the basis of your belief that the walking route that should be used by Megan is unsafe. In certain cases the Department is able to approve subsidised school transport on the grounds of serious traffic-related hazards. However, the walking route used by Megan has been assessed and, on the basis of information available to the Department, would not justify approving subsidised school travel.

The letter continued:

It is important to understand that this decision is based on the Department's own assessment of the walking route ...

That letter was dated 17 March. When Mr Brown challenged the decision he received a copy of the assessment which—surprise, surprise—was dated 14 April, one month after the department wrote stating that it had conducted the assessment! Obviously, that raises the question of why the letter would be sent saying an assessment had been done when clearly it had not. How many other times has the department through its bureaucracy or other means said a task had been completed when that was not the case? It was only when Mr Brown challenged the decision that it became evident the assessment had not been carried out.

I have a copy of the assessment with me. The document has a number of items which require being ticked off or commented on under the following headings: terrain, environment, roadways, traffic type, traffic volume, pedestrian facilities, pedestrian aids and safety hazards. Mr Brown commented on each of those items in a letter dated 5 June to the School Student Transport Scheme Appeals Panel in Sydney. I know well the area that Mr Brown is talking about and I agree with him that the assessment bears little resemblance to the conditions of that part of Taree Megan would have to walk through to go to school.

In the assessment under the heading "terrain" the department has ticked "level" and "undulating". I assure the House that that is not the case; the area is quite hilly and onerous to traverse. Under "environment" it was ticked as being residential. Clearly it is an industrial and commercial area with a timber mill, a manufacturer of parquet floors, two petrol depots and other industrial-type activities as well as some residential sections within it. The traffic type has been ticked as light to medium commuter traffic. The area is in a significant thoroughfare with heavy traffic passing through to service industrial areas in the immediate vicinity and further afield of Taree. In my view the traffic should be classed as heavy. It is noted that the assessment was conducted at 2.30 p.m. which, of course, is not the time at which Megan would be expected to walk that route. She would follow that course between 8 a.m. and 9 a.m. and between 3.30 p.m. and 4.15 p.m.

The volume of traffic would increase significantly during those times when parents collect children from other schools and workers finish and commence work in the area. A number of inconsistencies have occurred with this assessment not the least of which is the rather serious matter that the department said it had been conducted a month before it actually was and provided that information in a letter to Mr Brown. The department needs to offer some compassion in this instance. In his letter to the appeals panel Mr Brown set out a number of reasons Megan should be included in the school transport scheme. In the circumstances the Department of Transport should accede to Mr Brown's request for Megan to be included in the school transport subsidy scheme.

**VETERINARY SURGEONS INVESTIGATING COMMITTEE**

**Mr LYNCH** (Liverpool) [5.57 p.m.]: I have previously spoken in this House about aspects of the Veterinary Surgeons Investigating Committee [VSIC] that trouble several of my constituents. Today I draw attention to further aspects concerning the operation of the VSIC. A strong body of veterinary opinion distrusts the VSIC. A number of veterinary surgeons have expressed concerns to me that the VSIC is completely self-funding. Accordingly, the belief is that almost any complaint addressed to the VSIC will result in a monetary penalty. Complaints about substantive veterinary malfeasance or failure are brought to the VSIC. However, though there are no findings of such conduct, seemingly irrelevant findings about procedural issues—for example, note taking—are used by the VSIC to impose a fine.

This sort of occurrence gives rise to a suspicion that VSIC hearings are about revenue raising for the VSIC and not for the proper purposes of veterinary discipline. Some support for that proposition is gained from a letter under the signature of Geoff Reed, who is the President of the Board of Veterinary Surgeons. The letter is dated 1 August and deals with recent changes to the Veterinary Surgeons Act. In part the letter states:

It should be noted that the board's activities have to be fully funded by the profession after registration and licenses.

In the past a number of procedural atrocities and inadequacies of the VSIC have been brought to the attention of this House. A number of instances brought to my attention raise serious doubts in my mind about the operation of the VSIC. One such instance involves veterinary surgeon Warren Collins. His view and, as I understand it, that of his solicitor, is that the VSIC operates as a star chamber and kangaroo court. A complaint was made resulting from the death of a male samoyed dog. Dr Collins produced a substantial amount of scientific data and expert opinion that his treatment was more than adequate. The VSIC refused to place any weight on this evidence and instead issued him with a caution ostensibly on the basis that he failed to note in his clinical notes the bath of a dog. However, this allowed the VSIC to impose a costs order in the sum of \$300 against Dr Collins. He said:

In summary I found their determination biased and ill-informed.

Another horror story relates to a western Sydney veterinarian who was asked to examine an eight week old puppy, which he did. Subsequently it was examined by another veterinarian who, as that other veterinarian acknowledged, was fortunate to detect what he thought may have been a heart murmur and referred the animal to a specialist. The animal's owner came to the veterinarian's surgery and demanded money otherwise, as the owner indicated to the vet, "There would be a lot of problems for you." A complaint was then made. As I understand it, the extent of the VSIC's inquiries were pretty bizarre: they were limited to a telephone interview by a VSIC member with the complainant. Apparently that was the limit of the evidence of complaint and was accepted by the committee as completely true and correct. There was not the slightest chance of the accused facing his accuser. The vet was found guilty of inappropriate behaviour. He is understandably bemused at what that means.

Dr Tibor Dipold is another veterinarian who was dealt with unfairly by the VSIC. The committee decided to make findings against him following a complaint despite the following: the complainant was not his client; no appointment or consultation had been arranged—Dr Dipold was involved only as a result of an over the fence consultation; no fee was charged or was ever going to be charged; the complainant had declined the vet's offer of a re-examination; and, most interestingly, the incident that gave rise to the complaint occurred 18 months after Dr Dipold had ceased practising veterinary medicine because of personal health problems.

The concerns relate to more than merely individual cases. Thomas Lonsdale has been a veterinarian for many years. He has been engaged in a campaign against the Australian Veterinary Association [AVA] and its involvement and association with commercial pet food interests. He complained to me that as a result of those campaigns he has been harassed in an unjust, unethical and possibly illegal manner. He said that much of that harassment has been carried out through the VSIC. He said:

In my opinion the system of regulation of veterinary surgeons in the State of New South Wales is seriously out of control. Individual veterinary surgeons and the community of New South Wales are badly served. Unless and until principles of fairness and honesty are reinstated the future appears to be as bleak as the past.

One would expect the VSIC and the AVA to reject the Lonsdale allegations as simply the rhetoric of a campaign. The problem I have, however, is that granted all the other problems with the VSIC one cannot dismiss that sort of comment easily. Another veterinary surgeon, Dr Jim Driver, wrote:

Since 1995 the Veterinary Surgeons Board has had to become self-funding. It appears that since this time there has been a spectacular increase in the number of complaints of professional misconduct against veterinary surgeons.

It appears that if a veterinary surgeon has to attend the veterinary surgeons investigating committee there is an inevitable guilty verdict, resulting in a monetary penalty. Frequently the guilty verdict has not related to the complaint, but a technicality such as record-keeping, labelling of medications, poor communication with the client, failure to refer to another veterinary hospital or to a veterinary specialist, to act more prudently, for using a sedan motor vehicle instead of a pet ambulance to transport animals, for failure to detect a heart abnormality which was also inaudible to the operating specialist cardiology surgeon, for giving service and free advice in a casual or social setting away from the place a business.

These matters are serious and I would ask the Minister to give them attention, particularly the self-funding nature of the operations of the VSIC. [*Time expired.*]

### SCHOOL CROSSINGS SUPERVISORS

**Mr DEBNAM** (Vaucluse) [6.02 p.m.]: On behalf of my electorate I want to address the matter of school crossings, a matter that has been addressed in this House in the past 24 hours. Last week I became aware that the Double Bay Public School in William Street, Double Bay, which is a busy main road, has been without a crossing supervisor for the past four weeks. The school's parents and citizens association wrote that there is the potential of a very serious accident occurring if the crossing is not supervised. I find it extraordinary that at a number of locations across the State, especially in Sydney, the Roads and Traffic Authority [RTA] has decided that it is appropriate to have a school crossing supervisor and then, for various reasons, a supervisor is not made available. Last week I wrote to the RTA and requested that urgent action be taken to replace the crossing supervisor. It is apparent from discussions I had with the RTA that little will happen in the near future. This matter is of concern to every parent in New South Wales and every member of this House.

I became aware that McAuley Primary School in Carlisle Street, Rose Bay has been without a crossing supervisor for 2½ months. The school community is beside itself trying to get someone to fill that position. Anyone who is familiar with this matter would know that it is not as simple as putting a volunteer parent or a schoolteacher on the crossing each day. It is difficult to provide volunteers because workers compensation issues arise, a crossing supervisor has to undertake a one-day training course and a person has to be available each day. It is a real concern that the RTA appears to be incapable of finding the urgently needed crossing supervisors at those two primary schools. Yet yesterday in this House the Minister for Transport talked, with breathtaking hypocrisy, about safety around schools. I have no doubt he was referring to primary schools. Yesterday the Minister announced the funding of another 39 part-time crossing supervisors for New South Wales schools. I am sure the Minister realises that he can announce as many supervisors as he likes, but he is simply not filling the positions that are now desperately needed by schools in New South Wales. The Minister said:

The simple fact is that young children are vulnerable when negotiating traffic as they walk to and from school .

The reality is that young children in this State are vulnerable because the Minister for Transport is incompetent. The Minister undoubtedly has a major problem with his portfolio and with the RTA. In the lead-up to the 1995 election campaign the Premier said:

The Labor Government will shake up the RTA to make it a more open and accountable organisation.

He then repeated his undertaking about the M4 and M5 tolls. His undertaking with the RTA has gone the same way. The honourable member for Wyong may well laugh about the tolls in Western Sydney and claim that it is not an issue for him to deal with, but it is clearly an issue to the people of New South Wales—and so is the RTA. The RTA is an incompetent bureaucracy which should have been abolished years ago. The Premier should have kept the promise he made prior to the 1995 election. He has not done so. He has failed again. He has left us with an incompetent bureaucracy.

Everyone would agree that the RTA really is the last remaining dinosaur on the planet and should be abolished. It should be shot. The Minister should put it out of its misery. He should kill off the RTA dinosaur and give the responsibility for school crossings to someone who can do the job and deliver on the many promises made by the Government. The RTA simply cannot be entrusted with the safety of our schoolchildren. The Minister for Transport has to deliver on his promise of school crossing supervisors that are already funded, let alone the additional 39 he promised yesterday. If the Minister cannot do the job he should resign, get out of the job and let somebody else who can do a better job have a go.

### CRONULLA ELECTORATE BEACHES SAND REPLENISHMENT

**Mr KERR** (Cronulla) [6.07 p.m.]: I speak in relation to the sand on Cronulla beaches. Honourable members who have read the *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader* would be well aware of the problems that have occurred. The honourable member for Vaucluse is very conscious of it.

**Mr Debnam:** It is a major issue.

**Mr KERR:** It is a major issue. There is a great need for sand on those beaches.

**Mr Barr:** It happens at Manly too.

**Mr KERR:** I am sure it happens at Manly. Since this Government has been in office there has been a serious loss of sand. The last time a dredging operation occurred in Port Hacking was when Councillor Kevin Schreiber was mayor. That successful operation put sand back on the beaches. I am aware of the good work done by Harry Brown of the beach management committee with whom council officers such as Mr Des Hewitt have been liaising. They have brought together a number of the major stakeholders in relation to this serious matter. Sand is also a problem in Port Hacking; it is in the wrong place.

As readers of the *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader* would be aware, public transport on the channel in Port Hacking raises a major public safety issue. Unless the channel is cleared, lives will be endangered in the coming boating season. The previous successful dredging operation should be repeated. I am aware that expert advice from Professor Alberto Abani is available. It is crucial that sand be placed on our beaches in Bate Bay. The article in the *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader* drew particular attention to the condition of the Prince Street wall at Cronulla. According to that article the wall is being monitored. I know that some slippage has occurred.

One can see from the foundations and the baskets of stone placed around them that the wall was severely damaged. The consequences of a major storm would be very serious. Monitoring of the wall should be made public. A report should be prepared for the council on the condition of the wall and the likely prognosis should the wall remain in its present condition. There will be great public concern if that is not done. Whatever work has been done by Sutherland Shire Council or the Department of Public Works and Services should be reported on. A Labor member of the council, the Parliamentary Secretary for Health, said that he would take a personal interest in the matter. I would have thought that would be very helpful in bringing the reports to public notice. Urgent attention is needed in relation to the lack of sand on our beaches and the amount of sand in Port Hacking. Those matters should be raised at State and local government levels. All the documentation that has been prepared to the present day should be made available to the public.

### NEW HORIZONS EDUCATION INITIATIVE

**Mr BARR** (Manly) [6.12 p.m.]: I raise an important education initiative in my electorate which will have positive ramifications for all of the northern beaches. Over the past decade student enrolments at a number of public high schools has been static and below optimum levels. Three of the schools in question—Balgowlah Boys High School, Freshwater High School and Beacon Hill High School have had enrolments of between 350 and 400 students, yet each of those schools was designed and built to accommodate twice as many. In all, there is a surplus capacity of 1,440 desks. The issue that had to be addressed was how to resolve the surplus desk problem without undermining public education. One solution would have been merely to shut down one of the schools, but that would have been a retrograde step.

One of the local principals told me a year ago that it was important for him and other principals to be proactive in positioning the local high schools favourably in terms of the competition from private schools. He spoke about developing a stronger relationship with TAFE and obtaining a university presence on the northern beaches. During the second half of 1999 a review was undertaken of secondary education in the area. The review panel comprised local principals, representatives of the Department of Education and Training and a Teachers Federation representative. From the review came the concept of a multicampus college based on the site of Freshwater High School. That model, called New Horizons, was unveiled by the Minister at Freshwater High School on 26 June 2000. The multicampus college will comprise a senior high school, a TAFE business centre and a University of Technology study centre. Beacon Hill High School will be phased out. So will Freshwater High School, but it will become the senior high school catering for years 11 and 12.

The senior high school will be able to offer HSC students a broader range of subjects than any of the three high schools have been able to, and the connection with TAFE and the University of Technology will give students a good opportunity to articulate into TAFE and university courses. Manly High School will remain a selective high school. Mackellar Girls' High School will remain a girls high school, Balgowlah Boys High School will remain a boys high school, and Cromer High School will remain co-educational. Those parents and students will still have the choice of co-educational or single-sex schools for years 7 to 12, with the opportunity

to attend a co-educational senior high school in years 11 and 12. The Balgowlah Boys High School community has been allowed to determine whether to stay on the current site or move to Beacon Hill. This is one of the many issues that has to be worked through. Much of the proposal is still conceptual.

The proposed TAFE business centre at Freshwater is a vindication of the position taken by the Save Seaforth TAFE Committee and the hard work it has undertaken in fighting to keep TAFE facilities in the area. In essence, it will transpire that, although Seaforth TAFE has closed down, business courses will end up at Freshwater, not Brookvale. It is a pity that Seaforth TAFE was not brought into the review equation earlier: it may have saved a good deal of community angst about the timing and the manner of the closure.

The fate of the Seaforth TAFE site is still to be resolved. A proposal has been put to the Minister involving a community college. If the site is turned over to a community education use it will constitute a significant gain for the community. I am very pleased with the proposal. It is an innovative solution to the problem and it represents an important boost to education in the area. The Minister has committed an initial \$5 million to the project, which represents a significant capital investment. I would like to be on the record as supporting the project and congratulating the Minister for Education and Training. Not many electorates can boast such a facility, and we must now all work together to ensure its success.

### **TOUKLEY SAILING CLUB**

**Mr CRITTENDEN** (Wyang—Parliamentary Secretary) [6.17 p.m.]: It is my very pleasant duty to draw to the attention of the House the fact that the thirty-seventh annual general meeting of Toukley Sailing Club was held on 5 August. It was great to see the secretary of 37 years, Mr Bill Cheal, re-elected. His good wife, Joan Cheal, was re-elected as Treasurer. For 37 years Joan has also been the canteen supervisor. It is one of the great joys of going to a community function to see the best of humanity. Being a politician means that one sees the worst and the very best of humanity. The Cheals represent the very best of humanity. The president, John Lenton, was also re-elected. The commodore is Glen Bond, the captain is Eddie Miller, and the rescue boat driver and vice-captain is Frank Clapham.

Honourable members would be aware that my predecessor, Harry Moore, still takes an active interest in the local community. He and I, together with Wal Reeley, have been re-elected as patrons. The Toukley Sailing Club is one of those great organisations that brings the community together. It does not have poker machines. It is a very old-fashioned club that promotes healthy activities, especially amongst youth. Annual membership, including insurance, costs \$50 for a family, \$30 for a single senior, and \$15 for a junior. Boats can be rented from the club for \$70 a season for an adult and \$50 a season for a junior. Young people in my electorate sometimes think that they have nothing to do, but the coming sailing season will soon be upon us. Young people can hire a boat for the entire season, including the Christmas holidays. What is more, through the diligent efforts of Bill Cheal and Eddie Miller the club has gained a lot of sponsorship recently and has increased the number of training boats from three to seven.

In collaboration with the Department of Sport and Recreation, sailing classes will be conducted in the second week of the September school holidays. They will cost a mere \$50, plus GST, for five two-hour lessons. On 29 October the Active Australia program will be held at the club and anyone from the area will be able to try out his or her prowess at sailing and at least get a few tips. As well is being a great organisation that promotes the sense of community that is so important in a rapidly growing area such as the one I represent, Toukley Sailing Club is an unsung hero in bringing money into the shire. For example, in the coming season the Vaucluse Senior or VS national titles will be held there from 30 December to 6 January inclusive. The Heron State titles will be held over the Australia Day weekend, 26 to 28 January inclusive. People attending the events spend money in the area, making an important economic contribution.

It is to be noted that people who have a boat—I used to have a boat at the sailing club—can rent a space at the club for a mere \$5 per month. However, those who do not sail their boat regularly must pay \$20 per month. It is important to get the message to the people coming to new parts of the Wyong electorate that they can become active in the community, that they can take up this very healthy activity. Much of the reason for people moving to the Central Coast is the unique lifestyle that it offers. The Tuggerah Lakes are part of that lifestyle and therefore should be restored and maintained. Sailing on the lakes is an important part of local community activity.

**Private members' statements noted.**

**House adjourned at 6.22 p.m. until Wednesday 30 August 2000 at 3.00 p.m.**

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