

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Wednesday 28 February 2001

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

Mr Speaker offered the Prayer.

AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT

Mr Speaker tabled, pursuant to the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983, the report entitled "Auditor-General's Report 2001—Volume One".

Ordered to be printed.

ADDRESS TO HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR OF NEW SOUTH WALES

Mr CARR (Maroubra—Premier, Minister for the Arts, and Minister for Citizenship) [10.02 a.m.]: I move:

That the following Address be adopted by this House and forwarded to His Excellency:

To His Excellency the Honourable Gordon Samuels, Companion of the Order of Australia, Governor of the State of New South Wales in the Commonwealth of Australia.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY: —

We, the Members of the Legislative Assembly, in Parliament assembled, desire to express our deep appreciation to your Excellency on the occasion of your vacation of the Office of Governor of New South Wales.

We further offer your Excellency our sincere congratulations on undertaking the duties of your office with distinction and devotion and extend to your Excellency and Mrs Samuels the warm regards of the House.

It is altogether appropriate and fitting that this House should pay tribute to His Excellency the Governor of New South Wales, the Hon. Gordon Samuels, AC, CVO, QC, on completion of his period as Governor of the State. We should honour him for the job that he has done and pay tribute to the hard work of both the Governor and Mrs Samuels. We should recognise the importance of the position of Governor and acknowledge the fact that the Hon. Gordon Samuels is the first Governor to complete the duties of the office without having lived in Government House. That residence is now an historic house museum for the people of New South Wales. I do not think that fact is contested any longer: the matter was explored at the beginning of the last election campaign but the Coalition then relegated the issue. Through their vote at the last State election, the people of New South Wales put paid to any suggestion that there was something wrong with the public owning Government House and having it as a house museum. When I had the honour to announce the appointment of Gordon Samuels in January 1996, I said, without reservation:

The eminence of the new Governor reaffirms the significance of the Office.

Gordon Samuels was the last Australian Governor to have served in the Second World War. In the tradition of Governor Macquarie, he was an officer in the British army. In coming to Australia he was returning to his father's former home in New South Wales and was part of the great, immensely productive wave of postwar immigration to Australia. Gordon Samuels had a distinguished career at the New South Wales Bar from 1952. He was a judge of the Supreme Court from 1974 to 1993, Chancellor of the University of New South Wales from 1976 to 1994 and Chairman of the Law Reform Commission from 1993 to 1996. His appointment engendered a bit of controversy because of the decision by the Government—by me—that the Governor would no longer live in Government House. But that was only one of a number of controversies that has surrounded the office of Governor from time to time.

There was controversy in 1946 when my distinguished predecessor William McKell—a great Premier of New South Wales—insisted that he appoint an Australian as Governor of this State. Premier McKell recommended an Australian for that post but the Dominions office countered and gave the New South Wales Premier a list of 15 British generals, admirals and air vice-marshals. When Premier McKell said, "No, an

Australian shall be Governor of New South Wales", as a trump card, Lord Addison of the Dominions office produced for appointment the name of the brother-in-law of King George VI. Lord Addison wrote to William McKell a letter that included the paragraph:

I am happy to think that this solution has presented itself and sincerely hope that the honour of having the Queen's brother, the second surviving son of the late Earl of Strathmore, as Governor of your State is one that would greatly appeal to you and your colleagues.

Well, it did not—and an Australian was appointed Governor of New South Wales. That was a trauma for many good citizens of New South Wales, as was the appointment of the first Australian Governor-General, Sir Isaac Isaacs, by the Scullin Government. That appointment and the appointment of William McKell as Governor-General were also traumatic for the Dominions office. Honourable members may recall that Menzies called McKell's appointment a "black day" but then, to his credit, went on to work creatively and constructively with the former Premier of New South Wales. The events of 1946—the behaviour of Lord Addison and the Atlee Labour Government regarding the appointment of the King's brother-in-law and the months of wrangling with the Dominions office—remind me of the lines from Belloc's *Cautionary Tales* addressed by Lord Lundy to his wayward nephew:

We had intended you to be,
The next Prime Minister but three.
The stocks were sold; the press was squared;
The middle class was quite prepared.
But as it is, my language fails.
Go out, and govern New South Wales.

We have moved beyond those days and we now happily contemplate—we would contemplate nothing other than—having an Australian as Governor of New South Wales and an Australian as Governor-General. Gordon Samuels was a very good choice as Governor of New South Wales and he has worked very effectively and very hard, supported at all times by Mrs Samuels. At a farewell dinner on Wednesday 21 February the Governor gave an excellent speech in the presence of the Leader of the Opposition and me. He spent some time dwelling on his happiness at having done without Government House. He said that he and his wife had moved into their retirement home at Bronte and the idea of moving after that into an official residence did not appeal to them. He accepted the appointment I canvassed with him. He was very happy with the proposition that a Governor no longer should live at Government House. He referred to that as a controversy at that time. He said:

It was a pretty bouncy period.

He said that the media were "permanently encamped about our house in Bronte"—and we all know what the media is like. He also said that it seemed "we had television cameras in the drawing room for several days on end." He went on to say:

The whole thing seemed to be beaten up. It became a political issue.

He said that the media, however, did not make any personal attack on his wife and also said:

The furore continued on a diminishing scale for a year or more.

Of course, it has been diminishing since then. The Governor went on to say during his speech last Wednesday night:

I think now that there had been some misjudgment about the likely public reaction to the abandonment of Government House as a vice-regal residence, and to the possibility that the Governor would not devote all his time and energies to vice-regal duties. The opposition was mounted mainly by dedicated traditionalists, but others with various agendas joined the cause.

I received a large quantity of letters urging me to insist upon a "return" to Government House, and upbraiding me for my spineless compliance with the plans of the villainous Carr. Many were "form" letters, composed and circulated for signature by one agency. Few were rational, and fewer still persuasive. But none was seriously offensive. In particular none contained any anti-semitic sentiments. One correspondent - if I may call her that - attributed my stubborn refusal to live at Government House to the assertion in Exodus (Chap 33 v 3) that the Jews "are a stiff necked people". I took this as rather a compliment, although I think that God originally intended otherwise. I have always thought that this absence of rancour and abuse was a significant tribute to the basic decency of our society.

As time went on it became perfectly clear that the Governor was going to devote all of his time, and his wife all of her time, to the job, which they intended to perform in pretty much the usual way, including the pomp and ceremony of formal openings of Parliament. But those who nurtured doctrinal or psychological opposition to change refused to take any heed of the fact that their warhorse had foundered under them.

He meant, if I have interpreted His Excellency correctly, that attempts to make a political issue out of the Governor not living at Government House did not last long as a warhorse. A few honourable members who are present would not have had the pleasure during the previous Parliament of hearing a dozen petitions every day from people who, I would have assumed, were members of Liberal Party branches. But we all know that there are few people in the Liberal Party branches these days. I remember those petitions lamented the fact that somehow the role of the Governor had changed because of the decision on the status of Government House. But as soon as Parliament convened after the election, the issue evaporated. There has not been a single petition on that theme since. Last Wednesday night the Governor said:

We have been happy to live at home and work at Government House. I have never believed that residence at Government House was an essential requirement for the successful performance of my vice-regal duties. I venture to say that it is not. The current arrangement has been successful.

Those are the words spoken by the Governor—the man who had the experience of doing his job under the terms of the policy that I announced in 1996, namely, no official residence. He, having done the job, was saying that it worked and that he did not need to live at Government House to do the job. He made this point:

The House has been busier and more full of life over the last five years than it ever was before. We have held 760 vice-regal functions with about 47,000 guests. There have been nearly 550 functions in the communal and cultural program, with over 100,000 guests. In all, over half a million people have visited the House and grounds.

I thought His Excellency made an excellent speech. It is testimony to the success of the new arrangements for Government House. Although not strictly germane to this motion of thanks which I ask the House to contemplate and to send to His Excellency, it would be interesting to hear whether the Opposition adheres to the policy of forcing—if necessary, at bayonet point—a future Governor to live at Government House. I will comment on the role that Mrs Samuels has played. She has been a very important part of vice-regal arrangements and work. She has travelled with His Excellency across New South Wales and she has been particularly important in working in the arts. She and her husband are very knowledgeable about the arts and, in common with the Governor designate, have been keenly interested in performance arts and visual arts. That is just one aspect of the work done by Mrs Samuels, but it is worth acknowledging.

It was a pleasure to work with the Hon. Gordon Samuels, a man of education and high professional attainment. On Wednesday night, when we paid tribute to him, he remarked on what an enriching experience it was to get to know the people of this State, especially those of rural New South Wales. The role of Governor is very significant. The Governor is the Head of State in New South Wales. The Governor must see, among other duties, that the process of government is sound and that the processes work. This Governor has been quick to highlight any breaches in the flow of paperwork to the Executive Council that have come to his attention and that is part of the role of Governor. As the Chief Justice of the High Court, Sir Murray Gleeson, said recently:

... our form of government ... depends upon politics and politicians. Politics is what makes representative government work. People who regard political behaviour as essentially distasteful or unworthy overlook the fact that it is only through political organisation, advocacy and where necessary conflict, that we can hope to have a government that sufficiently represents and gives effect to the will of the people ... To despise politics is to despise democracy.

The Chief Justice also noted "political legitimacy emerging from the political debate and struggle". When I paid tribute last Wednesday to the office of Governor in the presence of the Governor, I stated that the office of Governor now symbolises, more than anything else, the legitimacy of parliamentary democracy in New South Wales. To uphold that legitimacy calls for exceptional qualities of trust and integrity. The Hon. Gordon Samuels has displayed those qualities in full measure. He leaves the office of Governor with that office strengthened and renewed. He has served this State very competently and very diligently. In doing so, he has served and strengthened not only what I described last Wednesday as the honourable and venerable office of Governor of New South Wales, but also the cause of parliamentary democracy in Australia.

Mr SPEAKER: Before calling the Leader of the Opposition, I draw the attention of the House to the presence in the gallery of the Lost Ladies history group. It seems appropriate that they join us today. I welcome them to the Parliament.

Mrs CHIKAROVSKI (Lane Cove—Leader of the Opposition) [10.19 a.m.]: I join with the Premier in thanking the Hon. Gordon Samuels, the retiring Governor of New South Wales. As honourable members would be aware, the Hon. Gordon Samuels was born in England of Australian parents. He was educated overseas but returned to Australia in 1952 and became a member of the bar in New South Wales in that year. He has had a very distinguished career as both a lawyer and a judge and has been involved in a wide variety of community

activities for many years, not only as Governor but also prior to his appointment. He has been very generous with his time and was appointed to a number of substantial positions by various governments.

He was elected to the Council of the University of New South Wales and was Chancellor from 1976 to 1994. He was also a member of the Law Foundation of New South Wales, becoming chair of that organisation. It was in that capacity that my father first got to know the Hon. Gordon Samuels as he worked as a member of the Law Foundation. I first got to know the Hon. Gordon Samuels when he was appointed chair of the New South Wales Migrant Employment and Qualifications Board, a position that he held from 1992 to 1995. As Minister responsible for the board for a number of years I worked very closely with the Hon. Gordon Samuels. He had at his heart the interest of people coming to this nation. He believed very strongly that people who had been qualified overseas should be able to work in this country and worked tremendously hard on the board to make sure that people had every assistance in having their overseas qualifications recognised. I pay tribute to him for the work he did on the board.

However, it is as Governor that he has become better known. As I said, he was a distinguished lawyer and judge but as Governor he was able to travel around New South Wales and to get to know the people of the State. At the dinner that the Premier referred to the Governor made many references in his speech to his enjoyment of the interaction with the people of New South Wales, particularly the people of Country New South Wales. He said that with his wife he had made more than 35 visits to country and regional New South Wales and that it was a measure of respect by the people of this State for the office of Governor that he was so warmly received on those visits. Many members of this House can relate to the Governor's remarks about morning and afternoon teas in Country New South Wales because of our own visits.

As the Premier said, there was controversy over the Governor's decision not to live in Government House. There was a great deal of feeling about the issue and among some people that feeling remains. But it was never reflected personally on the Hon. Gordon Samuels. It was reflected against the Government at the time but it was never a reflection on the Governor. Gordon Samuels carried out his duties as the Governor very effectively. He has been a tremendous contributor to the State in all sorts of ways. People have to be constantly assured of the stability of government and the stability of the office of Governor. Following a turbulent period prior to the appointment of the Hon. Gordon Samuels he determined that there would be no continuing unrest once he became Governor.

As the Premier has already said, Mrs Samuels supported the Hon. Gordon Samuels in his work. She has been a very active participant. She has been patron of many charities and generously given her time to others that are too numerous to mention. I recall sharing occasions with her when she spoke of her commitment to the people of New South Wales in much the same terms as her husband speaks of his commitment to the people of the State. The difference is that Mrs Samuels has done it in an honorary capacity. We should be grateful to her for giving of her time so generously.

Whilst the Hon. Gordon Samuels is about to retire, he will be no less busy. During a discussion with him the other night he told me that, while he and his wife are planning to have some time to themselves and to travel overseas, his time following his governorship will be particularly busy. He is looking forward—as all of us do on occasions—to spending more time with his family. I spoke to his daughters the other night and asked them whether they thought that they would have any more time with him. Their reply was, "Probably not", but they are hoping that he will be able to spend a little more time with their grandchild. The younger daughter was recently married and they may be able to spend time overseas with her and her new husband. On behalf of my Coalition colleagues I thank the Governor and Mrs Samuels for their work during the Governor's time in office. I thank the Governor for his service to the people of New South Wales. We wish him all the best in his retirement and we look forward to his continued public service in other ways for this State.

Mr SOURIS (Upper Hunter—Leader of the National Party) [10.25 a.m.]: I have pleasure in joining the Leader of the Opposition and the Premier, on behalf of the National Party and the people of rural New South Wales, in offering sincere and heartfelt congratulations to our Governor, the Hon. Gordon Samuels and to Mrs Jacqui Samuels, who have performed their duties with such distinction. I had the honour and pleasure of receiving the Governor on his first rural visit, to Merriwa in the electorate of Upper Hunter. The functions at the time related to the Festival of the Fleeces. It was a very cold encounter, and we have often dined out on some of the events that occurred during the Festival of the Fleeces, which would best be left out of the *Hansard*. I believe that the Governor discharged all his duties and obligations with distinction, particularly his role involving community organisations, especially those organisations in Country New South Wales, but also with charities and welfare groups and the multitude of institutions that encompass every facet of our society.

Nonetheless, for the sake of historical accuracy I must correct a statement made by the Premier. During his speech he referred to the Governor as the Head of State in New South Wales. I must point out that the Head of State in New South Wales is her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and not the Governor. The Governor performs the vice-regal role. The Governor fulfils that role representing the Queen competently and with distinction. Indeed, the strength of our Constitution and the stability of our parliamentary democracy are exemplified by the role of past and present Governors. The present vice-regal constitutional arrangements serve our democracy well and nothing that has transpired during the term of past Governors or during the term of the present Governor alter the view that constitutional revolution is unwarranted, unjustified and unacceptable to the vast majority of the population of New South Wales. Their will was reconfirmed particularly during the period when the Premier sought to downgrade and depower the role of Governor and particularly the role of Government House.

Nothing that I have seen or heard since that time diminishes my view that the rightful and proper place, irrespective of whether it is of comfort to a Governor who may wish to be in semiretirement, the vice-regal office is the most important constitutional office in New South Wales and ought to be discharged fully—competently of course—and ought to be discharged at Government House, the figure point of our constitutional democracy in New South Wales. Nothing I have seen with past Governors or the present Governor alters the strength of those views, which are significantly held by the majority in New South Wales. With those words I again offer congratulations and heartfelt thanks from the people of New South Wales but in particular the rural constituency, for the marvellous job that Governor Gordon Samuels and Mrs Jacqui Samuels performed on behalf of the people.

Debate adjourned on motion by Mr Face.

CRIMINAL PROCEDURE AMENDMENT (PRE-TRIAL DISCLOSURE) BILL

In Committee

Consideration of the Legislative Council's amendments.

Schedule of amendments referred to in message of 7 December 2000

No. 1 Page 4, Schedule 1 [2] (proposed section 47D), lines 14-34. Omit all words on those lines. Insert instead:

47D Pre-trial disclosure requirements—general

- (1) Pre-trial disclosure is to be made as follows:
 - (a) the prosecuting authority is to give the accused person notice of the case for the prosecution,
 - (b) after the accused person has been given notice of the case for the prosecution, the accused person is to give the prosecuting authority notice of the defence response to the case for the prosecution (referred to in this Division as **the defence response**),
 - (c) after the prosecuting authority has been given notice of the defence response, the prosecuting authority is to give the accused person notice of the prosecution response to the defence response.
- (2) Pre-trial disclosure is to be made in accordance with a timetable determined by the court.
- (3) For the purposes of the pre-trial disclosure requirements, a reference to the accused person is to be read as including a reference to the legal practitioner of the accused person.

47E Disclosure of case for the prosecution

The notice of the case for the prosecution is to contain the following:

- (a) a copy of the indictment,
- (b) an outline of the prosecution case,
- (c) copies of statements of witnesses proposed to be called at the trial by the prosecuting authority,
- (d) copies of any documents or other exhibits proposed to be tendered at the trial by the prosecuting authority,
- (e) if any expert witnesses are proposed to be called at the trial by the prosecuting authority, copies of any reports by them that are relevant to the case,
- (f) a copy of any information in the possession of the prosecuting authority that is relevant to the reliability or credibility of a prosecution witness,

- (g) a copy of any information, document or other thing provided by police officers to the prosecuting authority, or otherwise in the possession of the prosecuting authority, that may be relevant to the case of the prosecuting authority or the accused person, and that has not otherwise been disclosed to the accused person,
- (h) a copy of any information, document or other thing in the possession of the prosecuting authority that is adverse to the credit or credibility of the accused person.

47F Defence response

- (1) The notice of the defence response is to contain the following:
 - (a) if any expert witnesses are proposed to be called at the trial by the accused person, copies of any reports by them proposed to be relied on by the accused person,
 - (b) the names and addresses of any character witnesses that are proposed to be called at the trial by the accused person (but only if the prosecution has given an undertaking not to interview any such witness before the trial without the leave of the court),
 - (c) the accused person's response to the particulars raised in the notice of the case for the prosecution (as provided for by subsection (2)).
- (2) The accused person's response to the particulars raised in the notice of the case for the prosecution is to contain the following:
 - (a) if the prosecuting authority disclosed an intention to adduce expert evidence at the trial, notice as to whether the accused person disputes any of the expert evidence and which evidence is disputed,
 - (b) if the prosecuting authority disclosed an intention to adduce evidence at the trial that has been obtained by means of surveillance, notice as to whether the accused person proposes to require the prosecuting authority to call any witnesses to corroborate that evidence and, if so, which witnesses will be required,
 - (c) notice as to whether the accused person proposes to raise any issue with respect to the continuity of custody of any proposed exhibit disclosed by the prosecuting authority,
 - (d) if the prosecuting authority disclosed an intention to tender at the trial any transcript, notice as to whether the accused person accepts the transcript as accurate and, if not, in what respect the transcript is disputed,
 - (e) notice as to whether the accused person proposes to dispute the accuracy of any proposed documentary evidence or other exhibit disclosed by the prosecuting authority,
 - (f) notice of any significant issue the accused person proposes to raise regarding the form of the indictment, severability of the charges or separate trials for the charges.

47G Prosecution response to defence response

The notice of the prosecution response to the defence response is to contain the following:

- (a) if the accused person has disclosed an intention to adduce expert evidence at the trial, notice as to whether the prosecuting authority disputes any of the expert evidence and, if so, in what respect,
- (b) if the accused person has disclosed an intention to tender any exhibit at the trial, notice as to whether the prosecuting authority proposes to raise any issue with respect to the continuity of custody of the exhibit,
- (c) if the accused person has disclosed an intention to tender any documentary evidence or other exhibit at the trial, notice as to whether the prosecuting authority proposes to dispute the accuracy or admissibility of the documentary evidence or other exhibit,
- (d) notice as to whether the prosecuting authority proposes to dispute the admissibility of any other proposed evidence disclosed by the accused person, and the basis for the objection,
- (e) a copy of any information, document or other thing in the possession of the prosecuting authority, not already disclosed to the accused person, that might reasonably be expected to assist the case for the defence,
- (f) a copy of any information, document or other thing that has not already been disclosed to the accused person and that is required to be contained in the notice of the case for the prosecution.

47H Disclosure requirements are ongoing

- (1) The obligation to undertake pre-trial disclosure continues until any of the following happens:

- (a) the accused person is convicted or acquitted of the charges in the indictment,
 - (b) the prosecution is terminated.
- (2) Accordingly, if any information, document or other thing is obtained or anything else occurs after pre-trial disclosure is made by a party to the proceedings, that would have affected that pre-trial disclosure had the information, document or thing been obtained or the thing occurred before pre-trial disclosure was made, the information, document, thing or occurrence is to be disclosed to the other party to the proceedings as soon as practicable.

47I Court may waive requirements

- (1) A court may, by order, waive any of the pre-trial disclosure requirements that apply under this Division.
- (2) The court may make such an order on its own initiative or on the application of the prosecuting authority or the accused person.
- (3) An order may be made subject to such conditions (if any) as the court thinks fit.

47J Requirements as to notices

- (1) A notice under this Division is to be in writing.
- (2) Any notice purporting to be given under this Division on behalf of the accused person by his or her legal practitioner is, unless the contrary is proved, taken to have been given with the authority of the accused person.
- (3) A notice under this Division that is required to be given to a prosecuting authority may be given to the prosecuting authority in the following manner, or as otherwise directed by the court:
 - (a) by delivering it to the prosecuting authority,
 - (b) by leaving it at the office of the prosecuting authority,
 - (c) by sending it in a letter addressed to the prosecuting authority at the office of the prosecuting authority.
- (4) A notice under this Division that is required to be given to an accused person may be given to the accused person in the following manner, or as otherwise directed by the court:
 - (a) by delivering it to the accused person,
 - (b) by leaving it at the office of the legal practitioner of the accused person,
 - (c) by sending it in a letter addressed to the legal practitioner of the accused person at the office of the legal practitioner.

47K Copies of exhibits and other things not to be provided if impracticable

- (1) A copy of a proposed exhibit, document or thing is not required to be included in a notice under this Division if it is impossible or impractical to provide a copy.
- (2) However, the party required to give the notice:
 - (a) is to specify in the notice a reasonable time and place at which the proposed exhibit, document or thing may be inspected, and
 - (b) is to allow the other party to the proceedings a reasonable opportunity to inspect the proposed exhibit, document or thing referred to in the notice.

47L Personal details not to be provided

- (1) The prosecuting authority is not to disclose in any notice under this Division the address or telephone number of any witness proposed to be called by the prosecuting authority, or of any other living person, unless:
 - (a) the address or telephone number is a materially relevant part of the evidence, or
 - (b) the court makes an order permitting the disclosure.
- (2) An application for such an order may be made by the accused person or the prosecuting authority.
- (3) The court must not make such an order unless satisfied that the disclosure is not likely to present a reasonably ascertainable risk to the welfare or protection of any person or that the interests of justice (including the accused person's right to prepare properly for the hearing of the evidence for the prosecution) outweigh any such risk.

- (4) This section does not prevent the disclosure of an address if the disclosure does not identify it as a particular person's address, or it could not reasonably be inferred from the matters disclosed that it is a particular person's address.
- (5) An address or telephone number that must not be disclosed may, without reference to the person who made the statement being disclosed, be deleted from that statement, or rendered illegible, before the statement is given to the accused person.

47M Requirements as to statements of witnesses

- (1) A statement of a witness that is included in a notice under this Division may be in the form of questions and answers.
- (2) If a notice includes a statement that is, wholly or in part, in a language other than English, there must be annexed to it a document purporting to contain a translation of the statement, or so much of it as is not in the English language, into the English language.

47N Exemption for matters disclosed in brief of evidence

The prosecuting authority is not required to include in a notice under this Division anything that has already been included in a brief of evidence served on the accused person in accordance with section 25.

No. 2 Page 10, Schedule 2 (proposed section 15A(3)), lines 18-22. Omit all words on those lines. Insert instead:

- (3) Police officers investigating alleged indictable offences also have a duty to retain any such documents or other things for so long as the duty to disclose them continues under this section. This subsection does not affect any other legal obligation with respect to the possession of the documents or other things.
- (4) The regulations may make provision for or with respect to the duties of police officers under this section, including for or with respect to:
 - (a) the recording of any such information, documents or other things, and
 - (b) verification of compliance with any such duty.

Mr DEBUS (Blue Mountains—Attorney General, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister Assisting the Premier on the Arts) [10.31 a.m.]: I move:

That the Legislative Council's amendments be disagreed to.

Mr HARTCHER (Gosford) [10.32 a.m.]: The Coalition does not agree that the amendments moved in the Legislative Council should be disagreed with. This legislation was supported in principle by the Coalition when it was introduced by the Minister. At that time I made it clear that the Coalition would look closely at the detail of the bill and if appropriate amendments were moved in the Legislative Council it would consider them and, if appropriate, support them. The Legislative Council has amended the bill along the lines that the Act should contain the procedure whereby pre-trial disclosure is regulated. There is nothing exceptional about that but the Government seeks to ensure that pre-trial disclosure requirements are made by regulation. In other words, the Government, rather than the Parliament, wants to have control of the process. Pre-trial disclosure is an important issue because it prevents trials from being conducted by ambush. But, by the same token, everybody should know the rules in advance and it is the Parliament that should set the rules.

If Parliament changes the fundamental system of the administration of criminal justice in this State it should be done publicly and upfront, and that is what the Legislative Council amendments have been designed to secure. The Government says it is not prepared to accept the Legislative Council amendments because it wants to control the procedure whereby the pre-trial disclosure system is to be implemented in this State, by regulation. That is not acceptable to the Coalition. The rules of law and parliamentary democracy are that matters of fundamental importance should be determined by the Parliament and that matters of incidental importance can be determined by public servants and by the government by way of regulation. The regime is a matter of fundamental importance.

There are four pages of amendments, they are fairly detailed, and I do not propose to traverse them as that has already been done in the Legislative Council. The amendments provide that the prosecution must give the defence details in summary form of its case. The defence must give details in summary form of its case to the prosecution. The obligation on both sides is a continuing one and it is always subject to the jurisdiction of the court.

The notices and procedure are set out. There is nothing exceptional, and there is no cause of concern, about how notices are to be written and served, what is to be done with copies of exhibits, how personal details

of witnesses are to be protected, the handling of matters of concern and how translation into the English language should be made available if statements or exhibits are written in a language other than English. Yet this Government is running away from the amendments of the Legislative Council. The Legislative Council, by majority of the Coalition parties and the cross bench members, supported these amendments and the Government is not prepared to indicate why it does not support them. The Government simply says that it will send this bill back and forth between the two Chambers until its gets a bill that it wants; but that is not acceptable because the people of New South Wales are entitled to something better. The Coalition wants the Attorney to say why he disagrees with the amendments. He said only, "I move: That the Legislative Council's amendments be disagreed to." and then sat down. Why does he not support the Legislative Council amendments?

Mr Debus: The chairman was polite enough to allow you to speak. I am going to speak when you have finished.

Mr HARTCHER: Excellent! This new-found parliamentary democracy is encouraging. The Government's reasons for disagreeing with the amendments should be set out. I have just been told that the Attorney will give his reasons and I will listen to them with some interest. If his reasons are persuasive, the Coalition will support them. The Coalition has no intention of continuing the present system where trials are often run by ambush and the defence can spring a surprise line of defence. The prosecution, while it is required to make full disclosure, does not know what case it will meet until it gets to the steps of the court.

There needs to be a better and more orderly system which ensures that both parties have a fair go, justice is done, and the presumption of innocence is maintained. The Opposition will support any reasonable program which gives the State those outcomes. If the reasons of the Attorney are persuasive I will accept them. The concern of the Opposition is for the concern of justice, not for the concern of Government strategy. Until justice is clearly shown and until the public interest is manifestly upheld and advanced we will not support the Government's position and we will maintain our support for the Legislative council amendments.

Mr DEBUS (Blue Mountains—Attorney General, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister Assisting the Premier on the Arts) [10.38 a.m.]: Each contribution that the honourable member for Gosford makes to debate on this matter leaves me more confused—and it is not my fault. The honourable member for Gosford claims to have indicated in the original debate in this place that the Opposition would consider amendments in the upper House but I can see no record of that proposition in *Hansard*. He just said that if I give sufficient reasons he might agree with me. I really cannot tell whether he will or will not agree with the present proposition.

Indeed, although this communication has no force within the Chamber, the honourable member for Gosford indicated to my office during the weeks that have gone by that he does not agree with the amendments that were made in the upper House. I do not see anything in *Hansard* of the original debate on this matter to indicate that the Opposition was in any way keeping its options open for later amendment. The reasons the Government cannot accept the bill as reported back from the Legislative Council are as follows. The concept of fair and frank disclosure by both parties has been hijacked in the upper House by an Opposition in complete disarray. This landmark legislation represents a model for consultation and co-operation between interested parties and the Government. This was embodied in the substantial amendments made to the bill in this place during the second reading debate, which were supported by the Opposition, to wit, the honourable member for Gosford.

The bill was amended with the support of the Opposition in the other place to make the content of the proposals substantially different and to water down the requirement that the defence disclose specific defences. By incorporating into the bill regulations that were different to the regulations drafted and circulated by the Government—regulations that were arrived at after extensive consultation with and recommendations from a working party—the Opposition is responsible for an appreciably diminished concept being presented back to this Chamber.

The Government approach offers much greater flexibility, as supported by the Chief Judge of the District Court and the Law Reform Commission. This advice was ignored by the Opposition and some members of the Legislative Council. It was accepted easily enough by the honourable member for Gosford when the matter was debated previously in this Chamber. However, some members of the Opposition and the crossbench in the Legislative Council went further and decided to water down the regulations prior to voting to incorporate them into the bill. The Government cannot pass a bill that will no longer require the defence to take

responsibility for providing information to the prosecution on important matters. That is the core of the matter. Under the Government proposal the defence would have to provide to the prosecution a notice of defence if it chose to rely upon the following matters: insanity, self-defence, provocation, accident, duress, claim of right, automatism or intoxication.

Under the amended bill, as per the amendments made in the other place, there is no longer that responsibility. The defence can introduce any of those defences with no notice to the prosecution. The consequences are increased trial length and the risk of further court delays, victims suffering as a result of being put through longer trials and surprise tactics on the part of the defence, and the prospect of ambush defences being increased. All these matters go to the very principles of the legislation that the Opposition agreed to support in the second reading debate in this Chamber. The amendments that the Opposition supported in the upper House went further still in undermining a balanced approach to pre-trial disclosure by omitting the requirement for "notice as to whether the accused person proposes to dispute the admissibility of any other proposed evidence disclosed by the prosecuting authority and the basis for the objection".

That weakens the requirement that trials be properly case-managed to ensure that defence disclosure is on a par with prosecution disclosure. The Government challenges the Opposition to give a commitment that it will support these requirements going into the bill when the bill is again presented to the Legislative Council. No-one even knows why the Opposition in the upper House supported the diminution of the proposal because, as *Hansard* reveals, no member of the Opposition even had the decency to speak to the relevant amendments in the Committee stage in the upper House. We do not formally know why any Opposition member in the upper House supported the amendments, amendments that gut the original intention of the bill and have caused extraordinary dismay to the Homicide Victims Support Group and the Director of Public Prosecutions. I have received a letter from the Director of Public Prosecutions expressing concern that the effect of the amendments is such as to actually increase the workload for the prosecution and not provide a balance of responsibilities between the parties as intended.

The essential purpose of the bill was to simplify otherwise complex trials but to do so on the basis of fairness: to bring equal responsibility for the proper conduct of the trial to both the defence and to the prosecution. The amendments gut the legislation and, extraordinarily, I would have thought from the point of view of an Opposition that is not short of very stringent right-wing law and order rhetoric from time to time, actually make it easier for the defence to succeed in these kinds of cases. I have a letter from Martha Jabour, Executive Director of the Homicide Victims Support Group, who said that the legislation that the Government presented to Parliament was precisely what victims of crime wanted, that it would reduce of the length of trial, stop ambush defences and, therefore, significantly reduce the trauma experienced by victims of crime.

Ms Jabour says that is why the Homicide Victims Support Group supported the bill. The group is gravely concerned that this legislation has been undermined by the amendments made in the Legislative Council and it asks that the original bill be resubmitted now. The group hopes that the Legislative Council can understand that the whole idea of pre-trial disclosure is to make the system adequate, fair and unbiased.

The Homicide Victims Support Group is surprised and disappointed that the Opposition in the upper House has reached this decision. The group asks why family members of homicide victims and other victims of serious crime have to put up with long, tedious, money-wasting trials that revictimise people who have already gone through enough. It asks why the family members of homicide and other victims have to face being thrown into the unknown by the defence changing its tactics and defences three or four times throughout the trial. Why indeed?

Why does the Opposition actually support such a circumstance being actually established by this bill? The group questioned why parliamentarians—it means the Opposition—want trial by ambush? The Government does not. Where is the fairness in that and what about an equal system for all concerned? Finally, Ms Jabour asks: How will watering down this bill, which may or may not be supported by the honourable member for Gosford and has been supported by people not justifying their position in the upper House, ensure that justice is fairly administered? The reason for our disagreement is that the amendments undermine the principles of pre-trial disclosure requirements that are fundamental to the bill itself. The amendments, in effect, make the entire process, which has been so lavishly praised—there was a bipartisan attitude to this bill in the Legislative Assembly at the time of the original debate—impotent, and it would be downright absurd for the Government to support them.

Mr HARTCHER (Gosford) [10.48 a.m.]: I thank the Attorney for finally telling the House why the Government does not accept the amendments. I reiterate that the Opposition supports in principle the concept of pre-trial disclosure. It does not believe in trial by ambush. The Opposition, through me, has indicated this to the

Chamber and to Ms Martha Jabour, the very worthy representative of the Homicide Victims Support Group. We supported this legislation, in principle. At its second reading we did not call for a division, and I spoke in support of the principle of pre-trial disclosure. That is on the record and it is quite clear cut. What we do not support, and never have supported, is every point and every detail that the Government, for its own strategic reasons, wants to make.

I make the point now, in respect of this legislation and all other legislation that the Attorney wants to bring before this House, that we reserve our rights to properly scrutinise legislation in the Legislative Council, where the Government cannot gag debate and ram things through as it does in the Legislative Assembly. In this House, again and again legislation is presented on day one, standing orders are suspended on that day, debate takes place the following day, and after a certain number of speeches are made the debate is gagged and the bill is whipped up to the Legislative Council. If that is supposed to allow the Legislative Assembly its full right of review, that is not parliamentary democracy under the Westminster system. The Attorney knows that.

On no occasion has the Attorney stood in this place and said, "There should be proper consideration of legislation in the Assembly." He never says that. The only place where legislation is properly scrutinised—because the Government cannot use the gag and cannot suspend standing orders and ram its legislation through—is in the Legislative Council. The Opposition has said persistently that, even where it supports legislation in principle, it will examine the details of that legislation in the Legislative Council and will support appropriate amendments and ideas that are advanced in the Council. The Attorney knows that. He is simply playing with words when he says, "The honourable member for Gosford gave support." Of course the honourable member for Gosford gave support, but the honourable member for Gosford also makes clear the position of the Coalition in general and on this legislation in particular: We reserve our right to scrutinise legislation in the Legislative Council.

The Attorney's reasons were not cogent or compelling. The Attorney said that the amendments sought to "gut" the legislation. The amendments do no such thing. The amendments support the principle of disclosure of the case for the prosecution, then go on to state what the defence must do. The defence has to give details of any expert witnesses. One cannot plead a defence of insanity without an expert witness. One cannot plead a wide variety of defences without supporting expert witnesses, because without those experts one would simply be making a statement. Expert evidence is needed to establish such defences. So in most cases in which someone raises the defences to which the Attorney referred, experts will be needed. Then the prosecution will have the names of the experts and copies of the reports that they will use to establish a defence. How does that not make clear what evidence the defence will be adducing at the trial? How does that not give the prosecution the opportunity to rebut that evidence by calling its own experts if it so desires?

Further, the defence is required to give the names and addresses of any character witnesses. So if the defence wishes to rely on the defence of character, it will have to disclose the identity of the persons who will support the defendant on that issue. The third point of the Legislative Council amendments is that the defence response is to contain "the accused person's response to the particulars raised in the notice of the case for the prosecution (as provided for by subsection (2))". In other words, the prosecution having given notice of the particulars of its case, the defence has to give its response to that notice and show what it will argue at the trial and what it will not argue at the trial. How does that catch the prosecution by surprise if it has a response from the defence telling the prosecution what the defence will be arguing and what it will not be arguing?

How is the prosecution caught by surprise when the identity of expert witnesses and their reports are supplied by the defence to the prosecution? How could the prosecution not know what is going on when it has a list of all the character witnesses that the defence will call? So the defence and its particulars are provided in response to the prosecution's statement, and character witnesses and expert witnesses are all disclosed to the prosecution. What is the prosecution lacking? In the eyes of a reasonable person, nothing at all. It is all there. And the responsibility is ongoing. If the defence changes its position, it is required to change its notification. That is provided for in section 47H. The procedure is set out in the four pages containing the amendments.

Let it be clear what the Attorney does not like. He wants to run this system by regulation. That is what his bill proposes—that the Government can make regulations dealing with these matters. Then the regulations would be under the Attorney's control, and from time to time he could change those regulations without coming back to Parliament. That is what the bill is all about. The issue is not pre-trial disclosure, because the Opposition supports pre-trial disclosure. To make that clear, once again I say we support the principle of pre-trial disclosure.

But the Coalition also supports the principle that people should know what they are to be required to disclose, and that that should be set out in an Act of Parliament. If the Attorney wants this legislation passed, all he has to do is set out his requirements in the Act. Why will he not do that? If he does not like the Act, he should bring in new legislation setting out every step, so that everyone knows what steps are required, so that lawyers when advising their clients will be able to refer to the Act and know what has to be done and what does not have

to be done. Those requirements should not simply be under the control of the Attorney. That is not rule by law, it is rule by the Attorney General.

The Opposition does not agree with the Attorney's contention and will maintain its position. We will indicate to all interested parties that the Coalition will support any reasonable and appropriate legislation. At this stage the Attorney has not introduced reasonable or appropriate legislation. He has not introduced legislation that sets out the details of what is required by each side. Until he does so, the Opposition will maintain its present position. If the Government objects to these amendments, the Attorney should give the detail of the basis of the Government's objection, rather than make general statements such as that the amendments "gut the bill" or "destroy the principles of the bill" or are unacceptable to the Attorney. Give us the details of the Government's objection to the amendments. The Attorney has a whole department of advisers, he has policy advisers and staff. Let the people of New South Wales know the detail of his objections to these amendments. The Opposition's position remains unchanged.

Mr DEBUS (Blue Mountains—Attorney General, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister Assisting the Premier on the Arts) [10.56 a.m.]: The honourable member for Gosford changes his position in this debate as frequently as he makes speeches in this place. In fact, he adopts opposing positions within the same speech rather frequently. I have given the reasons why the Government cannot accept these amendments.

It is interesting to me that the kinds of issues that the honourable member for Gosford is now raising certainly were not raised by him at the time of the original debate in this Chamber. The bill was introduced after a great deal of consultation with all interested parties and indeed after it had lain upon the table of the House, if I recall correctly, for a number of months. It is quite absurd to suggest now that fundamental aspects of the legislation did not have appropriate consideration at the time. It would be absurd, for the reasons I have given, for the Government to accept all the amendments. I refer, by the way, especially to amendment No. 2. Amendment No. 1 is a matter that might be reconsidered in the upper House.

Question—That the amendments be disagreed to—put.

The Committee divided.

[*In division*]

Mr Fraser: Point of order: The honourable member for Manly was clearly on this side of the House when the doors were shut. I ask you to direct him to return to this side of the House.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr Price): I did not see where the honourable member for Manly was at the time the division was called for. The division will continue.

Mr Fraser: Point of order: The rules of this House clearly dictate that if a member is on a certain side of the House when the doors are shut, that member is to be directed by the Chair to return to where he or she was. I suggest that what you are doing is not within the rules of this House and that you request the honourable member for Manly to return to where he was when the doors were shut.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: I repeat what I said earlier. I did not observe the location of the honourable member for Manly. The division will continue.

Ayes, 49

Ms Allan	Mr Gibson	Mr Orkopoulos
Mr Amery	Mr Greene	Mr E. T. Page
Ms Andrews	Mrs Grusovin	Dr Refshauge
Mr Aquilina	Mr Hickey	Ms Saliba
Mr Ashton	Mr Hunter	Mr Scully
Mr Barr	Mr Iemma	Mr W. D. Smith
Mr Bartlett	Mr Lynch	Mr Stewart
Ms Beamer	Mr Markham	Mr Tripodi
Mr Black	Mr Martin	Mr Watkins
Mr Brown	Mr McManus	Mr West
Miss Burton	Ms Meagher	Mr Whelan
Mr Campbell	Ms Megarrity	Mr Woods
Mr Collier	Mr Mills	Mr Yeadon
Mr Crittenden	Ms Moore	
Mr Debus	Mr Moss	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Face	Mr Nagle	Mr Anderson
Mr Gaudry	Mr Newell	Mr Thompson

Noes, 35

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

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Legislative Council's amendments disagreed to.

Resolution reported from Committee and report adopted.

DEATH OF SIR DONALD BRADMAN

Debate adjourned from 27 February.

Ms SEATON (Southern Highlands) [11.09 a.m.]: Those of us from Bowral know him as our Don. It is a great honour to represent the area that includes Bowral, where the Bradman legend began in a house with a water tank at the back which the young Don Bradman used for batting practice with a cricket stump and a golf ball. I pay tribute to Bowral's favourite son, who departed the field this week with the undisputed reputation of the greatest cricket player the world has ever seen, and one of our greatest Australians. Sir Donald Bradman was born in Cootamundra and at the age of 2½ moved to Bowral, where he lived with his family in a house in Shepherd Street, near to where the Bradman Oval is located.

Sir Donald attended the Bowral Public School along with Jessie Menzies, who later became his wife. He became a member of the New South Wales Sheffield Shield team and the Australian test team, which he captained with great distinction for many years. Many details of his cricketing career have been covered by other members of this place who have contributed to this condolence debate. I had the honour of meeting a number of members of the Invincibles team of 1948, which was greatest Australian cricket team that ever left our shores. It was interesting to hear Arthur Morris and Bill Johnston, both members of that team, speak of Sir Donald's leadership, his aura, his sense of fair play and his great pride in representing Australia. I am honoured that I had the chance to speak to both those gentlemen and hear at first hand what it was like to be captained by the great Sir Donald Bradman in 1948 when the team visited England.

In the Southern Highlands we are very proud that Sir Donald Bradman grew up and lived in Bowral and attended Bowral Public School. The school has had the distinction of having been visited and touched by many great Australians, one of whom was Sir Henry Parkes, who visited the school in March 1890. A few decades later Sir Donald Bradman, then a young boy, took his first steps to school in Bowral, accompanied by Jessie Menzies. In recent days I have spoken with members of the Bowral Public School Parents and Citizens Association. At its meeting last night there was discussion about an appropriate way in which Bowral Public School might acknowledge its famous former student. One idea that was put to parents was to change the name of the school to include the name "Sir Donald Bradman". Another idea, which probably has a lot of support, is the reconstruction of a gate which is in need of repair as a memorial gate to Sir Donald Bradman.

The school is located a few blocks from where Sir Donald grew up, and is close to the famous Bradman Oval and Bradman Museum. I look forward to working with the parents and citizens association to implement whatever it decides is the most appropriate way in which the school can acknowledge that Sir Donald was once a student at that school. I never had the privilege of meeting Sir Donald but long before I became a member of this place I certainly revered him and knew a great deal about him. I first became aware of him when I was a child living in the Solomon Islands. At that time it was a British colony and very keen on its cricket. In the afternoons I used to listen to the British Broadcasting Corporation [BBC] World Service. Brian Johnston, a

famous British cricket commentator, would tell those living in that tropical place, four degrees below the equator, what was going on in a cricket game in England or Australia.

Living in a place where there was no television and no other form of communication, the BBC World Service evoked in me pictures of a game that I had never actually seen. Although Sir Donald was not playing in any of those games, his name was often mentioned in those broadcasts. From a young age I had some idea of him, although I had never seen an image of him and certainly never seen a real game of cricket. When I was elected to this House in 1996, as a matter of courtesy I wrote to Sir Donald Bradman and told him that I was now the member for Southern Highlands. I told him that I was keen to do whatever I could to support the work of the Bradman Museum and the Bradman Foundation.

I informed Sir Donald that I had been elected to the position held by John Fahey prior to the by-election. I did nothing much more about that letter, which I had written as a matter of courtesy to keep him up to date with what was happening. I was extremely touched and surprised when a few weeks later I received a letter from Sir Donald Bradman, handwritten on blue paper. He congratulated me on my election and thanked me for my interest. He said that the best help I could give him was to support the work of the Bradman Museum, especially that of the curator, Richard Mulvaney, on behalf of the foundation for the promotion of cricket.

I took Sir Donald's request very seriously and with a sense of honour. I have done whatever I can to work with the past president of the foundation, Gary Barnsley, and the current chairman, Ian Craig, as well as Richard Mulvaney, the executive officer. I was not present at the opening of stage one of the Bowral Museum, but John Fahey was there. I followed with interest the comments that Sir Donald made at the opening of the building. He said, "I hope they will have some wonderful contests on this lovely ground." It certainly is a lovely ground and I urge any members of this place who have not yet visited the Bradman Museum or Bradman Oval to do so. The museum is a great tribute not only to Sir Donald Bradman but also to the game of cricket and its cultural characteristics.

Some wonderful contests have been held on that lovely ground and Sir Donald would be proud to know that it is used as he had hoped it would be. Recently it has fielded contests between the South African test team and a selection from the Australian test team as well as contests between Australian and English women's elevens. This year there was a wonderful match between the West Indies test team and the New South Wales country side. It is with pride that I say that the New South Wales country side wiped the floor with the West Indies side—all in good fun, a good-natured game. It is an extraordinary testament to the quality of Australian cricket, and the heritage of our game, that a New South Wales country side can convincingly defeat a West Indies test team. Sir Donald would be pleased to know that on any Saturday morning in summer the Bradman Oval is teeming with young cricket players from the local schools and their parents. They gather for cricket practice and matches. Certainly Australian cricket is alive and well at the Bradman Oval.

I spoke with John Fahey, a former member for Southern Highlands, earlier this week about the death of Sir Donald. As many honourable members would know, John Fahey has been in hospital for a number of weeks. I asked him if he would like me to place his sentiments on the record, as he would not have the opportunity to do so. He was grateful for the opportunity and asked me to acknowledge the greatness of Sir Donald and his contribution to the Australian character and spirit. He also asked me to acknowledge the work of the Bradman Museum and the Bradman Memorial Foundation. John Fahey has had a long involvement with the museum and has worked on the fundraising team for the foundation.

The Bradman Memorial Foundation plays an important role in fostering and developing cricket, particularly amongst children of remote communities and people with disabilities. The foundation does a very important job. One of the objects of the creation of the Bradman Museum was to give focus to the foundation. On that basis Sir Donald Bradman broke his famous characteristic silence. He was a private man and was cautious about lending his name to anything because of the way in which it might be used. Because of the work and objects of the foundation, he agreed to put his name to the museum. A number of functions have been held in Parliament House to raise money for stage two of the Bradman Museum. John Fahey, who plays an ongoing role in the foundation, was keen to take the opportunity to place on record his tribute to a very great Australian.

I also spoke during the week to Richard Mulvaney, the curator of the Bradman Museum, who, in the course of his work, developed a close friendship with Sir Donald Bradman. He valued that friendship very much. He asked me to say that he very much regrets Sir Donald's passing, as we all do. However, he called on us to look at his life by way of celebration rather than mourning. We all mourn the loss of a great Australian who has touched our lives in some way or another. But I believe Sir Donald would want us all to celebrate being

Australian and the ambassadorship not only of himself but of all Australian players who have left our shores to play cricket overseas. That is one of the most rewarding experiences that Australians have been able to share with other countries.

Richard Mulvaney also said that in some way perhaps Sir Donald's death was a relief. In the past couple of years since the death of Lady Jessie he has been quoted as saying how much he missed her and that life on his own was not what he had hoped. It is nice to know that he died peacefully at home. Richard Mulvaney also spoke of the importance of the public appreciation that is being shown for Sir Donald and his life. He said that the Bradman Memorial Fund is now set up for the purpose of raising funds to support disadvantaged and disabled communities who have would-be cricket players in their midst.

Condolence books are available for signing at Australia Post offices around the country and at the Bradman Museum in Bowral. In this time of public mourning it is important that a facility is provided for the public to show their appreciation and respect for Sir Donald Bradman. Richard Mulvaney asked me to acknowledge the work of Australia Post in providing access for Australians to do so. He told me that a public memorial service will be held in approximately three weeks at Adelaide cathedral and that people will also be able to gather at the Adelaide Oval on that occasion. International and interstate visitors will come to pay their respects to Sir Donald Bradman. A memorial service will be held in Bowral two or three days after the Adelaide service, so that those who attend the Adelaide service and others may come to Bowral and pay their respects.

Sir Donald Bradman is survived by two children, John and Shirley, and grandchildren Tom, Greta and Nicholas. I acknowledge the interest that John Bradman has shown in the ongoing work of the Bradman Museum and the Bradman Memorial Foundation. I met him at a recent fundraising dinner held by the foundation in Bowral. John Bradman had travelled from Adelaide. It was an honour to have him with us and to know that he is interested in the work of the museum and the foundation. The people of the Southern Highlands look forward to the development of our relationship with him. The death of Sir Donald Bradman is a loss which, I suspect, we all had hoped we would never have to face and that Sir Donald, like the values he represents, would go on forever. Whilst we all express our sympathies to his children and extended family, Australia has lost an icon and a gentleman and Bowral has lost a favourite son. Sir Donald will now be reunited with his beloved wife, Jessie, who, he always said, was his greatest partnership.

Sir Donald Bradman helped define us as Australians. He set the standards for sportsmanship and a fair go and he treated everyone who admired him with respect and humility. Despite the fact that he was uncomfortable in the limelight, his extraordinary talents shone upon him. He was a man of great intelligence, complexity, compassion and modesty. In a documentary that was shown recently he said, "I try and get as many runs as I possibly can." That was the only explanation he gave for his great achievements. If in the course of doing that he set a few records, so be it. In the purest and simplest form, he was out there to get runs, and he certainly did. A heavy burden of responsibility falls on us in Bowral and the Southern Highlands to honour and celebrate his outstanding legacy. With the privilege of hosting the Bradman Museum in our community, it falls on our shoulders to be the custodians of the values and Australian characteristics that are synonymous with the Don. Farewell to a great and much loved Australian.

Mr GREENE (Georges River) [11.26 a.m.]: As the member for Georges River I can proudly say that my electorate is completely within the St George district, which is a district also synonymous with Sir Donald Bradman. I can also proudly say that in my years within the St George area I have been privileged to have been a life member and president of the Georges River St George Cricket Association. I am a life member and current President of the Georges River Penshurst St George Junior Cricket Association, as well as the President of the Illawarra Catholic Club Cricket Club, which fields 23 sides every Saturday of the cricket season in the St George district cricket competitions. I am very proud of my association with cricket in the St George district.

One of the other great privileges I have is being a member of the St George District Cricket Club. It was to the St George District Cricket Club that young Don Bradman came in November 1926. Sir Donald Bradman, as a young 18-year-old, decided to further his cricket career by playing in the Sydney grade competition as a member of the St George club. On his debut in November 1926, playing for St George against Petersham, he scored 110 and then, unfortunately, was run out. At that time Petersham was one of the strongest clubs in the Sydney cricket competition. In that innings Bradman and a fellow by the name of Target put on a fifth wicket partnership of 197, which to this day is the record fifth wicket partnership for the St George District Cricket Club. That was Don Bradman's debut.

The next season Bradman, aged 19, played his first Sheffield Shield match and on his debut scored a century—in fact 118. At this time Bradman was still living in Bowral and travelled to Sydney for both his grade

and Sheffield Shield commitments. Bradman's Sheffield Shield debut was against South Australia, which had a reasonable leg spinner in the shape of Clarrie Grimmett, who went on to take more than 200 wickets for Australia. Clarrie Grimmett led the attack, but Bradman on his debut scored a century.

That season Bradman posted a score of 134, which was his first century against Victoria at the Sydney Cricket Ground. Unfortunately, he was not able to play for St George too often that season because of his Sheffield Shield commitments, but as a young 19-year-old he still managed to lead the batting average with an aggregate of 402 runs for the season. As has been well documented, in the 1928-29 season Bradman made his test debut at the age of 20 in the first test of that series against England in Brisbane. Bradman was the first St George player to represent Australia. The St George Cricket Club was a fledgling grade club, having commenced its first grade commitments in 1921.

On debut Bradman was not successful on a wet wicket. He accumulated only 18 runs in his first innings, and he scored about one run in the second innings. Amazing as it may seem, he was dropped for the second test. But he was picked for the third, fourth and fifth tests. In the fifth test he had the pleasure of sharing the debut of another St George player, Alan Fairfax, who was also a very successful test player. Although he played only 10 tests before moving to England to play professional cricket in the Lancashire league, he had a test average of 51. In the 1928-29 series Bradman managed to score two centuries. He also scored a couple of sixties and a couple of forties. At the age of 20 years and four months he was the youngest player at that time to score a test century.

In the Sheffield Shield season that year Bradman managed to start what was to become something of a regular occurrence: notching up big scores. In the game that year against Victoria he scored 340 not out, and in the match against Queensland he scored a century in each innings. When I was a young cricket historian and I read the feats of Bradman, I believed that he had something against Queensland because in the 1930s he scored 452 not out, which was the highest first-class score at that time. I note that later, when he played for South Australia, he also accumulated some very large scores against Queensland. Bradman continued his career with St George for a number of years.

In the 1929-30 season he scored 187 against Randwick, which at that stage was a club record score. He also scored 180 against Glebe. His aggregate of 549 with an average that season of 109.84. It was in that season that he scored 452 not out, which eclipsed the previous record of 437 held by the Victorian Bill Ponsford, who was known as a great accumulator of runs. In 1930 Bradman and Alan Fairfax were the first St George players to tour England. On that tour Bradman made 2,960 runs at an average of 98.6. In the second test at Lords Bradman regarded his innings of 254 as technically the most perfect innings of his career, even though he scored 334 in the third test of that series at Leeds, which included 309 in one day and 46 fours.

Bradman went from 254 in one innings to 334 in the next, which became the record test score, surpassing the previous record of 287 set by R. E. Foster in 1903 against Australia. In the 1930-31 series against the West Indies, when Bradman was still playing for St George Cricket Club, he made his first test duck. But that season he also posted his tenth double century. I suppose the duck was an indication that cricket is a great leveller. We can reflect on that later when we look at the end of Bradman's test career. In the 1931-32 season for St George he improved on his previous record by taking the highest score to 246, which he scored against Randwick.

I note the comments of Ernie Laidler, the long-time St George wicket-keeper who played in that game against Randwick and who, at the age of just on 90, is still a resident of the St George area. Randwick did not declare until 10 to three on the second day of the match because they were so fearful of what Bradman could do. Their fears were proven correct, because Bradman managed to win the game with a club record score. Bradman played more games for St George that year because there was no test series, and he scored 785 runs at an average of more than 100, which set a new record batting aggregate for the club. The 1932-33 season was Bradman's last year at St George. It is also remembered as the bodyline test series. Bradman's record in that series is well documented elsewhere.

It is appropriate to note at this time that during Bradman's career with St George, which spanned seven seasons, he had 44 innings and scored 3,013 runs—which included 13 centuries—at an average of 91.30. It is well recorded that Bradman ultimately played 52 tests for Australia. When he finished playing for St George at the end of the 1932-33 season, at the age of almost 25, he had been playing test cricket for just over four years and he had played 23 tests. In those 23 tests he scored 3,091 runs while he was still a member of the St George club, which included one triple century, five double centuries and seven centuries at a test average of 99.71. Bradman was extremely consistent throughout his career.

The St George Cricket Club is very proud of its involvement with Sir Donald Bradman. This morning I was speaking with Warren Saunders, the long-time President and co-patron, with Brian Booth, of the St George club. Warren was reminiscing about his Sheffield Shield debut. Both he and Brian Booth made their first tour to South Australia in 1955. While there they hoped to meet Sir Donald Bradman, and they had that privilege when Bradman walked into the New South Wales dressing-room. Warren tells the story that as Bradman walked in there was instant silence across the dressing-room. The captain at the time, the very famous Keith Miller, was a good friend of Bradman, and introduced him to the team.

As young players in their initial year of Sheffield Shield cricket they were in awe of this great man of Australian cricket when they met him. New South Wales managed to win that game over South Australia in about two and half days. At the end of the game Warren Saunders and Brian Booth decided to borrow a couple of tennis rackets and have a hit on the Memorial Tennis Courts, which are just out the back of the Adelaide Oval. They were amazed to see Sir Donald Bradman leave the ground, and they were even more amazed when he stopped for five minutes to watch them having a hit. As St George players they certainly appreciated the fact that Bradman was watching them.

As Bradman was about to leave he stopped and said to them, "You know, young fellows, you would probably be better off practising your cricket." It is an indication of the man that Bradman stopped to talk to these two young players. He was keen to encourage them to continue to practice their cricket to improve their skills, which is very much a part of the development of the young cricketer as it is for any young sportsperson across any life development. Warren Saunders and Brian Booth were most impressed with his comments.

St George Cricket Club is world famous for the quality and calibre of its players, including Sir Donald Bradman, but the involvement of St George with Bradman goes even further. Bradman always said, and I saw this again the other night in the television replay of an interview with Ray Martin, that the best bowler he ever played with or against, or ever saw, was Bill O'Reilly, who was also a great record holder with the St George Cricket Club. Until his death he lived for many years in the Blakehurst area.

It is worth reflecting on another of Bradman's close associations with St George players. We all know that Bradman was dismissed in his final innings at the Oval by Eric Hollies' second ball: a googly that caught the inside edge and bowled him. The gentleman then standing at the other end of the wicket was Arthur Morris, who scored 196 in that match—a fact that is often forgotten. Arthur Morris was also a famous St George cricketer. He played his junior cricket in the St George area, progressed to Green Shield and through the grade ranks to play for New South Wales and then Australia. It is fitting that a St George player was at the non-striker's end during Sir Don's last innings for Australia in 1948.

It is also worth mentioning that, in the previous test at Leeds when Australia scored 3 for 404, Morris and Bradman shared a significant partnership of more than 300 runs on the last day while attempting to overhaul an enormous English lead. Morris scored just over 180 and Bradman scored just over 170 runs. That partnership obviously helped Australia to win the fourth test at Leeds. It is also worth noting that in the final test at the Oval Bradman did not have a second innings because, first, England was dismissed for 52 through the efforts of the young Ray Lindwall—who was also a St George junior cricketer—and, second, Morris scored 196, which meant that Australia did not need to bat a second time.

It is apparent that the relationship between the St George District Cricket Club, the St George district and Don Bradman goes back a long way. In fact, when Bradman first came to live in Sydney at age 20 during the 1928-29 cricket season, his first residence was in Penshurst. After a couple of months, he moved to Rockdale where he lived with the Cush family in Frederick Street. At the time, Frank Cush was secretary of the St George District Cricket Club and he later became president of the Australian Cricket Board. Two other famous Australians also came from Penshurst: Sir Jack Brabham and Ken Rosewall. The Georges River electorate—and particularly the suburb of Penshurst—has a famous sporting tradition. Bradman certainly enjoyed his involvement with St George. He celebrated his twenty-first birthday at the home of Harold Fraser, after whom a cricket field at Carss Park on the Princes Highway is named.

Much factual information has been supplied about Don Bradman. Many souvenir editions of newspapers and books have been published about him. Michael Page's book entitled *Bradman—The Illustrated Biography*, which contains a collection of Bradman's private material, features on its cover a photograph of Sir Donald Bradman wearing his St George District Cricket Club cap. Bradman was obviously a great Australian. Although I never had the pleasure and the privilege of meeting Sir Donald Bradman, the few great sportsmen whom I have met all have one thing in common: great humility and humanity. In other words, they considered themselves to be ordinary people who had been given extraordinary gifts.

The previous speaker, the honourable member for Southern Highlands, referred to a comment about Sir Donald Bradman made on Monday by Alan Jones on Radio 2UE. In his concluding remarks, he said that at the end of Bradman's life the greatest desire of that great man and great Australian was to be reunited with his wife of 65 years. It is worth reflecting on that point. As well as being Australia's great hero and our Don—the Don—he was also a man with a family and a long-term relationship with a loving wife with whom, ultimately, he wished to be reunited. We thank Sir Donald Bradman for his contribution to Australia, to Australian cricket and to Australian sport. I also thank him for his contribution to the St George district. Ultimately—and most importantly—we thank him for being a great man who set a fine example to this nation.

Debate adjourned on motion by Mr Gibson.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Matter of Public Importance: Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders

Motion by Mr Watkins agreed to:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to allow the consideration forthwith of the matter of public importance given by the member for Oxley on Tuesday 27 February 2001.

DAIRY INDUSTRY DEREGULATION

Matter of Public Importance

Mr STONER (Oxley) [11.46 a.m.]: On this the second day of sittings in the House for 2001, it is important to review what has happened to the New South Wales dairy industry since this Government deregulated that industry on 1 July last year. Numerous farmers and other industry representatives in my electorate and beyond tell me that the Carr Government has walked away from its responsibilities after it deregulated the dairy industry and has virtually thrown New South Wales dairy farmers to the wolves: in this case, the supermarkets and some processors. I have been asked why no rural impact statement was produced before the decision was taken. Unfortunately, the answer is that there was no rural impact statement: a committee is examining the issue only after the event. The Government has provided no substantive assistance since the deregulation of the New South Wales dairy industry, despite the fact that New South Wales farmers were affected more adversely than those in other States.

A recent report from the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics [ABARE] revealed that New South Wales farmers have suffered a 29 per cent cut in milk prices compared with those in South Australia, who have suffered a 14 per cent cut, those in Tasmania, who have suffered a 7 per cent cut and those in Victoria, who have suffered only a 3 per cent cut. The report also showed that the average New South Wales dairy farmer has suffered a drop in income of \$53,000 per annum compared with the next worse-off State, Queensland, with a drop of \$43,000 per annum. It also revealed that 200 dairy farmers in New South Wales left the industry in the six months following deregulation. The only assistance provided so far by the Government has been a counselling program funded by the industry. The Minister for Local Government, Minister for Regional Development, and Minister for Rural Affairs recently announced the allocation of \$500,000 under the regional economic transition scheme, which is a drop in a bucket.

The Dairy Deregulation Impact and Assessment Committee came about only as a result of sustained pressure applied by the Coalition, particularly the National Party. In evading the question of State-based assistance for New South Wales dairy farmers, the Minister has claimed that the taxpayer should not pay twice. That statement is patently untrue: the Federal Government package was funded not by the taxpayer but by a retail levy on the price of milk. Consumers are still getting cheaper milk despite this retail levy. The sad fact is that even with the Federal dairy structural adjustment package New South Wales dairy farmers are getting less for their milk. Their income has dropped drastically.

The refusal by the State Government to assist the New South Wales dairy industry comes despite national competition policy payments to the State of around \$160 million from the Federal Government in 1999-2000 and over \$200 million in 2000-2001. The Western Australian Government has acknowledged its responsibility to help its farmers by providing a \$20 million package. There is an even greater need for assistance to New South Wales farmers, as indicated by the ABARE report. I quote a Dairy Farmers Association [DFA] position paper dated 16 November 2001 regarding this issue:

State Governments have repeatedly refused to provide additional assistance or compensation aside from some targeted programs. This includes the NSW Government despite some heavy lobbying by industry and the NSW Coalition Opposition at the time of the Legislation debate. The Opposition allowed the deregulation legislation, without State compensation, only on the urgings of the industry to avoid a collapse in the Federal Government's Dairy Adjustment Scheme. The NSW Government maintains its firm opposition to financial aid.

The issue of reduced incomes to New South Wales dairy farmers has been partially addressed by the federally co-ordinated dairy structural adjustment program, but it has not been sufficiently addressed. The DFA paper to which I referred seeks an extension of the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission authorisation powers to allow farmer organisations to negotiate prices with processors and supermarkets on behalf of all farmers in the State with a view to achieving an immediate lift of 5¢ or more a litre for market milk. Any thinking or caring person would agree that that is a reasonable request.

Mr Fraser: The Minister would agree with that.

Mr STONER: He probably would. The medical and legal professions have schedule fees. They have strong associations that set a price for their services. Trade unions collectively bargain for wages for their members. Why should there not be such a system for farmers. Yesterday in this House we were talking about Grainco and arrangements for collective bargaining and payment to grain farmers. Increasing the price for farmers is supported by the New South Wales National Party on the grounds of wider public benefit: the retaining of income and jobs in the regions. The dairy industry would have to be the perfect example of a decentralised industry. It is outside metropolitan areas providing income and work and sustaining communities outside the cities, which are growing at a frightening rate at the expense of country areas. Not enough has been done with regard to regional development by the Government. There is a continuing population drift and continuing social disadvantage in country areas. It is worsening under this city-centric Labor Government.

Assistance and support should be provided to the dairy industry, which is the perfect example of a strong, decentralised, regional industry which is providing income and jobs and hope for country people. When the Government repealed sections of the Dairy Industry Act last year it resulted in a drastic cut to milk prices and was tantamount to putting a red line through the milk quota assets of farmers. In the past farmers bought and built up quota assets. They worked hard to establish the assets to guarantee a future income. Many farmers regarded their quota assets as their superannuation. As soon as deregulation happened last year the value of the quota asset went and the value of the farm dropped dramatically.

In the past governments of both persuasions were happy to collect stamp duty on the total value of farms, including the value of the quota asset. Now the quota has been removed without any discussion about compensation. Farm values have dropped significantly. For the benefit of the Minister I will refer to a couple of people in my electorate. Mr Hugh Aitken of Tewinga, which is near Macksville, three years ago had a contract on his property, a working dairy farm, for \$780, 000. This included a quota value of \$132,000. Since that time because of the drop in income the person on the property decided to get out of dairying and the dairying operation has effectively closed down.

Mr Aitken recently had the property valued at \$280,000. So there has been a drop in the asset of half a million dollars. Mr Colin Sheather of Hannam Vale, which is towards the south of my electorate, in April 1996 had a contract for \$640,000 on his property. The sale later fell through. A valuation in September 2000 was for \$480,000. So there has been a drop in valuation of \$160,000. Hannam Vale would be the most beautiful farming country anywhere. If the Minister is ever up on the mid North Coast he should turn left at Johns River and head up to Hannam Vale to have a look.

Mr ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Mills): Order! The honourable member for Oxley has the call. The honourable member for Coffs Harbour and the Minister for Agriculture will cease interjecting.

Mr STONER: The value of Mr Sheather's property has dropped only \$160,000 because Hannam Vale is the best land around. There has been no suggestion of compensation for the lost asset despite the urgings of the National Party and the Dairy Farmers Association and the strong protests of the Australian Milk Producers Association, AMPA. We have been able to get a concession from the Government, and that is the establishment of the Dairy Deregulation Impact and Assessment Committee chaired by the fine former member of the Legislative Council Richard Bull. It was established at the end of June 2000. Only this month have there been meetings on the North Coast—at Lismore, Coffs Harbour and Wauchope.

The meetings were welcome but why has it taken eight months for any action to be taken? The issue is important to country New South Wales. There is a world outside Sydney and this issue should be addressed urgently. I am told that the committee will report to Parliament in October this year—15 months after deregulation. All sorts of devastation is occurring. People are leaving farms. People are depressed and in financial trouble. Last year dairy farmers suicided. We cannot let people remain out on a limb without assistance other than counselling.

There is only one counsellor for the whole North Coast and that is not sufficient. The fact that 15 months went by without tangible support being provided to the New South Wales dairy industry indicates an uncaring attitude to country areas by this city-centric Government. Despite the rhetoric of its rural faction, the Government has changed a good system without a rural socioeconomic impact statement, without financial assistance similar to that given to the forestry and egg industries and without compensation for loss of assets. The Government is only assessing the impact after the event because of pressure by the Coalition, and it has dragged on for 15 months. People are walking off farms and families are breaking down and becoming dysfunctional. New South Wales is dragging the chain. This matter is important because the Carr Government must fast-track the deliberations of the Dairy Deregulation Impact and Assessment Committee and must deliver on its recommendations to help our struggling dairy farmers.

Mr AMERY (Mount Druitt—Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Land and Water Conservation) [12.01 p.m.]: I am pleased to respond to this matter of public importance moved by the Opposition on what has been one of the most significant issues facing rural New South Wales in recent times—the massive restructure of the dairy industry. One must question the quality of the submission by the National Party. It was a jaundiced rehash of the history of the process of deregulation and only occasionally passed by the truth. I do not want to waste the time of the House by rehashing the debate we have had on the dairy industry during the past 18 months because that already appears in *Hansard*. The honourable member for Bega found out yesterday that the Government introduced dairy deregulation last year and he was excited about that.

In the late 1980s all State governments were regulated and considerable pressure was brought to bear, particularly by the Jewell food chain, which flouted the law by stating that it would bring in Victorian milk at a lower price and undermine the regulated system in New South Wales. Through negotiation with the industry and the Federal Government, the Kerin plan was introduced, followed by the Crean plan, and that, in effect, brought in the Dairy Management Scheme [DMS]. That scheme kept Victorian milk in Victoria, not so much by regulation but by way of a levy system that favoured dairy farmers in Victoria and kept them there. That scheme came to an end last year.

In 1994—unprovoked, unprompted and not forced by competition policy—the then Coalition Government in New South Wales moved to deregulate the dairy industry from the farm gate. Milk vendors in particular were severely affected by that deregulation. The then State Government did not provide a cash incentive to assist milk vendors, like the honourable member for Cessnock, who were put out of business as a result of the deregulation. However, an industry package was introduced with funds provided by the selling of regulated milk runs and so on. No State-funded assistance package was provided following the 1994 farm gate deregulation. The legislation took effect in 1994 and continued until 1998. During that period competition policy was introduced in Australia, which required all States to implement a competition policy review of all regulated systems and to apply a public benefits test.

New South Wales undertook that review and resolved to have regulations in place for another five years. However, the Victorian Government carried out a competition policy review but resolved to do the opposite and deregulate its industry on 1 July 2000. With 64 per cent of the Australian dairy industry producing milk at a lower cost, one does not need to repeat the impact that had on the regulated farm-gate prices in all States of Australia. Industry was able to negotiate a \$1.7 billion package, which has been the subject of many references to the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics [ABARE] report and public meetings with the State-established dairy industry report committee, which will report to Parliament this year.

Questions have been asked as to whether the \$1.7 billion package is enough, and when one considers the cuts to margins, some might say that it is not enough. Many farmers are going out of business at a rate far greater than even the most pessimistic industry representatives predicted. Who are the winners? Who pays for it? The National Party wants State taxpayers to pay for a top-up scheme. That is, New South Wales consumers and taxpayers will be paying again! One should ask whether New South Wales consumers, farmers and taxpayers are paying more than their fair share towards this Federal Government dairy deregulation assistance package.

Mr Fraser: What are you doing with the \$156 million you get?

Mr AMERY: Let me tell you who will get what. The consumers of milk products in New South Wales will pay a levy of 11¢ a litre for eight years.

Mr George: Why not tell the dairy farmers that?

Mr AMERY: I have told them. They know that. It is, by law, a consumer levy. There is no other description for it, although it is fair to argue that that is being paid at the expense of the dairy farmers. Most consumers would agree to wearing that cost for eight years if it helped dairy farmers. However, New South Wales consumers are paying \$506 million towards this package but only \$330 million of it goes to New South Wales dairy farmers.

Mr Fraser: You signed off on the agreement.

Mr AMERY: We had no choice on that one, buster. The other \$200 million subsidises Victorian dairy farmers and dairy farmers in other States. Yet the National Party wants taxpayers to pay more. Let us consider what the Federal Government is getting out of this. Warren Truss, the Federal Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry said that the Federal Government has done everything for the dairy industry and State governments have done nothing. The Federal Government should introduce a similar scheme for every agricultural industry in Australia, because it is the big winner. When the dairy farmers committee visited the North Coast and Bega before Christmas dairy farmers told the committee that the money they are receiving from the Federal Government by way of the dairy assistance package is fully taxed.

The honourable member for Oxley, the honourable member for Coffs Harbour and the honourable member for Lismore accused the State Government of receiving a windfall for some fictitious stamp duty that it would collect from this industry package. There was no stamp duty and the State Government made no money at all from the assistance package. However, the Federal Government had a windfall. The Dairy Farmers Association representative told me today that the Federal Government coffers will rake in \$350 million. The Federal Government is not only not putting any money into the scheme, it is making a \$350 million profit. Yet the Opposition has piously said that the State Government is gaining some benefit from this.

I call on the Federal Government—because it has the power to do so under Federal legislation—to declare this a tax-free grant to enable the dairy industry to receive full benefit from the package. That point has not been emphasised enough. The Federal Government has not provided any cash towards the package yet it will receive a profit of \$350 million. There has been talk in the media about Howard receiving \$400 million from an excise on petrol, but the hidden gain is the amount it is receiving from dairy farmers via the consumer. Honourable members opposite should lobby their Federal colleagues to make this assistance package tax free, because that is what it should be.

I believe that consumers who are paying a levy of 11¢ a litre are unaware that 4¢ of that levy goes to the Federal Government as taxation. Most would think that 11¢ per litre goes to the dairy farmers. This grab for money by Canberra should be highlighted and brought to public attention. There has been a lot of talk about the petrol excise. The Federal Government has been lucky. It has been getting a lot of bad publicity about the petrol excise but no-one has mentioned the \$350 million it will make at the expense of dairy farmers who are going through the most difficult time of any agricultural industry in our State's history.

In relation to the point raised by the honourable member for Oxley about the committee possibly reporting this month, I cannot give an exact date on which the committee will complete its report. What I can tell the honourable member is that my own chief of staff is a member of the committee. The former shadow Minister for Agriculture is the chair of the committee and a former Liberal Minister in the Coalition Government is a member of that committee. There has been no Labor Party stacking in that regard. Milton Morris and Richard Bull are also members of the committee. This is not something that the Opposition would do. Labor did not load the committee with members from its own party; it appointed people it thought could best do the job.

They provide the Government with an update after every meeting. There is nothing hidden about these meetings. They are public and people attend them. There can be no suggestion that the Government is sitting on a report about the impact of dairy deregulation after 10 months. Let us not forget that in the initial stages of the impact of dairy deregulation the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics [ABARE] provided us with a quite substantial and, I believe, good report on the impact of dairy deregulation. I certainly acknowledge the work the bureau did in examining the impacts of dairy deregulation.

As I said in public recently, it is an irony because organisations such as ABARE and the Productivity Commission have been arguing for deregulation for some time. Having been given the job of looking at the impact of deregulation, they have been forced to tell the truth—that is, that it hurt farmers greatly. I believe that the honourable member for Oxley may have referred to the committee also giving farmers some ability to obtain

a fair price for their product. That is what farmers really need. Honourable members can forget all the politics about State-based assistance packages and compensation for this, that and the other. What farmers need is a reasonable price for their product and it is fair to say that they are not getting it.

I understand that the Queensland industry received a tick-off from the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission [ACCC] to organise a collective bargaining arrangement. I propose now to look at that, and I give an assurance to the House that we are going to work with the dairy industry in this State. We are going to help the industry put together a case to try to get a system, unnamed at this stage—some collective bargaining arrangement with regard to obtaining a fairer price for their product.

I would make the point that I am having some discussions, although this is not necessarily the way it will go. In Great Britain when dairy deregulation took place, dairy farmers got together and established an organisation called MilkMark. That organisation has been disbanded because it was challenged by the British equivalent of the Competition Council. But that should not be a disincentive to farmers considering a similar arrangement here. It should be looked at here, despite its failure in Great Britain, because when I spoke to the people associated with the British industry I was told that MilkMark failed because in Great Britain a monopoly is regarded as any structure that has 25 per cent market power.

On my understanding we do not have that restriction in Australia. Had MilkMark been established here, at that time and in the same circumstances, I could probably hazard a guess that the organisation would still be operating. It brought all of the British farmer members under one collective—I suppose a good description of it would be a form of single desk—so that when the supermarkets and the processors wanted to buy milk in a particular part of England they had to go to MilkMark and buy the milk at the market price set by MilkMark, not at a price set by the processors, as happens here at the moment.

I am not saying that is the solution to the problem, but I know that the industry, particularly the farmers side of the industry, is beginning to realise that we cannot deal with processors and supermarkets individually, or even one or two in combination. They have to get together in strength—the trade union way, you might say—but they have to make sure they do not in any way conflict with competition policy or competition rules that would prevent them from gaining too much market power, as silly as that may sound in the light of deregulation.

There is a two-pronged suggestion from this side of the House in response to the motion moved by the Opposition. First, let us all get together to work with dairy farmers to try to get this collective bargaining entity established so that we can obtain a better price. Second, let us send a message to our colleagues in Canberra about the \$1.7 billion dairy assistance package being tax free. I will talk to those on our side of politics in Canberra. I have said for some time that the Federal Government and Mr Truss have the luxury of this big package. We have always said that they have not put any dollars in, but we have not highlighted enough the fact that the Federal Government will receive \$350 million as a bonus.

Mr Fraser: What about the \$156 million you are getting?

Mr AMERY: We will get nothing. By deregulating we have lost quite a lot. Let us call on the Federal Government to make this grant to dairy farmers tax free. All of this talk will be assisted by the fact that the dairy assistance package will be a net amount.

Mr GEORGE (Lismore) [12.16 p.m.]: The Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Land and Water Conservation has stated openly in this House that the New South Wales Government will get nothing as a result of the deregulation of dairy farming in this State. I cannot accept that.

Mr Amery: We lost the reserve funding because we lost regulation. We are the net losers.

Mr GEORGE: That is your responsibility. It is inaccurate for the Minister to say that the New South Wales Government has not benefited from deregulation in this State.

Mr Amery: It has not. You are wrong. Come and talk to us about levies.

Mr GEORGE: It is a bit like the stamp duty debate. I want to tell the Minister that dairy farmers along the North Coast of New South Wales have had the battle of their lives to stay afloat. That is not only because of dairy deregulation, but also as a result of what New South Wales Agriculture is doing to dairy farmers in my area in respect of tick control and the bovine Johne's disease [BJD] status in the area. I tell the Minister that they have been devastated and are lucky to stay alive.

The Minister wants to take us back over history. I admit that dairy farmers on the North Coast of New South Wales became regulated in the 1970s under a Labor Government. In those days dairy farmers had to purchase quotas and were told they had no alternative but to update their dairies and herds or get out of the industry. During those years dairy farmers continued to purchase quotas. Even as late as the past three or four years people on the North Coast have bought quotas. Now they have been taken away from them.

I agree with the Minister—and I told the parliamentary committee recently when it visited Lismore—that the dairy structural adjustment payments have created problems. I will place an incident on the record. One of my constituents had a quota worth \$300,000 but it is worth nothing today. He will get a payment of \$22,000 per annum for the next eight years, which has created a tax problem of an extra \$6,000 a year to him. Furthermore, he has lost his family allowance payments. It has created problems and it needs to be addressed.

It is incorrect for the Minister to state in this House that the Government has received no benefit from deregulation in New South Wales. This Government has received \$156 million, as I understand it. Part of that is attributed to deregulation and the fact that dairy farmers who have lost their quotas received no compensation whatsoever. Adding to the problems in the north is the Norco situation. Norco has been critically affected by deregulation and, as a result, has had to close its cheese factory. That has had a flow on in that 37 staff have already gone, and it will have a further flow on to areas in country New South Wales and in regional areas.

Furthermore, dairy farmers had shares that had a value in Norco. Today, sadly, those shares do not have any value because of deregulation, and, yes, there have been other problems. Honourable members should remember that during debate on deregulation a rosy picture was painted for dairy farmers. They were told by the Dairy Farmers Association and this Government that the figures were calculated on a 35¢ to 37¢ payment for their milk. Today payment is down to as low as 22¢ in my area, and that has been the problem. Honourable members should remember three events: in May 2000 three major processors submitted tenders to Woolworths. In June 2000, prior to deregulation—and I would like to know why these figures were not published prior to the deregulation—Woolworths went back three times to the processors to determine whether that was a sustainable price. Woolworths was assured by the processors.

Mr Amery: I think that happened since deregulation.

Mr GEORGE: No, it happened in June. They copped deregulation, lost the 11¢, and then in August a new price was awarded to Woolworths by the processors. Deregulation of the milk industry has resulted in a significant erosion of the farm base and the ability of small processors to maintain their existence.

Mr HICKEY (Cessnock) [12.21 p.m.]: Clearly, I have a fair amount of empathy with dairy farmers. I come from a milk vending sector, and the honourable member for Coffs Harbour was a party to its deregulation. It has received no package of assistance—nothing. Deregulation of the dairy industry is something about which we are all concerned. Members of Country Labor were concerned when this matter was first raised.

Mr Fraser: Why didn't you vote against deregulation?

Mr HICKEY: The honourable member for Coffs Harbour asked me why I did not vote against deregulation. It was the Federal Coalition which put up the \$1.7 billion, and if we had voted against it, that \$1.7 billion package would have been in jeopardy.

Mr Fraser: No they did not put it up; the consumers did.

Mr HICKEY: As the honourable member for Coffs Harbour said, the Federal Government did not put up the package, the consumer put it there. The consumers pay 11¢ for every carton of milk purchased, which goes towards a fund. That equates to the \$1.7 billion package, and the Federal Government, in putting packages together, gets a \$350 million windfall. The State Coalition has complained that this Government is hypocritical. Consumers are not aware that the Federal Government is double dipping. I am sure that after today's debate the Minister will issue a press release outlining that fact. The New South Wales Government's Dairy Deregulation Impact and Assessment Committee is travelling around New South Wales and is listening to the concerns of dairy farmers.

The committee is putting packages together and, as the honourable member for Coffs Harbour said, it is a slow job. The Minister, who is concerned about this, will be given an interim report to enable him to address some issues in the short term. The committee found that the federally funded industry adjustment scheme is

creating its own problems. Farmers have to pay interest on their outstanding loans because of the length of time they have to wait for adjustment payments, and are also charged income tax by the Federal Government. Farmers have told the committee that because the adjustment payments are regarded as income they lose one-third of their payments to the Taxation Office.

The New South Wales Government should send a clear message to the Federal Government that that is totally wrong. The Federal Government could make adjustments to the payments, free of income tax, but it has chosen not to do so. It is happy to sit back and reap \$350 million. Compare that to the far more productive work of the New South Wales Government. Last year Country Labor, through the Minister, put forward a plan calling for a floor price on milk, something that the State and Federal Coalition scoffed at. However, we are all screaming for that now, and the Coalition is saying that that is what is needed. The Carr Government is implementing valuable on-the-ground work for dairy farmers in the form of advice for dairy families and communities, counselling services, business management, farm planning advice and other practical industry information.

The Minister for Regional Development, and Minister for Rural Affairs has provided an additional \$500,000 to help communities to adapt to new industries. Of course, the dairy deregulation committee is listening to farmers' concerns and meeting with prominent dairy industries. We are not hindering farmers, not charging them \$350 million in income tax, but helping them where we can. The State Opposition should support the New South Wales Government and condemn the Federal Coalition for its appalling handling of the situation. Instead, the Opposition says that the Government is not doing enough. It is happy to put the blame back on the State Government. This is a Federal issue and we should all aim our sights at the Federal Government and stop this imposing tax.

[Debate interrupted.]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Matter of Public Importance: Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders

Motion by Mr Whelan agreed to:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to permit three additional members for five minutes each on the matter of public importance.

DAIRY INDUSTRY DEREGULATION

Matter of Public Importance

[Debate resumed.]

Mr R. H. L. SMITH (Bega) [12.26 p.m.]: There is no doubt that dairy farmers throughout New South Wales and Australia are hurting at this time. The people who originally pushed for deregulation did not realise that the price that farmers would be paid for whole milk was going to drop to such an extent and that there would be so much competition between the manufacturing companies. It is extremely important that the committee report is produced as quickly as possible; October is far too late. On a number of occasions I have said that the State Government has not given financial assistance of sufficient magnitude to individual farmers to help them cope with deregulation.

Again I call on the Government to consider compensation to dairy farmers for the loss of their quotas. Within the dairy industry quotas have been traded for many years. Until deregulation everyone believed that quotas were an asset that could be traded. They could be sold to other dairy farmers. The banks and financial institutions considered quotas to be an asset. But as soon as deregulation was introduced the quotas became valueless. As New South Wales is one of two States which had quotas that could be traded, it would be good and equitable for the Government to become involved and to make sure that the transition into deregulation, which is Australiawide, is made in a relatively just and least harmful way for dairy farmers. My electorate of Bega has an efficient industry which produces 1.1 million litres per year per farm. Throughout New South Wales the average is 700,000 litres per year per farm. That indicates that Bega farmers are efficient and have kept up with modern practices.

In recent days an announcement was made by the Bega co-operative that the 143 farmers who supply the Bega factory have entered a partnership arrangement with the New Zealand Dairy Board and Bonlac Foods

Ltd of Victoria. That arrangement will be beneficial to Bega farmers. I congratulate the Bega co-operative and particularly the Bega farmers for the way in which they have progressed during a number of years. The Bega co-operative is a small player in the manufacturing industry, but through its specialised cutting and packaging plant it has stayed ahead of the game. At present, it is one of three such plants in Australia, but after it combines with Bonlac and the New Zealand Dairy Board it will have a cutting and packaging plant that will be the best in the Southern Hemisphere. I give credit to that small co-operative of 143 farmers.

Not only will the partnership benefit the farmers, but throughput will increase threefold. The Bega cheese factory will employ another 150 to 200 people, which is a huge increase when one considers the population of Bega. The farmers will receive a financial benefit in the order of \$15 million. The co-operative realises that the farmers are hurting. It is playing its part and putting money back into the farmers' pockets to help them during this period. I call on the Carr Government to follow the example of the Federal Government and the Bega co-operative and compensate farmers for quotas they have lost.

Mr BLACK (Murray-Darling) [12.31 p.m.]: I am more than pleased to represent Country Labor and support the Minister for Agriculture and city Labor in this matter. To date, we have heard from the Opposition two contributions and interjections from a third member, which can only be described as towering hypocrisy. Let us remember that the Federal Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Warren Truss is married to competition policy. He drove this process from the start. He is supported by John Anderson, who, it was said in last Sunday's papers, would lose his seat of Gwydir over competition policy. Competition policy drove deregulation; there is no getting away from it. Look opposite and what do we see? The National Party has learnt nothing. In the Western Australian election three weeks ago the National Party lost all its upper House seats to One Nation. It also learned nothing from the train crash in the Queensland election. It is not being honest. The National Party should own up to the fact that competition policy is driving its Federal colleagues and that that is what caused deregulation in the first place.

The Minister for Agriculture referred to the 11¢ per litre levy. The National Party has supported the proposition wherein a young mother gives Sally a litre of milk to go to preschool or kindergarten and 3.3¢ of that 11¢ levy is being creamed off by John Anderson, Warren Truss and, at the end of the day, the Prime Minister in income tax. That is the bottom line. The National Party should be told about this nonsense of taking 3.3¢ out of the 11¢ per litre. As the Minister said, the Federal Government receives a windfall of \$350 million. The Federal Government has acknowledged that it is 30 per cent in income tax from the consumer.

We should never forget that the Federal Government set up this deal with not one cent coming out of Federal coffers. The 11¢ per litre levy to rescue the dairy farmers has come from consumers. Further, the issue of deregulation is not a clear one. Dairy farmers in the Murray and Moruya irrigation areas and a significant number of dairy farmers in the Wakool shire, led by the Wakool shire mayor David Shannon, supported deregulation. They wanted it simply because many dairy farmers down south did not have a quota to start with. It is not the same picture everywhere. With the great support of city Labor, and my comrade the Minister for Agriculture, the establishment of a 5,000 feedlot dairy farm at Balranald is proceeding. There is a difference of opinion about deregulation. But at the end of the day we have to contemplate the towering hypocrisy that 30 per cent of the levy goes back to the Federal Government, when it did not put anything in. New South Wales is copping the blunt end for something the Federal National Party started. It promoted deregulation.

Mr Stoner: You are misleading the House.

Mr BLACK: Misleading? Nonsense! I am taking the bait by answering interjections. The vote in Victoria would not have carried unless \$1.8 billion was put on the table by the Federal National Party to help "the Victorian farmers penetrate New South Wales", et cetera. Now—would you believe it—on top of everything else Warren Truss is talking about bringing in milk from New Zealand. Deregulation was forced on New South Wales by the Victorian vote.

Mr Stoner: Towering hypocrisy.

Mr BLACK: Again, this is towering hypocrisy from the National Party. Our Federal Constitution requires free trade. As the Minister alluded to, that means if one system breaks the mould—as Victoria did—we have to go along with it. This Parliament cannot stop Victorian milk coming into New South Wales. That was the end of it. I was handed a note earlier that states, "If we had not deregulated the milk market, Victoria would have reduced the price and the quota would not be worth anything." That is it, full stop. We were forced to deregulate and deregulation was led and abetted by the Federal and State National Party, to their eternal shame. *[Time expired]*

Mr FRASER (Coffs Harbour) [12.36 p.m.]: The sophistry shown in this House by the honourable member for Murray-Darling is something that we expect from so-called Country Labor. Let us get this matter into perspective. The Minister for Agriculture has decided to politicise this debate. We brought this issue before the House because New South Wales dairy farmers are suffering. They were promised between 32¢ and 37¢ per litre floor price after deregulation. Since deregulation the price has reduced in some cases in my electorate to 16¢ for farmers who do not have the protein content in their milk and they have had to pay a 3¢ levy to Norco, because Norco was hurting prior to deregulation and continues to hurt now.

Dairy farmers are now faced with an income level lower than they expected. I believe that the Dairy Farmers Association let them down in the first place. The honourable member for Murray-Darling and the Minister for Agriculture have tried to convince this House that deregulation was forced on New South Wales dairy farmers by the Federal Government. It was not. It was forced on them by the Victorian dairy industry, which was given quota compensation years ago. We were all told that milk was going to rush across the border. However, because of the low value of our dollar and the fact that manufactured milk produced in Victoria is now going to value added products and being exported, there has been no rush of milk over the border. In fact, sales of New South Wales milk are still high. All that has happened is that the farmer's price has dropped and the consumer's price has increased. The farmer has dropped about 11¢ or more per litre on the price he was promised and the consumer price has risen by 11¢ per litre. That is a 22¢ differential. Where has that money gone?

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission [ACCC] and others should look at the entire industry to see where the money has gone. Woolworths initiated a tender process, for which it claims absolute innocence, which resulted in all processors competing to put in the lowest possible price to maintain the market for the future because they were scared of where it was going. The Minister asked, "Who is the winner?" He told us at that the Federal Government will get an extra \$350 million. In fact, the Federal Government will lose in the longer run because the industry has been reduced. Income levels would have been far higher if not for deregulation.

Mr Amery: But the processors will be up.

Mr FRASER: The Minister knows that the income levels of farmers are down. If he does not know that he is not listening to his committee, because they will tell him that the income levels are down and, therefore, taxes are down. If there is a one-off windfall gain to the Federal Government I appeal to the Federal Government to return it to the farmer. At the same time I appeal to the Minister to return to the farmers some of the \$156 million that he will get as an extra competition bonus. Farmers have lost quotas, superannuation and property value. The Minister is trying to put this to one side in the debate.

I appeal to the Minister, on behalf of the farmers in my electorate, to give them something that they deserve: some compensation for the loss of quota and loss of capital value to their farms. Recently, one fellow told the Minister's committee that he had lost \$200,000 off the value of his farm and \$250,000 off the value of his quota, which is a total of \$450,000. How does he replace that? Can the Minister tell me how he replaces that? The Minister and his Government are doing absolutely nothing to assist farmers to develop another income stream from their properties. They cannot make money out of dairy farming—

Mr Amery: That is not what the farmers are saying.

Mr FRASER: The Minister says that the farmers do not want it; they do not want assistance. The Minister has offered the farmers only \$2 million—and that is drawn from the milk levy—and counselling. They do not want counselling; they want real help. The honourable member for Murray-Darling pranced around and berated the National Party, yet he voted three times for deregulation. We voted three times against deregulation.

Mr Black: I had no choice.

Mr FRASER: The honourable member says that he had no choice, yet he stands up in this place and plays politics. The honourable member has house cows in his electorate. He should come up to the North Coast and see what farmers have lost and see how hard it is for them. I appeal to the Minister to leave the committee to one side, come up to the North Coast and talk to farmers. Come up with an offer. We want real assistance to enable farmers to continue in an agricultural industry that was their future, but that future has now disappeared. We want them to be able to continue as farmers. [*Time expired.*]

Mr NEWELL (Tweed) [12.41 p.m.]: I join my colleagues from Country Labor in this matter of public importance from the perspective of a member from a North Coast seat, a seat which traditionally, for many

years, has been proudly associated with the dairy industry in New South Wales. However, it is sad and regrettable that, because of deregulation and a subsequent significant drop in the number of dairy farmers, such an association is quickly coming to a conclusion. Crunch time was deregulation of the industry on 1 July 2000. Much has been said about who is responsible for deregulation, and I do not doubt that we will continue to argue about that responsibility, but we also need to consider what we can do to maintain a viable dairy industry.

Dairy farms provide a necessary food source, they provide money directly to local economies, and they are involved in conservation work. For a long time local economies have depended on income generated by dairy farms. It is the responsibility not only of this Parliament but also of other State parliaments and the Federal Parliament to do everything possible to ensure the long-term viability of the dairy farm. How we and other parliaments deal with the farm gate price, which is the crux of the matter, will determine the long-term viability of the dairy industry. The committee that is examining deregulation is considering a proposal by the industry, supported by the New South Wales Government, to apply to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission to negotiate collectively with the processors and supermarkets to restore the farm gate price to a more realistic level. Country Labor called for such an approach last year, as did the Minister.

The committee has hinted at such an approach, and I am sure that the Government and the Minister will be right behind it to ensure that collective negotiations result in processors and supermarkets paying a realistic farm gate price. It is the way forward to improve the viability of dairy farms. Some of the comments made today about the history of the debate have been wild and hairy. I refer to the comments made last month by the Prime Minister, John Howard, on ABC radio that regulation of the dairy industry was a sensible change. Why would the Prime Minister not declare that it was a sensible change, when his Government is the beneficiary of such change? The Federal Government has gone to the trouble of setting up a compensation package that has been paid for by consumers, but the simple fact is that the Federal Government will pick up some \$300 million plus, when it never put a cent into the compensation package.

It was pretty good of the Federal Government to organise the package, but at the same time it is lining its own pockets. Some honourable members have stated that deregulation was not forced on dairy farmers by the Federal Government, but the Feds—such as Kerin and Crean, former agricultural Ministers in the Federal Government—failed to put schemes in place to maintain a viable farm gate price. The Federal Government stepped right away from it and refused to act in any way. Other honourable members referred to the national competition policy [NCP] payments coming to the State. Such payments will be spread over a number of industries, such as electricity and road transport. It would be impossible, even in the wildest dreams of those on the other side, to nominate a figure to quantify that work. [*Time expired.*]

Mr WINDSOR (Tamworth) [12.46 p.m.]: I have listened to the debate this morning, and it seems that everybody in this Chamber, whether they be in Government or Opposition, are trying to justify their position at the time. History shows that the concerns of the dairy industry were not properly understood when this legislation went through the Parliament. The Independent members outlined that lack of understanding at the time. I note what was said in this Chamber on 8 June 2000 when the country Independents opposed what we described as the destruction of the dairy industry, and called for a moratorium to measure the real impact of deregulation. Today this debate has been about the real impact of the decision to deregulate and who should pay for the compensation packages.

The Minister pointed out that \$350 million of the \$1.7 billion will be removed through taxation receipts. The honourable member for Lismore, using the example of a dairy farmer in his electorate, highlighted the fact that, despite the annual payment of \$22,000 during eight years, that farmer would lose other family payments. The impact of these—the \$1.7 billion package, the Victorian market and the removal of quotas in Victoria—was not assessed correctly at the time. I looked at *Hansard* and discovered that five members of Parliament voted against the second reading of this bill: honourable members representing the electorates of Manly, Dubbo, Bligh, Northern Tablelands and Tamworth. Other honourable members, who are today trying to blame each other about what it all means and who did what to whom, absented themselves from the Parliament. I think all honourable members were guilty of not applying enough pressure federally to slow down the process so that we could do what we are attempting now: to measure the real impacts of the decision.

I agree with the Minister that pressure should be applied in the Federal domain regarding the \$350 million in taxation that will be extracted from the \$1.7 billion. The honourable member for Lismore mentioned the impact on the benefits received by some dairy farming families. That effect was never discussed in this place. I would be quite happy to be part of the process to which the Minister alluded to try to quantify the impact of the decision on real people. We must revisit the issue—perhaps the States could work in conjunction

with the Federal Government—and resolve it. The decision has clearly had an unexpected impact. Rather than the State and Federal Governments throwing the ball to each other and parliamentarians from every party ducking for cover and hoping that someone else will end up with the cow manure on his face, it is time that we tried to come to grips with this issue. We cannot reverse the decision, but Parliament must try to alleviate some of the pain. The Minister made some interesting comments about collective marketing principles. He mentioned the removal of arrangements in England because of competition policy regulations. I would like the Minister to examine the chicken meat industry, its processes and monopolistic practices.

Mr Oakeshott: Chickens don't make milk.

Mr WINDSOR: Many dairy farmers may have to enter the chicken meat industry. I urge the Minister to consider the implications and the impact of any Government decisions on the chicken meat growers who have a monopolistic arrangement with processors.

Mr STONER (Oxley) [12.51 p.m.], in reply: I thank all honourable members who have contributed to this debate, starting with the Minister who I think, deep down, cares about New South Wales dairy farmers. He is not a bad bloke really.

Mr Windsor: Point of order: I request that those remarks be removed from *Hansard*!

Mr STONER: Unfortunately, the Minister used this opportunity not to address the issues of lost quota assets and drastically reduced income but to play politics. The fact remains that there is a crisis in country New South Wales and that, having created it, the New South Wales Labor Government has done absolutely nothing about it. The Minister played the blame game instead of taking positive action. He should not speak too loudly about blame: from go to whoa, dairy deregulation has had Labor written all over it. Who restructured the Victorian dairy industry to have 93 per cent production in terms of low-price manufacturing milk? It was a Federal Labor Government. Who introduced national competition policy that made the domestic market support scheme invalid? It was a Federal Labor Government. Who signed off on the national competition policy in New South Wales? It was the Federal and State Labor Governments. Who introduced the deregulation legislation in New South Wales? It was the State Labor Government.

Mr Amery: Selective history.

Mr STONER: Like the earlier selective history recited by the Minister. Who has steadfastly refused calls to provide financial help to dairy farmers who have lost valuable quota assets? It is the State Labor Government. I will never know how Boondoggle Beazley, the sanctimonious windbag, could walk through dairy farms on the North Coast recently without hanging his head in shame. The Federal Coalition Government played its part in co-ordinating—at the request of the Australian dairy industry—the largest ever package of its type: the dairy structural adjustment program. It did not force the States to deregulate; it acted positively to help an industry that was undergoing a change made inevitable, in part, by the actions of previous Federal Governments. All States, including New South Wales, agreed to deregulate in the knowledge that this change was inevitable.

In delivering the package, the Federal Government had to ensure that it applied equally to all States of the Commonwealth. Therefore, it could not withhold a federal payment to any one State. Logically, if a national scheme payment was to go to farmers, all States had to be on a level playing field: a deregulated field. That is what the national industry body wanted. In suggesting that the Federal Government in some way forced the State Governments to deregulate, the honourable member for Cessnock and the honourable member for Broken Hill were being either totally ignorant or extremely mischievous.

Speakers from the Government benches tried to divert attention from their responsibility to help New South Wales dairy farmers by attempting to make it a Federal issue and talking about tax implications. The State National Party has already taken up a range of issues with the Federal Government regarding Centrelink payments, income support payments and taxation. A capital loss is available to farmers in relation to lost quota assets, which will minimise taxation exposure for some farmers. The DSAP is an income replacement program: it replaces higher income that farmers would have received if deregulation had not occurred. Farmers would have paid more tax if the industry had not been deregulated. Trying to flick this issue onto the Federal Government reflects unwillingness on the part of this State Government to recognise its responsibilities to New South Wales dairy farmers.

Each State had different regulatory features at the time of deregulation. The State of New South Wales was more protected than most in terms of the drinking milk quota system. The Australian Bureau of Agriculture and Resource Economics report certainly supports that suggestion. That is why the New South Wales

Government had a responsibility—which remains—to consider the impact on dairy farmers and country towns when it destroyed that system. I raised the issue of collective bargaining in the context of a dairy farmers association position paper. I am very pleased that the Minister has agreed to consider that suggestion. The Federal Trade Practices Act 1974 offers protection to consumers but it does not protect primary producers from the buying power of supermarkets and the chain of processors.

As the honourable member for Tamworth said, all primary producers, including those in the chicken meat industry, are affected in this way. Collective bargaining and perhaps a single tier marketing system should be explored for a whole range of primary producers. The National Party has encouraged consumers in New South Wales to buy only local fresh milk and dairy products, which are the best in the world. New South Wales has a higher quality level of accreditation than other States. That is a concrete measure that will assist the New South Wales dairy industry.

All is not doom and gloom. Yesterday I gave notice of a motion congratulating the Hastings Dairy Co-operative and the organic milk association in the area for producing a new product, organic milk. The Hastings Co-operative is exporting cheese to Asia. So with the right government advice and assistance there is potential for the New South Wales dairy industry, which is efficient and which contains many clever people, to prosper in the years ahead. Some farmers in my electorate, particularly those who held no quota or a low quota, are getting better average prices. However, the message put across by groups such as the Australian Milk Producers Association is that those who purchased large amounts of fresh milk quota are suffering without any form of assistance for their lost asset. That is really the point of the motion: to impress upon the Government its responsibility to consider the impact, to move on prices and to provide protection from the purchasing power of supermarkets and processors.

The honourable member for Tamworth referred to who voted for what, going back into history. He said that only five voted against deregulation. The National Party amendment would have delivered assistance to New South Wales farmers. If the vote of the Independents had been carried—not that it ever will be—there would have been de facto deregulation. Victorian milk would have come across the border. The quotas would not have been worth too much because Victorians could land drinking milk into Sydney for about 35¢ a litre. So the honourable member for Tamworth would have condemned New South Wales farmers to de facto deregulation without any form of Federal assistance. The sad fact is that the Independents do not have a policy. They are sanctimonious about these issues because they do not have to deliver. I predict that the Dairy Deregulation Impact and Assessment Committee will make findings along the lines I have detailed today. I call upon the Government to urgently progress the inquiry and to act upon its recommendations promptly. The Government will receive national competition policy payments of more than \$200 million this year. The Treasurer crowed about the \$833 million budget surplus this year. The Government should delve into their hollow logs to provide assistance for dairy farmers.

Discussion concluded.

CRIMINAL PROCEDURE AMENDMENT (PRE-TRIAL DISCLOSURE) BILL

Motion by Mr Amery agreed to:

That the following message be sent to the Legislative Council:

MADAM PRESIDENT

The Legislative Assembly has considered the Legislative Council's message and schedule dated 7 December 2000 requesting the concurrence of the Legislative Assembly with the amendments to the Criminal Procedure Amendment (Pre-trial Disclosure) Bill, and informs the Legislative Council that the Legislative Assembly disagrees with the proposed amendment No 1, and proposed amendment No 2 because:

The effect of the amendment is to undermine the principles of pre-trial disclosure requirements that are the fundamental basis of the bill.

That amendment in effect makes the entire process impotent and cannot be supported by the Government.

Legislative Assembly
28 February 2001

JOHN MURRAY
Speaker

[Mr Deputy-Speaker left the chair at 1.05 p.m. The House resumed at 2.15 p.m.]

MINISTRY

Mr CARR: I advise the House that for the next two days the Minister for Police will be taking questions for the Minister for Community Services. The Hon. Faye Lo Po' is with her husband, who is in hospital undergoing serious surgery.

BATTLE OF LONG TAN THIRTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY

Ministerial Statement

Mr CARR (Maroubra—Premier, Minister for the Arts, and Minister for Citizenship) [2.17 p.m.]: This August marks the thirty-fifth anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan, the bloodiest battle during the Vietnam War involving Australian troops. The Battle of Long Tan on 18 August 1966 was itself a remarkable feat of arms—a force of 80 Australians, caught in a night ambush, repelled an opposing force of 2,000 regular troops, with 18 Australians killed and 34 wounded. Earlier this month the honourable member for Heathcote wrote to me requesting we mark the occasion. He is a Vietnam veteran. He has dedicated his efforts on behalf of the Australians who served our country in the Vietnam War. He is rightly proud of the record of his 59,000 fellow Australians who were sent by the elected government of Australia to fight in that conflict.

The recognition that the honourable member seeks is not only recognition of a particular battle in that war. The honourable member's proposal also involves a wider recognition—the recognition and acceptance of Australia's Vietnam commitment in the mainstream of Australian history and the Australian military tradition. It is particularly fitting that the honourable member should bring his proposal forward this week because 1 March is the one-hundredth official birthday of the Australian Army. On that day in 1901 control of the New South Wales Regiment and the other colonial forces passed from the States to the Commonwealth. On that day the new Commonwealth Minister for Defence, Sir John Forrest, directed the six colonial military commandants to meet at Victoria Barracks, Sydney, to draw up the first Australian Defence Bill. So this week in Sydney 100 years ago the foundations were laid and the tradition began—above all, the tradition of a citizen's army under civilian control through the authority of Parliament.

Of all our wars none was subject to such intense parliamentary scrutiny and debate as that of Vietnam. That war, or conscription for the war, was a central issue in five Federal elections: the 1964 and 1970 Senate elections, and the general elections of 1966, 1969 and 1972. It was, of course, the conscripted component that made our commitment in Vietnam unique. Only in the epic struggle in New Guinea in 1942 did non-volunteers play so large a role. More than 30,000 national servicemen served in Vietnam and 300 of the 500 who died in Vietnam were conscripts, young Australian civilians, 19 and 20-year-olds chosen by the so-called birthday ballot. Surely this was a citizen's army, if ever there was one.

We take pride in the fact that Australia alone went through the First World War with an all-volunteer army. We take pride in the achievements of the all-volunteer Second AIF and the volunteers of Korea and Malaya. The young conscripts of Vietnam lived up to the highest Anzac traditions. And surely this imposes an even greater obligation upon the Australian community to remember and honour the service of those who fought in Vietnam. Accordingly, I welcome wholeheartedly the proposal of the honourable member for Heathcote. I had the honour to host the first reception for Vietnam veterans at Government House, Sydney, on the thirty-second anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan on 18 August 1998.

In conjunction with the RSL and the Vietnam Veterans Association, I propose to hold a reception at Government House for the thirty-fifth anniversary. I look forward to meeting Vietnam veterans and their families. I know there are very active Vietnam veteran groups across the State, including Sydney, the Blue Mountains, the Central Coast, Dubbo, the Riverina, South Coast and North Coast. Vietnam veterans have taken senior positions in Australian society. On the weekend I had the pleasure of sharing the Tumba Trek in the Snowy Mountains with Tim Fischer, the Federal member for Farrer and former leader of the National Party. He is a former member of this Chamber and a Vietnam veteran.

The State reception will be on 12 August. It will be lead-up to local commemorations around New South Wales, in particular the annual parade and memorial service at Springwood in the Blue Mountains. I have asked the New South Wales Protocol Office to make the necessary arrangements and to consult with the key Vietnam veterans groups and associations. Our message to Vietnam veterans will be a simple one: We remember, honour and respect your service and sacrifice in Australia's name.

Mr COLLINS (Willoughby) [2.22 p.m.]: On behalf of the Opposition I join with other members of the House in endorsing the Premier's comments. I do so as one who has served in the Australian Army Reserve, and

more recently in the Australian Naval Reserve, alongside many who, in their service, spent time in Vietnam and some of whom served in the Vietnam War. I acknowledge in particular the initiative supported by the honourable member for Heathcote to recognise the heroic sacrifice made by those Australians who died in the battle of Long Tan.

Many members of this House may not recall that extraordinary battle. It does stand as the battle in which there was the largest loss of life by Australian forces in a single action in the Vietnam War. It was my privilege as a member of 1 Commando Company to serve under Major Harry Smith, MC, who was the company commander a year or two earlier in that battle of Long Tan. He commanded D Company 6th Battalion Royal Australian Regiment in the most extraordinary defence and eventual reinforcement by Australian armoured forces.

That battle, for those who are unaware of its detail, is well worth recording in this House so that all members of our society understand. It is the most extraordinary show of gallantry by the Australian Army in recent times. The Premier also mentioned that this is the one hundredth anniversary of the Australian Army. It is something that this House does well to recognise. New South Wales, of course, was pre-eminent in the formation of what is now the Australian Defence Force. We had already deployed forces as a New South Wales government to the Boer War in South Africa, and I think to the Boxer Rebellion in China.

Indeed, the Premier did not mention the fact that there was legislation covering the establishment and operation of military and naval forces passed by the New South Wales Parliament—some might regret its passing. This is an opportunity for us all in this House to remember the strong tradition that volunteers have played in the Australian Defence Force, the strong role played by the militia, the Citizen Military Forces and now the Reserve Forces, in operations undertaken on behalf of this nation, most recently in East Timor.

There could be no more poignant and up-to-date indication of the ongoing need for a properly trained and maintained defence force than the recent operation in East Timor under the command of General Cosgrove. It was General Cosgrove, a classmate of mine at Waverley College, who was the successful applicant for the Royal Military College in 1965. I was the unsuccessful applicant! He has served the Australian Army and the Australian nation with great distinction. He has been properly recognised as Australian of the Year and is now Chief of the Army. We are indeed privileged to have a defence force so well led as by people such as Peter Cosgrove. I applaud the particular recognition of the battle of Long Tan by the honourable member for Heathcote, and on behalf of all members of this House I join with the Premier and endorse his remarks.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

Mr SPEAKER: I welcome to the New South Wales Parliament the member for Bulimba, Pat Purcell, who was recently re-elected to the Queensland Legislative Assembly.

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**.

State Taxes

Petition praying that the Carr Government establish a public inquiry into State taxes, with the objective of reducing the tax burden and creating a sustainable environment for employment and investment in New South Wales, received from **Mr Debnam**.

Cronulla Police Station Upgrading

Petition praying that the House restore to Cronulla a fully functioning police patrol and upgrade the police station, received from **Mr Kerr**.

Wagga Wagga Policing

Petition praying that funding be made available to provide long-awaited police accommodation in Wagga Wagga, received from **Mr Maguire**.

Malabar Policing

Petition praying that the House notes the concern of Malabar residents at the closure of Malabar Police Station and praying that the station be reopened and staffed by locally based and led police, received from **Mr Tink**.

Randwick Police Station Downgrading

Petition praying that the House notes the concern of Randwick residents at the major downgrading and possible closure of Randwick Police Station and praying that the station be staffed 24 hours a day by locally based and led police, received from **Mr Tink**.

Northside Storage Tunnel Gas Emissions

Petition praying for the installation of an acceptable system to address health risks associated with the discharge of sewage gases from the northside storage tunnel, received from **Mr Collins**.

Non-government Schools Funding

Petition praying that the Government reimburse the \$5 million in funding that has been withdrawn from non-government schools and reverse its decision to withdraw a further \$13.5 million in funding in 2001, received from **Mr Richardson**.

Albury Traffic Arrangements

Petition praying that traffic lights be installed at the intersection of Kaitlers Road and the Hume Highway, Albury, received from **Mrs Chikarovski**.

Tumut Regional Roads Upgrade

Petition praying that regional roads in the Tumut area be upgraded and that a regional roads summit be conducted, received from **Ms Hodgkinson**.

Main Road 241

Petition praying for an increase in funding to local government authorities to allow them to properly maintain Main Road 241, received from **Ms Hodgkinson**.

Level Crossings Safety

Petition praying that the Government install double boom gates and lights at all level crossings in New South Wales, including at Gerogery, received from **Mr Maguire**.

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**.

Sydney Water Biosolids Strategy

Petition expressing concern about Sydney Water's proposed biosolids handling and transport strategy and praying that the House reject the strategy, received from **Mr Barr**.

Wagga Wagga Electorate Fruit Fly Campaign

Petition praying that the Government resource the Fruit Fly Campaign for the years 2000, 2001, 2002 and 2003, upgrade the Wagga Wagga electorate to a fruit fly control zone, and develop and implement a fruit fly strategy to eliminate fruit fly from the electorate within the next five years, received from **Mr Maquire**.

John Fisher Park

Petition praying that the Government support the rectification of grass surfaces at John Fisher Park, Curl Curl, and oppose any proposal to hard surface the Crown land portion of the park and Abbott Road Land, received from **Mr Barr**.

National Parks Entry Fees

Petitions praying that the proposal to introduce a \$5 entry fee per car per day into national parks be rejected, received from **Mr George, Mr Oakeshott, Mr Slack-Smith, Mr Souris, Mr J. H. Turner, Mr R. W. Turner and Mr Webb**.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**Routine of Business**

Mr WHELAN: Mr Speaker, as a result of the swearing-in of the new Governor and the reswearing of all Ministers tomorrow, at the conclusion of Parliament tonight at 10.30 p.m. I will suggest that you leave the chair until the ringing of one long bell, which will take place at 2.15 p.m. tomorrow. Question time will start at 2.15 p.m. tomorrow.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY SERVICES HELPLINE

Mrs CHIKAROVSKI: My question is directed to the Premier. Yesterday the Minister for Committee Services told this House that the Department of Community Services [DOCS] helpline was having only “teething problems”. Can the Premier explain why school principals in south-western Sydney have complained today about routine dangerous delays in getting help, including one case in which officers from DOCS took two days to start investigating a child abuse case which the school principal believed was so serious that it required immediate action?

Mr CARR: This is the same matter that was canvassed yesterday. I refer the House to the answers given yesterday by the Minister to a similar question. As the Minister said yesterday, on Friday the average call wait time was—

Mrs Chikarovski: Point of order: This is a completely different matter. It is referred to in a letter from a different principal which was received by the Opposition today. I will table the letter for the information of the House. I seek leave to table the letter.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. Does the Leader of the Opposition wish to undertake another process?

Mrs Chikarovski: I seek leave to table the letter for the Premier's information.

Leave not granted.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I place the honourable member for Pittwater on two calls to order. I call the honourable member for Davidson to order.

Mr CARR: Don't members find themselves admiring the dignity and restraint that the former Leader of the Opposition, the honourable member for Willoughby, demonstrated a few moments ago in this House?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Southern Highlands to order.

Mr CARR: Wouldn't it be good to have a positive policy from the Opposition?

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

Mr CARR: Because we have never had one.

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

Mr CARR: Yesterday we demonstrated that the one policy document the Opposition rolled forward—

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

Mr CARR: By the way, the honourable member for Gosford has been put in political detox for a few weeks.

Mr O'Doherty: Point of order: My point of order relates to relevance. This matter is about children at risk and the Government's failure to respond. The Premier is not allowed to go on some rambling, arrogant display about every other matter under the sun. The question is about children at risk. The Premier should tell us about that.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Hornsby will resume his seat.

Mr CARR: As the Minister for Community Services said yesterday, on Monday the average call wait time on the public line was 59 seconds, while the longest wait time was 13 minutes. On the same day the average wait time on the mandatory reporting line was 16 minutes, while the longest wait time was—

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

Mr Hazzard: She did not say that in this Parliament.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I will ask the Serjeant-at-Arms to remove the honourable member for Wakehurst if he is again called to order for interrupting.

Mr CARR: I am advised that yesterday's average wait time on the public line was 71 seconds and the longest wait time was 19 minutes and on the mandatory reporting line the average wait time was 25 minutes and the longest 83 minutes.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Gosford to order for the third time.

Mr CARR: As the number of calls varies between 3,400 and 6,800 per week, some variation in response times from day to day can be expected. But, clearly, the service has improved dramatically. Any complaints about the line are taken very seriously and the information is used to continually improve systems and processes. While the helpline receives up to 6,800 calls per week, it currently averages 14 complaints per week. If the Opposition has genuine concerns it should provide the details, including dates and times. Because these matters are so serious, the Government will ensure that they are responded to.

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

Mr CARR: If the Opposition cannot provide details, it is following the time-honoured custom as far as this Coalition Opposition is concerned of being negative and never offering policy alternatives.

Mr Hazzard: Point of order: The Opposition is happy to table the letter that sets out the details. I seek leave again to table the letter. I ask the Premier to grant leave to table the letter.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The House has already dealt with that matter. The honourable member for Wakehurst will resume his seat.

Mr Hazzard: The Premier is as bad as Faye Lo Po'.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Wakehurst to order for the third time.

Mr CARR: The words of the week from the Opposition are "lack of credibility." The honourable member for Gosford said in the House yesterday, "This paper does not claim to be a Chris Hartcher original, that Chris Hartcher sat down and wrote it." That is exactly what the cover sheet said it was.

Mr O'Doherty: Point of order: If the standing orders mean anything I ask you, under the standing orders, to ask the Premier to give an answer that is relevant to the question, which was about 83-minute delays on the helpline.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! No point of order is involved.

Mr CARR: I loved the comment yesterday by the honourable member for Gosford, "I never pretended at any stage it was an original work coming out of my head." With people like that directing Opposition policy development, no wonder the Coalition received the rating it did from the electors in the Campbelltown by-election. The Opposition went backwards. The percentage rise in the Labor vote was higher than the Coalition's approval rating.

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

Mr CARR: After yesterday's fiasco, why should anyone take a claim coming from the other side of the House seriously? Yesterday the Leader of the Opposition spoke in this House and then issued a press release containing information that was plain wrong. Her claim was based, no doubt, on information brought forward by the honourable member for Wakehurst.

[Interruption]

The honourable member for Wakehurst should not get impatient; he will have his turn as Opposition leader. They will all get a turn. That is the great thing about the State Liberal Party in Opposition: everyone will get a turn. Intellect is no barrier. Yesterday the Leader of the Opposition claimed, no doubt based on information provided by the honourable member for Wakehurst, that a particular report had sat in an in-tray for two days after a matter had been referred to the helpline. That was plain wrong. The matter was actioned in about four hours.

We are back where we were in the last session of Parliament. At that time the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party asked, "How can you defend putting David Hill on the payroll as a consultant for the State Rail Authority?" David Hill was not on the payroll of the State Rail Authority, the Rail Access Corporation or any rail entity. In the last session of Parliament he accused the Government of demolishing a railway station in rural New South Wales. It turned out that the station had been demolished when he was the adviser to Bruce Baird, and the demolition had been a blunder. It had not even been a deliberate demolition. Today we are facing misinformation that is comparable to all those claims in the last session of Parliament.

Mrs Skinner: Point of order: The contempt that the Premier shows for the forms of this House is the same as the contempt he shows for the lives of children who are identified as being at risk. I ask you to direct him to treat the question seriously. This is a matter of children's lives being at risk and the House is being insulted by the contempt shown by the Premier.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. The honourable member for North Shore will resume her seat.

Mr CARR: All my comments are in response to the unceasing interjections that are being hurled across the Chamber by the Opposition. Let us make it clear: Yesterday, in the spirit of all those questions I have referred to that we handled in the last session of Parliament—baseless accusations day after day—the credibility of this Opposition was destroyed by its own leader. Yesterday accusations were made.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Coffs Harbour to order.

Mr CARR: It turns out that the matter was actioned in around four hours, not the two days that were alluded to.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to order.

Mr CARR: If the Opposition is willing to provide—and it has not done so until now—factual information, this matter will be acted upon because it is so serious. The welfare of children ought to be above grubby party politics. The royal commission, the establishment of which the Coalition voted against in May 1994, revealed the Coalition's record on child protection. It is a record that the Government has been setting right, not least because of the work of the Minister for Community Services.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Wakehurst to order for the fourth time.

Mrs CHIKAROVSKI: I ask a supplementary question. Given that the Premier has just admitted that people who are required to report under the mandatory provisions of the legislation are being forced to wait almost one and half hours to speak to an appropriate officer, will he now intervene to ensure that the so-called helpline—which, rather than helping children at risk is placing them at greater risk—is given more funding and more resources, and is put into a position to do the job it is supposed to do, that is, make sure that kids are protected? The Premier is putting children at risk.

Mr CARR: The Government is proud of the fact that it has increased funding for child protection by no less than 90 per cent. Which side of this House is serious about child protection, the people who starved the system of funds or the people who have increased funding by 90 per cent? By the way, I am advised by the Minister's staff that she has received just four letters from the Opposition about the helpline: only one from the honourable member for Wakehurst, and none from the Leader of the Opposition.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr GIBSON: My question without notice is to the Minister for Local Government. What is the latest information on the Minister's push for financial accountability by local government, particularly in relation to legal costs?

Mr WOODS: New South Wales local government is a \$4.4 billion industry that employs more than 40,000 people. The 173 councils in New South Wales are elected every four years to provide essential services to families and businesses. Honourable members will recall my previous statements on the need for accountability in local government. I am particularly alarmed at the spiralling legal costs run up by councils and borne by the ratepayer.

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

Mr WOODS: Each year local councils spend close to \$20 million in legal fees in relation to planning and development matters alone. In 1998-99 Woollahra Municipal Council spent \$1.3 million on lawyers. It was followed by North Sydney council, which spent \$850,000. At the other end of the spectrum, Strathfield council spent the least of any Sydney council, \$47,000. It was followed by Liverpool council, which spent \$58,000. Make no mistake: some of these cases are justified, but others are not. I am aware of several cases involving one councillor that can be described only as downright irresponsible. The councillor in question has engaged in frivolous and vexatious legal actions. This joker has a wardrobe full of law suits: 28 in total. He uses the courts to challenge anything that he opposes. He has fought the construction of commuter car parks in the St George area, even though he is a councillor in the eastern suburbs. He unsuccessfully tried to join as a party an Aboriginal land claim for Duffy's Forest on the North Shore. Justice Marcus Einfeld of the Federal Court threw the case out.

He sued American television in a bid to stop its broadcast of the Sydney Olympic Games. He is well known as a key player in the legal wrangles over the beach volleyball stadium. This man is a walking, talking episode of *The Practice*. In addition he has taken legal action against the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union, the Department of Land and Water Conservation, the Department of Urban Affairs and Planning, SOCOG, the State of New South Wales, the Olympic Co-ordination Authority [OCA] and the Nussli special events. He has even taken action against his own council. He is well remembered for the notoriety he brought to local government by his international appearance on CNN on 8 May 2000 as one of the protesters dragged away by police at the Bondi volleyball site.

This joker has been in court more times than Rumpole of the Bailey, and each time he has had costs awarded against him, which he cannot pay. That means that taxpayers and ratepayers are copping the bill. This joker is not only a serial litigant, he is a serial waster of public funds. The ratepayers of Rockdale City Council are now stuck with a \$195,000 legal bill because of the actions of this councillor. Taxpayers, who fund the OCA, had to cough up \$370,000 to fight the councillor in the courts. It does not matter where you live, this fellow is coming out to waste your money. Justice Einfeld said in relation to the councillor:

[He is] a regular litigant in this court. He has made a specialty of filing applications of no merit and then doing his best to delay their dismissal by various procedural and personal claims—claims such as lack of legal representation, illness and most recently a breakdown of his printer and photocopier.

The judgment quotes the councillor's reasons for being two months late with his written submissions for an appeal. The councillor said that he could not meet the deadline, "due to poverty, technical problems and time management difficulties with my job as a Bondi Waverley councillor, which may not last very long because the council is talking about suing me."

The person I have been discussing is one Dominic Wykanak, a Waverley councillor. Councillor Wykanak was elected to represent the Bondi ward in September 1999. I have asked the Director-General of the Department of Local Government, Mr Garry Payne, to investigate allegations that Councillor Wykanak has breached his fiduciary duties as a councillor. That claim relates to an alleged breach of the pecuniary interest provisions of the Local Government Act, and emanates from a motion that Waverley Council should pay the costs of Councillor Wykanak's legal proceedings. Fortunately, commonsense prevailed and Waverley Council did not pay the bill. I have written to the Attorney General asking that he consider as a matter of priority declaring Councillor Wykanak a vexatious litigant under section 84 of the Supreme Court Act.

Mr Souris: Have you checked whether he was a member of Young Labor earlier on?

Mr WOODS: He is more likely to have been a member of the National Party. If Councillor Wykanak is declared a vexatious litigant he will not be able to institute any legal proceedings without permission of the court. Councillor Wykanak has been a busy man, but his run is finally coming to an end. Last month he had legal bills, including costs awarded against him, of more than \$400,000. That figure includes debts of \$160,000 to Rockdale City Council and \$65,000 to the OCA. Recently he claimed that he has no assets to pay these bills and that he has been on the dole since 1997.

Mr O'Farrell: So he is a barrister then?

Mr WOODS: He describes himself as a part-time lawyer. He has said that his only assets are court papers dating back to 1993. "That's my main asset, but I can't sell them", he said. Who would want them? Although he describes himself as a part-time lawyer, his only source of income—\$9,800—comes from the ratepayers of Waverley. Even at \$9,800, the ratepayers of Waverley are not getting very good value for money. It will come as no surprise to honourable members to learn that Councillor Wykanak now faces bankruptcy proceedings by Rockdale City Council. He is appealing that decision too. If Councillor Wykanak is declared bankrupt, his short and expensive career as the Ally McBeal of Bondi will come to an end. Under the Local Government Act, he faces immediate and automatic disqualification—and I admit that I would be very pleased if that happened. This is a serious matter. Councillor Wykanak claims that he takes legal action on issues of public interest, but the ratepayers of Waverley are not gaining from Councillor Wykanak's legal actions, and neither is the reputation of local government. I half suspect that, when I return to room 901, I will find a writ from Councillor Wykanak bearing my name. Thank goodness he is no Perry Mason.

DNA TESTING OF PRISONERS

Mr COLLIER: My question is directed to the Premier. What is the latest information on the DNA testing of serious offenders in the State's gaols?

Mr CARR: I congratulate the honourable member for Miranda on his marvellous work on behalf of his electorate. No-one representing any area of the Sutherland shire receives as much publicity as he in the *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader* for sound work on behalf of his constituents. The material about DNA is interesting and I am sure that honourable members will appreciate it. I can reveal to the House that as of yesterday no fewer than 1,653 offenders in the State's prison system—in fact, in 26 prisons across New South Wales—have been DNA tested two months ahead of schedule. That means that 1,653 prisoners have been tested in just seven weeks.

In the coming weeks, DNA testing will commence on the State's most serious criminals, including those prisoners serving natural life sentences. Four testing teams, including 16 police officers, will complete testing of those serious offenders by mid-April. In total, 5,500 prisoners will be tested. The testing is well ahead of schedule for two reasons. First, police testing teams are experts in conflict resolution and negotiation, which has resulted in only 62 prisoners initially refusing a DNA test. I can report to Parliament today that of those 62 prisoners all but two subsequently complied after negotiation. Samples were taken from the two remaining prisoners in accordance with legislative provisions.

Second, the Government legislation has struck the right balance. For example, it is subject to independent oversight by the Ombudsman. Samples taken from prisoners will be analysed by the Division of

Analytical Laboratories and checked against pre-existing crime scene samples. This legislation would have been blocked in the upper House if the Opposition had marshalled the necessary numbers. The legislation would not have proceeded through the upper House if the position devised by the shadow Minister for Police had prevailed in the Legislative Council. This scientific policing would not be under way if Opposition members had had their way in the upper House.

Mr Tink: Point of order: The Premier misleads the House. As the division lists show, the Opposition supported the legislation. We were trying to ensure testing of not only prisoners in gaols but also those who had been released from gaol, as the Federal Government recommended.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I place the honourable member for Epping on three calls to order. He knows as well as anyone in this House that he will have an opportunity to make a personal explanation at the end of question time. He should not disrupt an answer by a Minister in the way that he has done. I am inclined to ask the Serjeant-at-Arms to remove the honourable member as this is the second time that I have had to warn him, but I shall restrict myself to issuing another warning.

Mr CARR: One would think that the Opposition would support an advance such as this in the scientific resources available to the New South Wales Police Service rather than trying to score ridiculous political points.

Mr Fraser: Why don't you tell the truth?

Mr CARR: The honourable member for Coffs Harbour should be nice to me because, at the next State election, he will survive in the political intensive care ward on Labor preferences. I will be there in a white coat with an oxygen mask over the honourable member's face and Labor preferences will flow into what would otherwise be a political corpse. The same thing applies to all National Party members: they should be very nice to me. A Queensland member of Parliament is here today to remind them of the predicament they face. When the presence of a Queensland Labor victor in the gallery was announced, I imagined that their thoughts might turn to questions of survival. They will need our support, so they should be on their best behaviour at all times. The honourable member is very brave: he is like a man whistling at midnight as he walks through a graveyard. I prefer the National Party to One Nation so I will have the oxygen mask ready and we will pump Labor preferences into the honourable member's political veins.

Let us get back to DNA and the revolution in policing—otherwise the men in white coats might soon be leading the honourable member out. When the prison population in the United Kingdom was tested and placed on a national DNA database, matches with crime scenes doubled. That means that DNA can dramatically reduce the number of unsolved crimes. DNA testing is also very important because it can free the innocent. On 1 July, New South Wales will be the first State to set up a specialist panel—we will call it an innocence panel—which will receive applications from prisoners who argue that DNA could establish that they were wrongfully imprisoned. With the scientific policing represented by DNA, we can determine wrongful convictions. There is no need for me to remind the House of those tragic cases in our criminal history when innocent people served gaol sentences. This is another side of the DNA revolution—the revolution in scientific policing. The panel will comprise a senior legal officer, representatives of the Office of the Privacy Commissioner, victims of crime, New South Wales police and the Director of Public Prosecutions.

I want to respond to plans in the United Kingdom to retain DNA samples taken from suspects, not prisoners. In the United Kingdom those samples are retained indefinitely. That is not our approach. Under New South Wales legislation, DNA samples taken from suspects are destroyed within 12 months if criminal proceedings have not commenced. The New South Wales approach is sensible: it is tough, but balanced. We will not consider legislation such as the United Kingdom's latest proposal. The use of DNA testing has already enabled police to secure convictions in a number of high-profile cases. It is a forensic tool that police are already using to solve crime in New South Wales, facilitated by the legislation that this House passed so wisely and which the Opposition was so ill-advised as to attempt to block.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY SERVICES HELPLINE

Mr SOURIS: My question is directed to the Premier. Can the Premier guarantee that there will be no more disasters such as the experience of a Queanbeyan foster mother who on 30 January failed to get through to the Department of Community Services [DOCS] helpline to report suspected abuse of her foster child and was forced to seek the assistance of the director of Possum Hill preschool in faxing details direct to DOCS, only to be told that she should just keep trying to get through to the helpline even if it meant a long wait? Does the Premier accept that level of service in New South Wales?

Mr CARR: I refer the honourable member to the advice that the Minister for Community Services provided in the House yesterday and to the offer that I repeated today. Because these cases are so urgent, he should provide us with details of where the service has been insufficient, and the Government will respond.

CROSS-CITY TUNNEL

Mr E. T. PAGE: My question is to the Minister for Roads. What is the latest information on the proposed cross-city tunnel?

Mr SCULLY: The cross-city tunnel is a \$400 million project that will link the Eastern Distributor to the Western Distributor. Honourable members will be aware that last year the environmental impact statement was released. The Roads And Traffic Authority [RTA] called for expressions of interest from the private sector for the delivery of this project. I might add that the private sector considers it a highly sought-after project. We have received eight competitive bids from the private sector for the delivery of the cross-city tunnel. The RTA has carried out a comprehensive assessment and analysis of each of the eight expressions of interest. I am pleased to inform the House that, of the eight, three have been selected as preferred tenderers to go to the next stage of the delivery of the project. First is the Cross City Motorway Consortium, which is backed by Baulderstone-Hornibrook, Bilfinger + Berger and Deutsche Bank. The E-tube is backed by Leighton Motorway. Sydney City Tunnel Consortium is backed by Transfield and Multiplex.

The cross-city tunnel is an important part of our post-Olympics job creation program. It might disappoint our Opposition colleagues that we are creating 1,600 jobs over a three-year period with the construction of the tunnel. The project will be funded by a toll. It will take 50,000 cars off the streets of the central business district [CBD], with those vehicles going into the tunnel. It will save up to 20 minutes in travel time. Motorists will be able to bypass up to 18 sets of traffic lights. Construction will be completed in 2004 and is expected to start early next year. The benefits are numerous. Apart from the quick connection between the Eastern Distributor and Western Distributor, the tunnel will provide easier access to the CBD for buses, taxis, hire cars, courier vans and the like. The tunnel will make it easier for pedestrians and shoppers.

The Government clearly supports the provision of public infrastructure by the private sector. But, unlike the crowd opposite, we prefer that projects from the private sector are value for money and are carefully assessed. We invite creative proposals. But just compare the careful way in which we are proceeding in assessing private sector financing with the quick, stitched-up deal at five minutes to midnight in March 1995 for the airport line. That deal did not save the political necks of Coalition members. We are doing this properly: we are carefully assessing and analysing proposals from the private sector.

Recently the Deputy Leader of the Opposition addressed a Sutherland transport forum. He promised a transport plan. We have been promised a health plan. Some of the newer members of Parliament may not remember what happened to the transport plan that Michael Photios promised during the term of the Coalition Government. As the election came closer the spendometer crashed through the top of the glass. The mercury spewed everywhere. Michael Photios announced that obviously the *Daily Telegraph* was not going to support the Coalition transport policy and it went into the bin. I do not know what the Coalition transport policies are. Michael Photios promised a transport policy a few years ago. The Opposition spendometer will again crash through the glass with the policies of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

Unlike the Coalition, the Government has a plan for road and rail infrastructure across the State. It will connect communities, facilitate the delivery of freight, improve travel times and make it safer for people to travel. The M5 East project is well under way. The cross-city tunnel plan is well under way. Going out to the regions, the honourable member for Tweed is jealously guarding the fact that he has the biggest country road program currently under way in this nation with the Yelgun to Chindera Freeway—\$348 million.

Mr George: Thanks to the National Party.

Mr SCULLY: Success has many fathers, and if you want to take some credit I am happy for you to do so. The honourable member for Kiama and I were at the Princes Highway recently for the start of the North Kiama bypass. That project was long discussed by the Coalition, but it was delivered by the Government. When it comes to road and rail infrastructure, in the cities, in the regions and in the bush, we have the solutions. Let us not talk about the Woronora Bridge; let the community speak. The Coalition was going to provide a puny two-lane span, which the community roundly rejected. Honourable members representing the electorates of Menai, Miranda and Heathcote—three great members of Parliament—advocated to the Government what the solution

ought to be for the community. We delivered, with the support of the local members, a \$50 million bridge that is already making an enormous difference. That is what the cross-city tunnel will do. It has been very well received by the community.

RUSHCUTTERS BAY MARINA

Ms MOORE: Will the Premier honour the pre-Olympic commitment to remove the temporary marina from Rushcutters Bay just as the temporary volleyball stadium has been removed from Bondi Beach?

Mr CARR: My position on marinas is that there are too many of them cluttering up the bays and coves of Sydney Harbour. That is why my colleague the Minister for Urban Affairs and Planning recently announced that the State Government will effectively be the consent authority for marinas. This gave effect to my desire to block a proposed very large marina and potentially much larger marina going into, I think, Elizabeth Bay. I intend to inspect with the honourable member for Bligh the existing structure at Rushcutters Bay. I will talk to her about her response to the advice that will eventually reach us from the Olympic Co-ordination Authority [OCA]. I expect to get a report from the OCA in the future on all our Olympic facilities and plans for their management before too long. I will make a decision—

[Interruption]

The honourable member for Hornsby made a half-hearted interjection. It was not a big, strong interjection; it was a half-hearted, sickly interjection. I could barely make it out. If you have something to say, say it. He ought to speak up in shadow cabinet, because I am about to bring down a list of the spending commitments made by all his colleagues. It points to a failure of the shadow Treasurer to maintain fiscal discipline within his team. Promises are breaking out all over—half a billion here, \$25 million there, \$300 million there. Even as I speak a document shoots down the secret channel and arrives in the House. This is it—page after page of the Coalition's spending commitments.

It goes on and on. The *Daily Telegraph* will have to become a broadsheet, not a tabloid, to accommodate the spendometer. And the election is two years off! The honourable member for Hornsby is allowing the spending commitments to get through shadow Cabinet. I do not want to detain the House but one example over the parliamentary recess came from our old friend the honourable member for Baulkham Hills. Just off the top of his head he said that the State Government ought to pay the GST component of everybody's toll. Did the honourable member for Hornsby, the shadow Treasurer, approve of that spending commitment?

Mr O'Doherty: Mr Speaker, it is question time—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Does the member for Hornsby seek to take a point of order?

Mr O'Doherty: The Premier asked me a question and I am going to respond.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Hornsby will resume his seat.

Mr O'Doherty: I am seeking to take a point of order.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Hornsby will resume his seat.

Mr CARR: They are all part of it. The cost of what he committed them to is \$25 million a year and we now know that the shadow Treasurer did not approve of that spending commitment. This is how they operate under the leadership of the member for Lane Cove: any of them can promise anything, regardless of the cost, and it does not even go past the shadow Treasurer. The shadow Treasurer does not even get to tick it off. What an undisciplined fiscal rabble they are! And that is only promise number one.

Mr O'Doherty: Point of order—

Mr CARR: We have got them all here, page after page of spending.

Mr O'Doherty: Mr Speaker—

Mr CARR: I conclude with this sentence—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Hornsby rises on a point of order.

Mr O'Doherty: I seek the leave of the House to answer the Premier's question.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Leave is not granted. The honourable member for Hornsby knows that the standing orders provide that he can make a personal explanation at the end of question time. The honourable member will resume his seat.

Mr CARR: What honourable members do not like is that the Parliament does not only exist to test the Government; this Parliament exists to test the Opposition.

Ms MOORE: I ask a supplementary question. I ask the Premier to finish answering my question.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! That is not a supplementary question.

GOVERNMENT ONLINE SERVICES

Mr ANDERSON: My question without notice is to the Minister for Information Technology. What is the latest information on the New South Wales Government's commitment to government online services?

Mr Hartcher: Point of order: I move:

That the honourable member for Hornsby be now heard.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Gosford cannot put a motion before the Chair in that way. He did not have the call and, therefore, he is out of order.

Mr YEADON: I thank the honourable member for Londonderry for his excellent question. He understands the benefits of innovation. There are now hundreds of services online in New South Wales and we are putting more services online virtually every day. It is possible to register new cars, pay bills, buy a ticket to the Sydney Opera House, book a holiday or even chat about animals with staff at Taronga Zoo. There are more than 500 services in total. Government online services are certainly popular. The New South Wales Government homepage, www.nsw.gov.au, had 1.4 million hits—

Mr Souris: shopsteward@commiecom.au

Mr YEADON: We know that the Leader of the National Party is technically illiterate, and that is why he will be biffed out at the next election. He is not delivering to his constituency, unlike this Government. The Leader of the National Party has never been there but, indeed, 1.4 million people visited the site in December last year alone. In addition to the projects that we already have under way, another 275 projects are in the pipeline. As these become available they will deliver 820 online government services, of which some 460 involve payments. The popularity of the Government site reflects not only demand for the services but also the impressive penetration of computers, the Internet and technology in general in Australian society.

In the year to November 2000, 6.9 million adults—that is 50 per cent of adult Australians—accessed the Internet from home, work and other access points. Also, by November 37 per cent of households had Internet access. I was recently impressed with a service that will become available on the web by the middle of the year. That service will alert construction contractors, wherever they may be, to the availability of construction materials that would otherwise be dumped into landfill. They will not even have to go to their computer, or any computer, to look for this material. They will receive a message on their mobile phones, either with the now familiar short messaging service or the new wireless application profile service, an excellent service that my colleague the Minister for Public Works and Services got up and running. That is a clear use of online technology and online services. It is not only good for business, it is also good for the environment. Another practical online service that helps people in their daily lives is the register of encumbered vehicles service [REVS], which lets people know at any time of the day or night if there are any outstanding loans on cars before they buy.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! If the Leader of the Opposition wants to hold a discussion with her frontbenchers she should do so outside the Chamber.

Mr YEADON: She might even try using email. It would be less disruptive to the House. If she is unable to use it, we will provide her with some training. Every year 300,000 used cars are sold privately in New

South Wales, 20 per cent of which are the subject of outstanding loans. Buyers face the very real prospect of repossession if sellers fail to repay loans. REVS will deal with in excess of 940,000 inquiries this financial year and its database includes details of vehicles reported stolen or written off. It is a vital service for consumers, the motor trade and financiers. The Internet site is a fantastic value-added service. Electronic service delivery systems are helping REVS provide a better, convenient and more cost-effective service and they will soon allow people to buy certificates over the Internet.

This Internet service also helps people overcome the tyranny of distance. It provides an equitable service to regional New South Wales—something in which the Deputy Leader of the Opposition has absolutely no interest. This Government is progressing towards getting all appropriate services on the web by the end of this year. I am pleased to inform the House that 96 per cent of agencies have established web sites, and the remaining 4 per cent have plans to implement a web site within the year. To date, agencies have reported that they have completed 361 projects, a significant investment in meeting the Government's commitment to putting all the appropriate government services online.

Some of the new services being developed include parenting services online, jobs online and seniors online. Again, we are making sure that these services are also available in remote and regional areas so that our rural colleagues are not left behind. This year the Government is expanding country and rural services by building on our public library network and establishing community technology centres right across the State. We will make some announcements in that area in the not too distant future. They will be a major resource for rural people to gain access to the Internet, to come to understand it and, of course, to use the extraordinary array of services and resources that are available through it. We have a range of other services to improve business and information access and, of course, other services. As honourable members will note, the New South Wales Government is a leader in the delivery of online services to the community.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY SERVICES NOTIFICATIONS

Mr HAZZARD: My question is directed to the Premier. Last week the new Children's Court Chief Magistrate told a gathering of 200 child care specialists that on a day in the preceding week 87 per cent of the children appearing before him had at least one Department of Community Services notification of child neglect or abuse, and 62 per cent had at least three notifications. How does the Premier condone his Government's failure to protect so many children, leading to their inevitable spiral into the courts?

Mr CARR: This matter was publicised. This matter was in the media. This matter was responded to by the Minister.

Mr HAZZARD: I ask a supplementary question—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Because I ruled the supplementary question asked by the honourable member for Bligh out of order, I was under the mistaken impression that a supplementary question had not been asked during question time today. However, I overlooked the fact that the Leader of the Opposition had already asked a supplementary question earlier in question time. The standing orders provide that only one supplementary question may be asked during question time. I therefore rule the honourable member for Wakehurst out of order.

Questions without notice concluded.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Notice of Motion

Mr TINK: I seek to amend the notice of motion I handed up before question time to read:

That this House:

- (1) censures the Premier for misleading Parliament on 24 June 1999 when he said "98 per cent of the royal commission's recommendations are implemented or are being implemented".
- (2) and further censures the Premier for hampering ongoing royal commission reform of the Police Service by describing the independent audit as "management jargon".
- (3) notes that the recently released Independent Audit into Royal Commission Reform found "that the Police Service has not addressed the key reform themes developed by the Royal Commission".

- (4) notes that the Carr Government's attempts to tackle gang and violent crime without linking it to royal commission reform are floundering.
- (5) calls on the Government to re-negotiate the Police Commissioner's contract entered into on the eve of the 1999 election to incorporate the royal commission reform themes.

Mr WHELAN: It appears to me that the honourable member has changed the substance of his notice of motion because he realised that he made a mistake. He has realised that he has not moved a motion of censure; he has moved a notice of motion and now wants to try to redeem himself. What he has done is change the order so that it will appear that there will be a censure. The standing orders contain a censure provision, and that provision has to be complied with. The honourable member cannot simply jump that censure provision. There are procedures that relate to it. One is that if a member moves a motion of censure the matter of public importance is deferred. That would not have happened under the honourable member's original notice of motion because the word "censure" is mentioned only in the last two paragraphs of that notice of motion. This is a notice of motion for general business that goes on the business paper. I will give the honourable member for Epping a life raft, but not today. At any time tomorrow he may move a motion of censure and, in accordance with the proceedings of the House, the censure motion will be dealt with. But he cannot amend his notice of motion to give effect to a procedural impossibility. That is what the honourable member is attempting to do.

Mr HARTCHER: Unlike the Leader of the House, may I draw the attention of the House to Standing Order 124, which states:

The procedure for a motion of censure of a Member is as follows:

- (1) A notice of motion must be given.

That is the very point that the Leader of the House made. The honourable member has to give a notice of motion. When does he give it? He gives it at the time of the calling on of notices of motions. That is what the honourable member for Epping has done. What he has also done is renumbered the paragraphs of the notice of motion, but not a word was changed. He has moved paragraph (4) to the number one position and paragraph (5) to the number two position. He has changed the order in which the paragraphs appear. That is covered, of course, in the standing orders. There was no reference to the standing orders by the Leader of the House. Standing Order 148 states:

To alter a notice of motion already given—

the honourable member for Epping has given a notice of motion at the appropriate time—

the member must hand in before the notice of motion is moved—

the honourable member for Epping handed it in before the motion was moved—

an amended notice—

which he has done—

which must not exceed the scope of the terms of the original notice.

This cannot exceed the terms of the original notice, as it does not change a word. How can it exceed the scope of the terms of the original notice if every word is exactly the same? It is quite clear that the standing orders have been complied with. The amended notice of motion has been given and every single step required has been carried out.

[Interruption]

I would ask you to direct the Leader of the House to cease interjecting. Every single step required by the forms of the House has been complied with—a notice of motion, an amended notice of motion, an amended notice of motion not exceeding the scope of the original motion. It is clear that the notice of motion of the honourable member for Epping is in order.

Mr WHELAN: It is little wonder lawyers are choosing to become bankrupt. I do not think that the honourable member for Gosford will be far behind them. What he has carefully chosen to do is to ignore Standing Order 124.2, which refers to a censure motion taking the place of and being called upon at the time for consideration of matters of public importance on the sitting day on which the notice was given. The honourable

member has said there has been no change of intention. Of course there has. He now wants to defer a matter of public importance that may be on the agenda for today. That is the effect of the notice of motion of censure. It would defer forever the matter of public importance that Mr Speaker indicated to the House would come on today. There is one change. The essence of Standing Order 148—which relates to the permission required to alter a notice of motion—is that it must not exceed the scope of the terms of the original motion. The terms of the original motion were as a notice of motion; not a censure motion. Censure is dealt with under Standing Order 124, a different standing order completely.

The honourable member has reversed the paragraphs in his notice of motion but it is not a censure motion; he is using the argument of a notice of motion to bring on the debate. I suggest that he is clearly out of order. He has until tomorrow. It is only a matter of waiting until tomorrow to move his motion of censure. I would argue strongly that you cannot permit members to exceed the scope of the terms of the original notice of motion by this alteration.

It means that any time a member wants to change the terms of a notice of motion in any form, the notice of motion may become an urgency motion, or it may well become a matter of public importance, or it may well become some other issue. The honourable member is attempting to change the notice of motion before the Chamber from an ordinary notice of motion, which goes on the general notice paper for business, into a censure, which the House regards as a very serious issue.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The terms of an amended notice of motion must not exceed the terms of the original notice. When the honourable member for Epping gave notice of his original motion I sought advice from the honourable member and from the Clerk as to whether the motion was a censure motion. I was advised that it was not. Paragraphs (4) and (5) of the original motion referred to the censure of the Premier. A censure is normally dealt with at the commencement of a motion and I assumed that the motion was not one of censure. However, the honourable member for Epping was not precluded from seeking to amend the notice, which is what he has now sought to do.

According to the dictionary the word "scope" means "end, aimed at, or purpose or intention". The honourable member for Epping has used the same verbiage as he used in the original notice. However, the fact that he has reordered the paragraphs indicates that he has now decided that the intent of the amended motion should be different from that of the original motion. That being so, the scope of the motion has changed and I rule it out of order.

MEDICAL NEGLIGENCE LIABILITY

Personal Explanation

Mr HARTCHER, by leave: In answer to a question without notice today, the Premier allegedly quoted my speech from *Hansard*. The Premier's quotation was limited and inaccurate. The correct quotation reads:

In relation to the alleged plagiarism, I reject the claim. I stand by a document which contains endless footnotes. I acknowledge the fact that the document came together from many sources. I never pretended at any stage that it was an original work coming out of my head. I assigned it, I acknowledged it, but also acknowledged the fact that it represented contributions by many people.

CONSIDERATION OF URGENT MOTIONS

Lamb Industry

Mr MARTIN (Bathurst) [3.42 p.m.]: My motion is urgent because of current negotiations between the Federal Government and the Bush administration following its election concerning a free trade agreement with North America. Currently in the United States of America the farm lobby groups are lobbying the Bush administration for a doubling of subsidies. We all know what that will do to our rural industries. Members of this Parliament have spoken in the past about problems with the lamb industry. We sent a message to the Federal Government vigorously requesting it to talk to the Clinton administration about that, with limited success. This matter has risen again, and it needs to be dealt with now. The substance of the motion for urgent consideration moved by the Leader of the National Party was debated in this Chamber about four hours ago as a matter of public importance. For that reason, I commend my motion to the House.

Mr Souris: That was yesterday's MPI.

Mr MARTIN: I would have thought that 11.30 a.m. today was today. Obviously the Leader of the National Party needs to get a calendar. I commend my motion to the House for urgent consideration.

Dairy Industry Deregulation

Mr SOURIS (Upper Hunter—Leader of the National Party) [3.44 p.m.]: The dairy industry is in daily crisis. There is no other way of describing the situation than one which is immediate, urgent and critical. The recent Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics report placed New South Wales in the worst position. Why is it urgent today especially? Because the Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Land and Water Conservation issued a smart alec press release this morning stating that the Federal Government's compensation could somehow be exempt from taxation as if this is a new angle, a new avenue of hope. It is only false hope. That happened this morning, and this is urgent because of the actions of the Minister this morning in making that call.

I call on the Government to give the dairy industry some of the \$156 million that it is collecting out of its national competition policy. I call for the urgent and immediate use of the national competition dividends for the ailing dairy industry. That would be the very best thing the Government could do, and could do immediately. Another reason why this is urgent is because the committee that the New South Wales Opposition forced the Government to form last July still has made no progress, is not expected to finish its work until October and to report prior to Christmas. That will be the second Christmas since deregulation, forced through this Parliament by the Carr Government. We cannot wait for any of that.

The urgency that presently exists is far greater than the Carr Government is prepared to acknowledge by virtue of the fact that it is doing absolutely nothing other than issuing smart alec press releases attacking the Federal Government in the context of a looming Federal election. The Carr Government has its head in the sand. Urgent and immediate action is needed to save the dairy industry. There will not be a dairy industry if the Government waits that long. The urgency is now. That is why my motion should have precedence over the motion moved by the honourable member for Bathurst.

Question—That the motion for urgent consideration of the honourable member for Bathurst be proceeded with—agreed to.

LAMB INDUSTRY

Urgent Motion

Mr MARTIN (Bathurst) [3.46 p.m.]: I move:

That this House:

- (1) expresses its support for the \$650 million New South Wales lamb industry which employs 56,000 people;
- (2) acknowledges the Federal Government is currently negotiating a trade agreement with North America;
- (3) recognises the election of the United States President, George W. Bush, was due to him winning all mid-west and southern farm belt States;
- (4) notes that Mr Bush's home State of Texas is the largest single sheep producing region in the United States; and
- (5) calls on the Federal Government to stand up for our primary producers in the current negotiations.

The market with the United States of America [USA] is of critical importance to Australia. Australia exported some \$9,598 million worth of merchandise to the USA in 1999-2000, so trade does run strongly in the USA favour. Over the same period, the USA imported \$23,158 million of products. The USA is an important trading partner for Australia and at 9.9 per cent ranks second behind Japan, at 19.3 per cent, as buyers of Australian product. Exports of Australian agricultural product in 1999-2000 to the USA were worth \$3,133 million; that is, nearly one-third of total agricultural exports.

Last year lamb exports worth \$181 million represented about 6 per cent of total agricultural exports. The New South Wales lamb industry alone is worth \$650 million to our economy. Importantly, it employs 56,000 people in New South Wales. It is a critical industry for country New South Wales from Glen Innes and Armidale in the north, to Oberon, in my electorate, Cowra and Dubbo in the centre, to the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area, Wagga Wagga and Albury in the south. New South Wales makes up about 40 per cent of the

total value of the nation's \$1.75 billion industry. It is a growing industry, its worth has risen from \$554 million in 1995, which is significant. That is an increase of more than 17 per cent over the past five years.

The New South Wales sheep industry is by far the largest supplier of Australian lamb to the USA. We make up more than 40 per cent of the 25,000 tonnes sold to the USA last year. The two largest exporters of New South Wales lamb to the USA are Southern Meats from their Goulburn, Harden and Junee works and Colonial Meats, based at Mudgee—45 per cent of our exports go to the USA, making it our largest and most downhill export customer for lamb. The prices our industry receives on this market sets the tone for our entire lamb trade. It is the benchmark. The Federal Government must stand up and protect all our primary producers and their workers. John Howard must go in to bat for our farmers and make sure that their voices are heard loud and clear.

For a long time our farmers have had to play the poor cousins because of decisions made by American Presidents. For example, the emergency payments made to American farmers to protect them from the low commodity prices and the Asian crisis rose from \$6 billion in 1997 to more than \$8 billion in 2000 and included a further \$7 billion in insurance subsidies. That is a prime example of the United States Senate and House of Representatives flexing their muscles. The then President had to dance to their tune. For a President to get his legislation through, he must do individual deals with members and, in the process, hand out goodies to various farming States. Many of the deals, such as lamb tariffs, have a massive impact on Australian farmers.

Make no mistake, the situation will not improve under George W. Bush. The leaders of the Australian farming lobby groups showed a preference for a Bush administration to a Gore administration. They have learned very quickly that that was a false assumption. As we all know, George W. Bush was elected by a wafer-thin margin. The all-powerful United States Senate is deadlocked 50 votes each to the Republicans and the Democrats. For Mr Bush to pass difficult legislation, such as his highly controversial tax cuts, he will have to do deals. We must also remember that George W. Bush won in 30 States, including in all the mid-west and southern farming belt areas. Let me make this clear: Florida did not elect George W. Bush, the United States farm belt did.

For example, the southern State of Arkansas—Bill Clinton's home State—which has voted Democrat for the last eight years, voted Republican by a margin of 51 per cent to 45 per cent. Those six electoral college votes were crucial in getting Bush over the line. To be elected President under the electoral college system, a candidate requires 270 votes. George W. Bush finished with 271. Florida would not have mattered if the farmers of Arkansas had not turned to Bush. While Al Gore won the city vote in places such as New York, Los Angeles and Boston, George W. Bush was victorious in the farming strongholds of Montana, where he gained 58 per cent of the vote, North Dakota with 61 per cent, South Dakota with 60 per cent and Kansas with 59 per cent. George W. Bush will be looking for ways to retain this critical rural support. Without that support he would not be President. In political terms, there will have to be a payback. That represents a threat to farmers in this State in particular and in Australia generally.

At this stage we can only speculate on the attitude of the new United States Government. However, having considered the arguments, it is obvious what it will be. I note that the single most important sheep-producing State in America is the President's home State of Texas. The United States Government has not given any indication that dealings with the ever-powerful farm lobby will deliver any changes to its current protectionist approach. In negotiations for a free trade agreement our representatives, the Prime Minister and the Federal Minister for Trade, must put our case strongly. They have to ask for a fair deal. It is no good Australia's doing the right thing and playing by the rules when everyone else does not. At the end of the day, our primary producers will pay a hefty price.

Prime Minister Howard must be prepared to fight any plan to double the subsidies for American farmers. That is what the farmers are seeking. Mr Howard was quick to say that the election of George W. Bush was good news for Australian farmers. Already the signals show otherwise. If anything, the opposite is true. American farm leaders are placing demands on the new Bush administration. That is why this motion is being debated as a matter of urgency. Even before George W. Bush was sworn in, the lobby groups were banging on his door. It took him some time to get to 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, and that gave them a bit of a lead. The leading United States farming representative body, the American Farm Bureau Federation, called on President George W. Bush to double the farm subsidies to \$US18 billion, which equates to \$A32.5 billion. That gives an indication of the muscle of country America.

Doubling the subsidies would cripple Australian farmers with one stroke of the presidential pen. Australian farmers must fight against American producers, who are able to offer lower prices through

government support of their operating costs. Through subsidies the United States and the Europeans distort the international market and cushion their farmers in the market. That can only mean a loss in income for Australian farmers. At a press conference in Florida in December, Mr Bob Stallman, Chairman of the American Farm Bureau Federation, demanded that the new Bush administration double funding. He said that the current funding allocation proposed by the United States Congress was—can you believe this—"woefully inadequate". Mr Stallman also said, "We look forward to working with the new administration and believe many items on President-elect Bush's agenda will, if Congress co-operates, benefit farmers and ranchers." They will certainly do that, but they will also severely disadvantage farmers in Australia, particularly in New South Wales.

The United States farmers are throwing around their newfound influence. Who can blame them? Mr Stallman is bragging that he expects a closer relationship with the White House and is saying that the new Bush administration understands American agriculture. Who could forget last year's United States sheep quota controversy when our producers were hit by the Americans looking after their own backyard? Mr Howard must ensure that our interests are heard in Washington. The United States imposed its lamb tariffs in 1999. Under those restrictions a tariff of 9 per cent was placed on all imports of Australian lamb in 1999-2000 up to a quota of 17,000 tonnes. Anything on top of that was smacked with a tariff of a whopping 40 per cent.

Although the tariffs have been subsequently reduced, the World Trade Organisation [WTO] upheld Australia's protests against these restrictions. The United States Government has lodged an appeal and the WTO is required to hand down a verdict by 1 May this year. The new Bush administration has not withdrawn the appeal. However, even if the result goes our way, under WTO rules the United States has 15 months to remove the tariffs. Whichever way we go America has got us snookered. That 15-month period is crucial and damaging to our rural industries, particularly the lamb industry. If the WTO rightly comes down on the side of Australian farmers the United States does not have to implement any change until August 2002. For those reasons, I commend this urgency motion to the House. Because of the present situation, particularly in the United States where the farming lobby is flexing its muscles with the new administration, we must act decisively.

Mr SLACK-SMITH (Barwon) [3.56 p.m.]: I move:

That the motion be amended by leaving out paragraph (5) with a view to inserting instead the following:

- (5) congratulates the Federal Minister for Trade on his great efforts in sustaining the Australian lamb industry.

All of rural New South Wales is involved in the lamb industry in one way or another. The honourable member for Bathurst referred to specific areas of New South Wales where fine quality lambs are produced. Although that is true, a great deal of the breeding and foundation stock comes from my electorate and electorates further west and south on the plains of New South Wales. The first cross-ewes and foundation stock of our high-quality lambs came from those areas. The fat lamb industry creates \$650 million for our economy. Most importantly, it involves virtually all of rural New South Wales. Although we have a very strong domestic market, we currently export to many places around the world, particularly the United States of America.

The proposal presented to the United States was simple: we would assist the United States lamb industry to promote lambs. If we could increase lamb consumption throughout the United States there is no way in the world that the industry in the United States could cope with the demand. But the United States knocked that back. The quality of lamb produced locally in the United States is awful. It smells and it does not taste very nice. Once you cook a lamb roast in the United States the smell goes all through the house, it is rank and it does not taste very good. Apart from that, the Americans cannot cook it properly.

Lamb consumption in the United States is very low compared with its consumption in many other countries, particularly Australia and New Zealand because we produce top-quality lamb. But the Americans decided to protect their lamb industry, and as result they have restricted our tonnage to 35,000 tonnes, which is a tariff of 9 per cent. But if we exceed 35,00 tonnes the United States will place a tariff of 40 per cent on any extra tonnage. The United States talks about level playing fields and free trade, as long as it is their way. Mark Vaile should be congratulated on his tremendous hard work in trying to push the barrow in the United States on behalf of Australian lamb producers. He has appealed to the World Trade Organisation [WTO], which agreed with Australia and New Zealand that the United States was acting unfairly.

Unfortunately, if the WTO finds against the United States, the United States simply ignores it. Unfortunately, if America sneezes, Australia catches a cold. Our economy and our production in many areas is

extremely small compared with the might of the United States, which is the backyard bully in many affairs throughout the world. What the United States says goes because it is currently the only world superpower. Mark Vaile was very pleased when the WTO panel confirmed its interim findings that tariffs imposed on lamb exports by the United States were unjustified and inconsistent with WTO rules. But the United States ignored that finding, which is typical of America's attitude to trade throughout the world. It is unfortunate that everything is fine so long as things go the way of the United States, but once things go the other way the United States ignores them.

The lamb industry in New South Wales employs 56,000 people directly and indirectly, and it plays a tremendous role in our regional economies. Two weeks ago the price of fat lambs in Albury hit \$100 per head, and people think that is a great price. But if we look at the consumer price index and at the other costs that we have had to endure in the past 20 years, we realise that the current price is more realistic than it has been. The cattle industry is currently going through quite a good period: the prices we are receiving for our cattle are more realistic than they were a few years ago. One hundred dollars per head for fat lamb might sound pretty good, but in 1930 a neighbour of mine sold some first-crossed lambs to Flemington markets and received £15 a head for them. When I look at inflation and the current cost, I believe that the cost of lamb and beef in Australia is cheap—it is certainly cheap compared with many other countries. Many overseas visitors to Australia want to eat beef and lamb because they are so cheap here.

Mark Vaile has done an excellent job in taking the fight to the United States. He has worked tirelessly to try to get a better deal for the lamb industry in New South Wales in particular. It may take some time, but if pressure is exerted through the WTO we will be on the right track. The Opposition supports the motion because we believe that the Americans are out of touch. We believe that the Americans are the bullyboys in world trade. I could name a number of industries with which I am either directly or indirectly involved in which the United States continues to play the bullyboy and sometimes unfairly controls the markets. The American sheep industry would gain tremendously from using our expertise, promotions and genetics. Our expertise would not only result in an increase in the consumption of meat in the United States, but also assist our industry.

I would like to put in a little plug for the members of the Government. The Meat Livestock Authority of New South Wales is undertaking a promotion to encourage producers to inoculate their sheep against the very contagious disease scabby mouth. Although our live sheep exports are running at 400,000 per annum, if we could eliminate scabby mouth we could increase our exports by at least one million sheep per year. It is not a state secret; the Opposition supports it. The Government should get on side and become more proactive with agriculture. The Government does a lot of talking and it is very busy condemning the Federal Government, but so far as agriculture is concerned it has been dragging the chain. It does all the talking; let us see it do some walking.

Mr HICKEY (Cessnock) [4.06 p.m.]: We have been dealing with tariffs, but we seem to be bogging ourselves down by concentrating wholly and solely on sheep exports. This is a wide-ranging issue. Mr John Howard should set aside his delight at the election of the new Republican President and stand up for Australian farming families and our export communities in our great nation. On the ABC's *7.30 Report* of 14 December Mr Howard bragged about how he knew many of the Republicans who might be members of the new Bush administration. Mr Howard must use that association to the advantage of the whole country and not be simply a lap-dog for the Bush administration.

Trade between the United States and Australia is paramount. Southcorp's takeover of Rosemount winery to make it the eighth largest wine producer could have ramifications through tariffs if the United States doubles its subsidies. This level playing field about which the World Trade Organisation continually boasts is hurting people throughout our communities. It is totally unacceptable to wait 12 months for an appeal process to be completed and another 15 months for the result of the appeal to be implemented. It is hurting our farming communities.

The United States economy and United States administrators are very clear about the level playing field: they want it to apply to everyone but them. The Bush administration is pushing for double subsidies in the United States, which will have a disastrous effect on Australia's economy. It is time that the entire New South Wales Parliament argued against that plan and forced Howard and Anderson to get off their behinds and press the issue of world trade with the United States. The bottom line is: Will they be lap-dogs to the United States economy or will they stand up for their beliefs? We acknowledge that initiatives are currently being undertaken. The Australian Federal and New Zealand governments are pursuing free trade deals with the United States. Country Labor supports this move because Australian farmers will gain from agricultural trade deals with the United States of America. While the United States claims to favour free trade, its current farming policy definitely does not support that—quite the opposite.

Country Labor has been pushing the free trade issue since 15 December. Howard and the Republicans are mates and he must persuade them to examine the entire economic climate and the benefits of free trade to Australia. Mark Vaile has done nothing for our farmers and neither has John Anderson—which is why the farmers want to get rid of him. A farmer talked about him on the ABC this morning. Farmers are leaving the Opposition parties in droves; they no longer listen to Opposition members because they are not happy with the policies they spout. Anderson and Howard need to make a noise about this issue and convince the United States to drop those farming policies that do not benefit the people whom the Opposition claims to represent in this place. Opposition members are not listening to what the people are saying. They have had enough: free trade is great but it must also be fair. Opposition members claim that we are trying to score political points on this issue; we are not. We are stating the blooming obvious—and those opposites should do the same. [*Time expired.*]

Mr ARMSTRONG (Lachlan) [4.11 p.m.]: I support the motion as amended by the honourable member for Barwon. I acknowledge that Government members have raised this matter in the House, and I thank them for doing so. It is incumbent upon the Government to recognise the importance of industries such as the lamb industry, which has made a tremendous contribution to the social infrastructure of New South Wales and particularly its exports. As a country with 0.3 per cent of the world population, there is no doubt that we must live on exports. The prime lamb industry in New South Wales and in Australia as a whole has done a superb job over the past 15 years or so—that is acknowledged by geneticists around the world—reframing the industry to meet international demands for heavy prime lamb.

Lamb in the eastern States, particularly New South Wales and Victoria, and in the lower end of Western Australia has been effectively remoulded over the past 15 years into long, lean and high-yielding lamb with a higher percentage of retail cuts. Australian lamb is not only accepted in the American market but flown every day to Switzerland, the Scandinavian countries and the United Kingdom. Exporters such as Kevin Bowtell from Albury, who has been exporting for more than 40 years, has been able to expand into many niche markets. However, today we are discussing the American market. The honourable member for Bathurst spoke about American politics. I will not argue with him because we do not know what will happen. That is speculation and crystal ball gazing. We hope that he will be proved wrong—only time will tell.

The simple fact is that Australia must have confidence. Politicians, political parties, Premiers, Prime Ministers and Ministers must unite behind this industry. That means that Minister Vaile, Minister Anderson and Prime Minister Howard have a responsibility to ensure that they maximise the opportunity to cement market share and to access growing markets for what is arguably the best lamb available in the world today. State Premiers also have a responsibility. I am pleased that the Government raised this issue. The New South Wales Premier spent more than 60 days overseas last year. Can anyone tell me when he made one statement in the United States about lamb? Can anyone tell me whether he uttered one word to reinforce the value of Australian lamb? Did he argue on behalf of Australian lamb producers, abattoir workers, processors or shepherds—the whole industry? Did the Premier argue that we need support? If he did not, it is not too late for Bob to come to the rescue.

We must protect lamb through breeding. The biggest threat facing the New South Wales lamb industry and breeding stock today is the Government's policy regarding ovine Johne's disease [OJD]. Present in the gallery this afternoon were some wonderful sheep men from the Bathurst electorate, some of whom I have known for almost 50 years. Hanging over their heads is the greatest curse that the sheep industry in the Southern Highlands and in the Southern Tablelands has ever known: ovine Johne's disease. Government members can utter all the rhetoric they want about what might happen in the American prime lamb industry but, unless we can guarantee continuous supply, America will not have confidence in our exports. I call upon the New South Wales Government to recognise the importance of the prime lamb industry and to revamp its attitude to OJD. I call upon the Premier of this State to acknowledge that on his visits to Europe and the United States he has a responsibility to ensure that we gain access to those markets. He must also give an assurance that New South Wales will deal with its future disease problems properly and constructively.

Mr BLACK (Murray-Darling) [4.16 p.m.]: I am pleased to speak in support of my Country Labor friends, the honourable members representing the electorates of Bathurst and Cessnock. I also congratulate honourable members representing the electorates of Barwon and Lachlan on their approach to this issue. I am very passionate about this matter and I concur with the sentiments that have been expressed in this debate. I must inform the honourable member for Lachlan that the Premier, along with the honourable member for Barwon and I, will visit Moree on Thursday and Friday of next week and I am quietly confident that this matter will be raised then. I will be surprised if, in his remarks to the Western Division conference of the Shires Association of New South Wales, the Premier does not refer to the primary industries that support that division.

I wish to approach this issue from the point of view of the rice industry. The industry has had a record yield of 1.7 million tonnes—discounting the 10 per cent or 11 per cent that is lost to ducks, which is another matter—but the price has collapsed because our friends in the United States are ignoring their undertakings made at the Uruguay round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. We were selling a lot of rice to Japan after long negotiation. I congratulate the rice growers of New South Wales on what they have achieved in this area. The problem is that the United States price to Japan has dropped from \$400 to \$200 a tonne. The payment to United States growers is \$171, of which \$132 is a government subsidy. This is what is happening inside the United States in relation to farm costs. Last year we debated the 25 per cent tariff impediment. At that time there was agreement across the Chamber between the National Party, other Opposition members, Country Labor and the Government. I can live with that because in these issues, as both the honourable member for Barwon and the honourable member for Lachlan stated, there has to be bipartisan agreement if we are to march anywhere as a country.

On 28 March the western annual conference of the New South Wales Farmers Association, which I have been invited to open, will be held. I will refer to this matter at the conference. There will be a lot of agreement across the board. I am pleased to acknowledge the comments made about ovine Johne's disease. Maintaining a clean industry is the only way we can go. It is not unknown in this Chamber that most of the rams out west are big-framed Collinsville or Bungaree rams. It is not that long ago when wethers off shears at Peterborough sales were getting \$15. Out at Hay—it may be argued that is a niche market—sheep were getting \$41 at the same time. It is a question of breed. It is important for western New South Wales to maintain a clean industry. The big-framed sheep need the overseas market more than the internal market because the internal market does not want that kind of sheep meat for the butcher shop.

Reference was made to Mark Vaile. I have no problems with him; I have known him for many years. I still say that he should have stuck to roads. But with respect to John Anderson and Warren Truss I say different things. I am concerned that this side of November we will be locked into treaties which are flawed. I think that all of us know in our hearts that there will be a change of Federal Government some time later this year. Some of us think that it will be in November. Prior to that time we do not want to enter into treaties that will benefit only the United States. The United States has a very potent farm lobby. It is pulling in something like \$28 billion in subsidies. That is the fact which none of us can walk away from. [*Time expired.*]

Mr MARTIN (Bathurst) [4.21 p.m.], in reply: The honourable member for Barwon stated in his speech that he supported the motion, so I wonder whether he will withdraw his amendment.

Mr Slack-Smith: Definitely not.

Mr MARTIN: That is not consistent with your remarks. I thought he might have been converted on the road to Damascus. In relation to the comments of the honourable member for Lachlan, by coincidence in the first week in January I was on a private holiday with my wife—not a political junket—and in South Carolina I met some people socially. One was the economic director for the Governor of South Carolina, a chap by the name of Wayne Stirling. He said how impressed they had been by the visit of the Premier. He said that the Premier had vigorously represented New South Wales and its industry and that South Carolina was looking at various options. So I can tell the honourable member for Lachlan that when the Premier goes overseas he does make an impact. He has made an impact in the United States and has been pushing the points made in this debate.

The honourable member for Barwon stated that he is passionate about this issue. However, I note that even as the leading speaker for the Opposition he could not even pad out 10 minutes. It was obvious that he was going through the motions. While the United States says that it is in favour of free trade, its current farm policy does not support this. There have been numerous examples of this over the years. The *Australian Financial Review* reported on 16 February this year that there were talks in the early stages for a group of five Pacific nations to enter into a free trade agreement. The so-called Pacific five or P5 grouping would include the United States, Chile, Singapore, Australia and New Zealand—another great lamb producer alongside Australia. Already talks are under way between Chile and Singapore. This has been regarded as a stepping stone for the creation of the P5 group of countries.

In the same article it was reported that a number of high-powered US companies are lending their weight to the idea of a free trade group. They include IBM, General Motors, Johnson and Johnson—three of the corporate giants of America—Motorola, the investment bank Morgan Stanley Dean Witter and the American Insurance group. As we heard earlier, we still do not know whether the United States will support the move. In

the end it will mean nothing for our lamb producers if they are not on board with the P5 agreement if it comes to fruition. Some people have suggested that any P5 deals should be expanded to include Canada and Mexico as part of the extension to the North American Free Trade Agreement [NAFTA]. Canada is believed to be supportive of and sympathetic to Australia becoming part of it. An editorial in Canada's national daily newspaper, the *National Post*, said, "The policy change down under in favour of free trade pacts should be seized as an opening to bring Australia into the wider North American Free Trade Agreement."

We will support that because we know that our dry land farmers are probably the most efficient in the world, and certainly our lamb producers are. Whilst they are always working to improve the efficiency of the industry, there is a limit to what they can do. As has been pointed out, they are producing a superior product. They have cut their costs wherever they can. The very least this Parliament should be doing—this is the object of my urgent motion—is reinforcing the message to the Prime Minister and Mr Vaile that the welfare of lamb producers should be uppermost in their minds. The House should unite as one to support this.

For that reason I cannot support the wishy-washy amendment moved by the honourable member for Barwon to give Mark Vaile a pat on the back and say he is a terrific bloke. We emphasise and reinforce each point in the motion. The Coalition, particularly the National Party, is looked at less and less as the voice of the people in the bush. I do not want to inflict the pain of reminding my colleagues opposite of recent events in Queensland and Western Australia. Opposition members should vote with Government members to put the case to the Federal Government to ram home the importance of this motion. It must be done now because, while we are talking, the American trade groups are lobbying the Bush administration, and we do not know whether Australian parliaments can trust George W. Bush. [*Time expired.*]

Amendment negatived.

Motion agreed to.

DEATH OF SIR DONALD BRADMAN

Debate resumed from an earlier hour.

Mr GIBSON (Blacktown) [4.30 p.m.]: Shortly after the death of Sir Donald Bradman, his son, John, said:

Sir Donald Bradman was a wonderful father, grandfather and friend and we feel that many will share our loss.

It has also been recorded that India's star batsman, Sachin Tendulkar, said:

What can one say, it is a great loss for not only the fans but for all cricketers. What ever he has achieved is always a dream for other batsmen. They want to be like him, but it is probably impossible to get there.

Sir Alec Bedser said:

Frankly, he was the best. You can't say any more than that. There's been no one like him and I don't think there ever will be again. More than that, he was a wonderful credit to the game.

Much has been said about the record of Sir Donald Bradman and I do not want to canvass that, apart from mentioning a few features. In 1934 when the Ashes series was in Melbourne an English evening newspaper ran an advertisement for the coming test. It stated simply: "Bradman versus England." Such was the dominance of this great cricketer and sportsman. Sir Donald Bradman had an average of 99.4. He scored a total of 6,996 runs. His average against South Africa was a remarkable 201.5. His average against India was 178.75 and against England it was almost 90. His highest score was 334, which was scored in 1930 against England. In test cricket he scored 100 runs 29 times and 50 runs 13 times. His test career spanned more than two decades. He was a right-handed super batsman, a genius. He was self-taught; he was not coached. That is probably what set him apart from any other cricketer at that time and since. Most of the great cricketers today are not self-taught; they have been coached.

In the early 1990s Sir Donald Bradman was asked to speak to an Australian team before a test match. He gave one simple message to the players who were gathered there: "You do not own cricket, you are custodians of the game." That is how he played throughout his career and, in fact, throughout his whole life. Many have spoken about his great achievements on the field but I believe his greatest achievement was helping get Australians through the Great Depression and the Second World War. He inspired a nation at times when the nation needed inspiration.

Alan Jones has told the story many times that Steve Waugh at his first test match did not set the world on fire. In his two innings he scored only 13 and 5 runs. Sir Donald said to Alan Jones, "This young bloke can really bat." Alan Jones said, "Well, why don't you tell him?" Sir Donald said, "Well, why don't you tell him?" Alan Jones actually rang Steve Waugh and said, "There's somebody here with me at the moment who believes that you can really bat, that you've really got it", and he put Sir Donald on. Sir Donald said, "Keep going because you can bat, you've really got it." Of course, we all know what happened. Steve Waugh has gone on to become the greatest Australian cricket captain and probably will remain so. Sir Donald also said to Alan Jones at the time, "By the way, keep an eye on his twin brother because he can bat as well."

Not only was Sir Donald a great cricketer, he was a great judge of cricket and of people who would make it as cricketers. Another conversation has been recorded with Steve Waugh in which he spoke about the gear that people wear today such as helmets, gloves, thigh pads and so on. Sir Donald said that in the two decades that he played cricket at club, State or international levels he never wore gloves and he was never hit on the hands. I doubt that there has been another experienced cricketer who has never been hit on the hands. Sir Donald's eye and hand co-ordination and his footwork were so great that he was never hit. He did not need the extra padding or gear that cricketers have today. Alec Bedser played against the Donald Bradman in the 1946, 1947 and 1948 test series. Sir Donald has always rated Alec Bedser as the greatest bowler he ever played against. In an interview I heard only in the past week Alec Bedser said that Sir Donald Bradman was by far the greatest batsman that he ever bowled to. However, he also said:

What people have got to keep in mind is that I bowled to Sir Donald Bradman after he had that great spell from the game. Sir Donald Bradman was near the end of his career when I bowled against him and he was still the greatest. It would have been an experience and a half to have bowled against him eight years prior because he would have been an even greater batsman then.

Sir Donald Bradman was held in the highest esteem, and when one speaks about his popularity one remembers the 1932-33 series in Melbourne. Sir Donald was batting and he was close to 100 runs that day. Traffic stopped in Collins Street, Melbourne, and in other major cities in this country so that people could find out whether Sir Donald would get his 100 runs. Of course, he did. Many people might not realise that Sir Donald Bradman was very rarely caught behind by a wicket-keeper. In most games today the wicket-keeper picks up two or three wickets. It is a common way of getting out. The reason Sir Donald was rarely caught behind by the wicket-keeper was that, being self-taught, he used to bat with what he called "a close face to the bat". The way he gripped the bat and faced the bowler meant that he was rarely caught behind by the wicket-keeper. That set him apart from most players today.

Sir Donald said that he did not play for a living but played cricket because he loved the game. He said that if he had to play for money or for contracts he probably would not have been successful. He played for the love of the game and for the country that he loved, and he did it very well. He was a very private man and loved his best friend and wife, Jessie. They are together now and that is cause for great rejoicing. Close friends have said that he never got over the death of Jessie.

Don Bradman said that Sachin Tendulkar from India was the player who most reminded him of himself. It is indeed sad that Sir Donald Bradman passed away on the eve of the test against India. Yesterday, in India, Sachin Tendulkar went out to bat against Australia and he put on one of the greatest and most pleasing displays of batting the world has ever seen. It probably justifies the great faith that Sir Donald had in Tendulkar. Yesterday and today newspapers around the world carried the story of Sir Donald's death. Australia, England, India—just name a country and the news of Sir Donald's death was probably on the front page. The Australian team were in training when they heard the news of his death. The team stopped for a minute's silence as a mark of respect for this great man. The Indian people are great cricket lovers. People in India actually stopped in the street and cried when they heard of the death of Sir Donald Bradman.

Sir Don has been called the greatest sportsman or sportsperson of all time. When one compares him with some of the sporting greats such as Pele, Ty Cobb, Borg, Muhammed Ali, Joe Montana, Nicklaus and Jordan, one begins to realise the greatness of the man. A story about Don Bradman in the *Daily Telegraph* today referred to the time when Bradman was first selected to play for Australia, and his reaction. The article stated:

Bradman sat by the radio waiting to hear the team when the radio announced the selectors were deadlocked.

Bradman settled down to sleep when he heard an announcer say: "At last we can tell you the composition of the Australian Test side to play at the MCC at Brisbane on November 30. The players in alphabetic order are: D. G. Bradman, J. M. Gregory, C. V. Grimmet ...

Bradman didn't get out of bed to accept congratulations.

He shut his eyes and slept. To him, it was not a dream. It was the fulfilment of a goal he believed he could achieve.

That summarises what Bradman was like. In an article in today's *Daily Telegraph* Mike Gibson said simply this:

Out of the public arena.

But his place in our hearts will never change.

He will always be The Don.

Forever he will remain that elegant little man, dancing down the wicket of imagination, flogging the Poms and making us feel so Australian and so proud.

I will close on this note. One of my constituents, Jack Beazley, was a great Bradman fan. When he heard of Sir Donald's death he wrote a poem and brought it into my office later that day. I will read onto the record the first and last paragraphs of the poem, which is called simply "Sir Donald Bradman":

I lived in the bush when only a boy,
With bat and ball as my pride and joy.
I'd heard of O'Reilly strong and tall,
Who worked wonders and magic with a cricket ball.
And Don Bradman with bat came to Grenfell one day,
To play in a match some twenty miles away.
So we hopped in the tourer, our Overland Whippet,
And arrived there just as he came to the wicket.
I had dreamed of this moment many times before,
To witness Don Bradman score runs galore.

And so to our Don we turn again,
With a champion's heights few can attain.
He lived a life of humble refrain,
I'd give a fortune to see him bat again.
No other batsman could ever embrace,
Don's mammoth scores and swift run chase.
You always knew when Don was in,
For he made the pickets ring and ring.
To Kings and Queens he stood so tall,
His famous name is known to all.

Ms HODGKINSON (Burrinjuck) [4.43 p.m.]: I speak in support of the motion. The Don took on folk hero status during his lifetime, not something many people can lay claim to. He has been the motivation for generations of children, including me, to take up cricket—although I dropped it in favour of netball a little later on. I have a clear memory of the kids on the oval shouting a combination of "Howzat" even when the player clearly was not out, and the child who scored the highest was known as "Bradman" for the rest of the day. But it would appear that the Don very nearly took up tennis instead of cricket because, when he was about 18 years of age, he was performing well in both tennis and cricket.

One of the stories that I heard this week, during the tributes that have been flooding into the media—both the airwaves and the print media—is that in 1926 the Don travelled to the Sydney Cricket Ground to show his cricketing skills to a three-man selection committee. His style caught the eye of the selectors and he joined the Cumberland Club. Apparently the Cumberland Club could not meet the eight shillings and sixpence for Bradman's weekly trips to Sydney, so he was signed up by St George and thus began his career with Southern Districts team.

In the same year, and at the same time, he was selected for the Country Week tennis tournament, but he could not get time off work for both sporting pursuits, so he had to give up tennis. Who knows the kind of sportsman we could have seen had he been able to continue to play tennis as well! Bradman is a folk hero. He is a legend. During the course of last week I heard a lovely story about the way he met his wife. Don Bradman first met Jessie Menzies as an 11-year-old boy. Jessie had come from the country to stay at his house in Bowral for a year to attend primary school. At the same time a young Don had had a scrape and was being patched up by the local doctor. When he got home, complete with bandages, and opened the back door, there she was—a 10-year-old beauty in the eyes of the Don. As we know, that girl went on to become his wife of 65 years. Listening to such love stories is truly motivational to many. At the age of 12 the Don scored his first century. The memorials have continually mounted in the media and pilgrims are now visiting the Bradman Museum to remember him. An article in yesterday's *Daily Telegraph* stated:

Sir Donald Bradman should be regarded as a "one in 10 billion" freak of nature because of a cricketing prowess that made him the pre-eminent athlete in any field in world history.

The statement was attributed to biochemist Charles Davies who based the fact on the Don's test average of 99.94 and the fact that this was double that of the next best player. I consider the Don, our Don, to be one in 10 billion,

although Australia is fortunate to have some truly inspiring heroes who have now taken on folk hero status. I include in these Henry Lawson, Albert Namatjira, Nellie Melba, Joan Sutherland, Phar Lap, Weary Dunlop, Robert Menzies, Victor Chang and Neville Bonner.

Sir Donald Bradman is arguably our greatest sportsman, having achieved almost unbelievable feats on the cricket ground at international level, and was this country's only cricketing knight. At the age of 20 he was selected to play for Australia against England, and although we lost that series Bradman scored a century in his third test. It soon became apparent to all good judges that Bradman was an extremely gifted batsman. In one State game he hit 452 in world record time. In 1930 Bradman was again selected in the Australian team, which took six weeks to sail to England. It was a most successful series, with Bradman scoring 974 test runs.

In 1932 England toured Australia and it was at this time that, in an effort to curtail the Don's run scoring, England introduced the savage bodyline bowling—so named as it was apparent that the bowlers were aiming at the batsman's body and not at the wicket in an effort to intimidate. In 1936 the Don was appointed captain of the Australia team, a fine achievement considering his lack of experience in the job at State level. After the war Bradman was back in England again playing cricket, soon after retiring with the incredible test average of 99.94 runs. There will be national public memorial service in honour of Sir Donald Bradman on Sunday 25 March at St Peter's Cathedral near the Adelaide Oval. The memorial service is to be organised by the Australian Cricket Board and the Bradman family. This is news just to hand. The Don was an extraordinary man. He was an extraordinary Australian. We will miss him but his legend will live on. Vale the Don.

Mr ASHTON (East Hills) [4.48 p.m.]: There are very few speeches made in State Parliament that everyone would agree with, but any speech made about the achievements, record and reputation of our greatest ever sportsman, Sir Donald Bradman, would have to be one of them. In the late 1920s South Australia played New South Wales at the Adelaide Oval and young Don Bradman was in the team. South Australia won the toss and elected to bowl. South Australia had two very famous cricketing brothers, one was a fast bowler and the other was wicketkeeper for the team. Years later both brothers related this true story. In the first over the bowling brother came running in off about 60 or 70 feet—20 or 30 metres—and bowled. The batsman played the ball down the legside and the catch was taken by his brother, the wicketkeeper. There was great celebration, New South Wales was one wicket down for no runs.

Naturally everyone was very excited at the Adelaide Oval. In came the next batsman and the elder brother went in to bat, came in off his run again and bowled, but this time the ball was short and the batsmen went to hook it, snicked the ball through to the wicket-keeping brother who caught it. New South Wales was two for none in the first over. In came the next batsman, who may have been Kippax. He played the ball, flashed outside the off stump, was caught behind by the wicket-keeper, and New South Wales in the first over were three wickets for two runs. In came Bradman. The brothers were on a roll. In came the fast bowler, bowled, and Bradman duly went to hook the ball, snicked it and was caught behind by the wicket-keeping brother. New South Wales was four for 412. That is the type of player that the great Don was.

Sir Donald Bradman's sister once said, "I don't know what all the fuss is about; he is only a cricketer." The family kept their minds relaxed about his great success. So much of the great mystique of the great Don Bradman is because he did not carry on like so many modern athletes who are paid huge fortunes. One would keep a reasonably level head with one's sister making that comment. Don Bradman is the only name I could mention in over 20 years of teaching that every school student, boys and girls, would instantly recognise. There are some who have forgotten, or never heard of, the Beatles; but everyone has heard of Sir Donald Bradman.

I am sure that Don Bradman will be forever recognised in Australia as our greatest sportsman. That is a wonderful achievement in a modern world in which Andy Warhol once said that everyone would have 15 minutes of fame. Our Don had over 70 years of fame. Put simply, his batting achievements, on all types of wickets, often uncovered and sometimes mud piles—not pampered and tampered with like they are today, but at the mercy of the elements—will never be repeated. He scored more runs in 52 tests than some of our other great cricketers have scored in over 100 tests. His average of 99.94 in tests—and over 100 in first-class cricket—will never be surpassed. People do not understand that Don averaged 99.94 in tests but over 100 in first-class games, which means games played against other States and on touring matches.

In three consecutive tours, beginning with the Worcester team in England, he scored 200 on each occasion that he batted. Indeed, being bowled for a duck in his last test innings, when he needed only four runs to achieve a test average of 100, adds to the power of the legend that is Bradman. Maybe many Australians feel that an average of 100 would have been too neat. We always like our great sporting heroes to be a little human.

Mr Fraser: He should have made 101.

Mr ASHTON: Yes, or perhaps even 107 or 113. The honourable member for Blacktown said that Sir Alec Bedser commented on television that if Bradman had been batting later he would have averaged 125. Bowling attacks immediately after the war were weaker than they were before it. How easy would it have been for the Don to come back to Australia and in 1949 play one more test and achieve the literal handful of runs he needed to get that 100 test average? Other players may have done it, but not Don Bradman.

I have loved cricket all of my life. I have watched it, played it, read about it, and been criticised for my fascination—especially by my wife. Yet I know so many people, such as the Hon. Rodney Cavalier, a former Minister of this place; Daryl Melham, the Federal member for Banks; Senator John Faulkner, who is responsible for the Georges River area; and many others, whose fascination with the game and its vagaries defy belief among non-believers. Cricket is Australia's unifying game. We live in a world in which we play soccer, rugby union, rugby league, AFL, netball, and volleyball, and we did so well in the Olympics. But the one sport, not an Olympic sport, that unites this country from the most eastern point, the Byron Bay lighthouse, to the most western point, probably Christmas Island, is cricket. Recently Australia lost the world championship in women's cricket.

Mr George: Sad.

Mr ASHTON: It was sad, especially as we lost to New Zealand. But cricket is the one sport that unites us and defines what Australia as a sporting nation has been all about. Many hundreds of thousands of young people have played it, as have older people. That is the beauty of cricket. When Bradman went to England in 1948 he was 40 years of age, and was probably six or seven years past his best—and he had not always been a well man; he knew that. Today many people spend a lot of time being fully trained and paid athletes, but Bradman got on with a career in a sporting shop. He sold sporting equipment in Bert Oldfield's sporting shop, and was interested in becoming a stockbroker. He worked in the real estate industry and became a cricket administrator.

Cricket is the only sport that is played everywhere. Let us remember that Don Bradman came from the bush and did not have the advantages of playing in some of our elite cricket grounds around Sydney. It is ironic that two of Australia's greatest cricketers, Bradman and Bill O'Reilly, came from similar country areas. In every State, in every city, in the bush, in the million-dollar cricket grounds, in school playgrounds, on beaches, in backyards and in laneways, Australians continue to play cricket today. That is the Don's legacy.

I do not propose to restate the Don's career statistics; they are in all the papers and the cricket books. However, I will make a couple of points about the man. My father, who grew up in eastern Sydney, saw him play often enough. Although I could not understand it at the time, he told me that occasionally the Don could be a boring batsman. I asked him what he meant; how could such a legendary player be boring? He said, "Son, other blokes would go out there and get out, or do something stupid, or hit the ball in the air." My father did not mean that the Don was boring in the usual sense. My father meant that the Don was boring in the sense that he would be there at lunch and at tea, and he would most likely still be there at stumps. In the meantime he would score probably one run a minute, give no chances to anyone, and hardly hit the ball in the air.

My father told me that Bradman would invariably hit the ball along the ground; he would pick the gaps and hit certain fours rather than take the risk of occasionally hitting sixes and being caught out. Don Bradman should take credit for revolutionising fielding in Australian cricket. Some players of the day loped after the ball and lobbed it back to the keeper or the bowler. The Don insisted that great fielding was critical to a team's success. Today all great cricket sides know that great fielding is worth an extra batsman.

We know that in many one-day games all the run-outs can completely ruin a team's effort, or even the match. Many people do not realise that Don Bradman inadvertently began the one-day game in Australia. People sometimes refer derogatively to the one-day matches as pyjama cricket. In the 1970-71 series the test was washed out in Melbourne. They simply could not play at all. The administrators, of which Bradman was the senior, said let us have a one-day game between Australia and England. From that began the idea of playing one-day cricket in Australia. Up until then it had never happened.

Don Bradman was a great sportsman and a great sport. In the many cricket books I have read—even those written by his rivals, some within his own teams—all have agreed that he was the greatest cricketer, not just the greatest batsman, who ever lived. If he had not been a batting genius on a level never seen before or

since, he would have been a great bowler. He was an excellent slow bowler. The Don received letters from all over the world and, incredibly, answered them all. That is a remarkable thing for a man to do. At times he received 400 letters a day and he sat down with a pen, and later a typewriter, and answered them. Most members of Parliament will pen a letter which is typed up by a secretary. He felt he had an obligation to answer people who wrote to him. I cannot think of any sportsmen today who would do that. If they did answer letters they would probably have 10 agents do it for them and have their signatures marketed. But the Don wrote his own letters.

The Don received letters from all over the world, particularly from the Indian subcontinent. We will find out in the next few days how much he was revered in those countries. Cricket was the one event that unified the subcontinent long before the split of Pakistan from India and later Bangladesh from Pakistan. Let us also remember that Don Bradman was virtually forced into cricket retirement because of World War II. He missed seven years of test cricket. In those seven years he would have played 10 to 20 tests. Unlike today, when a cricketer can play 30 tests and not even be a great player, he would have played 60 or 70 tests. His career defies belief. He returned to lead the 1948 tour of England to help rebuild the morale of Australia and England after World War II. Of course, the Invincibles did not do much to rebuild England's morale, as they toured undefeated.

During his career, Don Bradman did not bat for records or for not-outs. It was not a matter of scoring runs because he wanted to be in the record books. The records came to him because he played at a different level to every other cricketer, and that was during a period of great cricketers. I am not talking about a time when there were not other great cricketers. Many great cricketers played at that time, such as McCabe, Archie Jackson, Kippax, Woodfull, the big ship Bill Ponsford, and the great Walter Hammond of England yet Don Bradman was twice as good as them and, on statistics, twice as good as any of the cricketers playing today. He was well known in cricketing circles for what people referred to in those days as throwing his wicket away—something that Mark Waugh has occasionally been accused of doing. In a sense he was saying, "I have made a nice innings; I have played a nice shot." The books I have read state that the Don would have got to 120 and entertained the crowd. He had done his bit, scored his runs quickly enough, and put his team in a winning position. Then he would hit the ball to an outer fieldsman to take a catch or play back to the bowler. That was known as giving his wicket away.

Mr O'Farrell: A bit like yourself.

Mr ASHTON: A bit like myself, generous to a fault. As a child I knew that the Don would eventually pass away. That might seem a silly thing to say, but just as we face the inevitability that our parents will pass on, I always knew that Don Bradman would eventually die. He was 92 when he died. It was no great surprise that eventually that day would come. In cricket terms we say that a person has had a good innings. When my father died in January this year at the age of 85 I thought to myself that he had had a good innings. The great Don had a good innings not only in life but also on the cricket field. I knew that Australians would mourn this occasion, as we have since his passing was made public. The events of the last couple of days have not surprised anyone. I am particularly proud to be able to pay tribute to Australia's greatest athlete in Australia's oldest Parliament. Sir Donald Bradman was a living legend. He is now more than a legend—if that is possible—because in death he has achieved an even greater status. He is now immortalised. As the honourable member for Burrinjuck said, Vale Don Bradman.

Mr MAGUIRE (Wagga Wagga) [5.04 p.m.]: It is entirely appropriate that all members of this House join to pay tribute to a great Australian, Sir Donald Bradman, whom, sadly, we lost this week. As the member for Wagga Wagga representing a city that is known as the city of good sports and one that has produced world-renowned cricketers, I have the great honour today to be able to speak on behalf of my community and the great sports men and women that our city and area has produced. Bradman was born at Cootamundra on 1 August 1908, but he grew up in Bowral, devoting himself to tennis for two years after leaving school at the age of 14. In the township of Cootamundra, which is in the electorate of Lachlan, Bradman's first home has been lovingly restored and cared for by an organisation that has contributed significantly to the memory of Bradman. That community idolises Bradman, as does the community of Bowral, which has established the Bradman Oval and the Bradman Museum of memorabilia.

Australians and people worldwide idolise Bradman. As the honourable member for East Hills said, in days to come we will see the devotion shown to this hero of the sport of cricket. At 17 he hit 234 for Bowral against the Wingello team—which included another future test hero Bill O'Reilly—and he followed up with an innings of 300 against Moss Vale. His negotiations to join the Cumberland club in Sydney broke down when the

club was unable to find the money for his train fare from Bowral each week. Bradman promptly joined the St George club and hit 110 not out in his first innings on a turf pitch. A year later he wore the sky blue of New South Wales and scored 118 in his debut innings in Adelaide against a South Australian attack that included test leg spinner Clarrie Grimmett.

In the 1929-30 season Don Bradman won the first of his 24 test caps against England at the age of 20 as a reward for scoring five tons in his first nine first-class matches. In the third test at Leeds in the 1930 series against England Sir Donald Bradman raced to 105 at lunch, 220 by tea and a triple century by the close of play. He had needed only 5½ hours to finish unconquered with 309 at stumps, and the next day he was caught for a record test score of 334. When he was finally dismissed, the *Stars* poster simply announced "He's out". Bradman had come to the wicket when opener Archie Jackson was out for one and England's new ball bowlers Harold Larwood and Maurice Tait were thirsting for more scalps. He promptly carved up the bowling, and by reaching a century before lunch he joined Victor Trumper and Charlie Macartney in the history books. Sitting with the Yorkshire committee in the pavilion, the famed Australian leg spinner Arthur Mailey overheard a conversation between former England manager Plum Warner and Lord Hawke. Warner declared, "This is like throwing stones at Gibraltar."

When Sir Donald Bradman suffered complications following an operation for appendicitis at the end of the 1934 tour of England the sporting world held its collective breath. The King and Queen of England asked that regular bulletins of his condition be sent to Balmoral Castle, and his wife, Jessie, made the trip to London to be at his side. Donald Bradman was well thought of by the Royal family, who took a personal interest in his health and wellbeing, and by citizens from around the world who wished him good speed.

In 1932 a 23-year-old Donald Bradman married his soulmate, Jessie Menzies, the charming, thoughtful daughter of a Mittagong farmer who, as a girl, had stayed with the Bradmans in Bowral. They were wed at St Paul's Church, Burwood, by the Reverend Canon Ernest Selwyn Hughes. Their first-born son lived for only two days, and their daughter, Shirley, was handicapped. She devoted most of her adult life to the voluntary service of other such people. Another son, John, was stricken with polio at 13, but he later recovered to set a South Australian record in the 120-yard hurdles. He became a lecturer in law at the Adelaide University. He developed such a complex about living in the shadow of his famous father that, at the age of 32, he changed his surname to Bradsen.

A well-known newspaper produced the article from which I am reading. It is one of many such articles that have been produced since the announcement of Sir Donald's death. When one lives in a nation such as Australia, one tends to forget the great achievements of Australians from all walks of life. But when death strikes, sadly, as it has for Sir Donald, after a long and wonderful career we are prompted to take particular note of such articles and to remember his achievements, and also to read more about the wonderful things Australians have achieved. Sir Donald continued to achieve until his death. Earlier speakers referred to the fact that Sir Donald continued to answer personally the enormous amount of correspondence he received.

Such was Sir Donald's generosity that, during our fundraising campaign to create a radiotherapy cancer unit for Wagga Wagga, he was kind enough to supply memorabilia for us to auction. Even after he retired he continued to contribute to Australian sport through his many connections within the cricket industry and through his generosity to his fellow Australians. I will continue to read from this article that caught my attention this morning. It has been such informative reading that I would encourage all the people of New South Wales, and indeed Australia, to take the time to read the articles that have been produced. They will certainly prompt them to remember the great achievements of Sir Donald and they will also make them proud to know that such a great Australian represented them on the world stage.

Cricket was not the only sport in which Sir Donald excelled. For years he played golf off scratch. He was forced to use a baseball grip because the countless pounding of bat on ball enlarged the muscle between his thumb and forefinger to the extent that the interlocking grip became impossible. He also excelled at tennis. In 1939 he won the South Australian Squash Championship by beating Davis Cup player John Turnbull in the final, three to two. When England toured Australia in 1932-33 they introduced bodyline tactics as a means of curbing Sir Donald Bradman's gluttonous appetite for runs. Umpires did not interfere when Harold Larwood and company hurled down short-pitched balls to a packed leg side at the unhelmeted batsmen.

The Don, refusing to turn himself into a target, repeated outside his leg stump and attempted to slash the ball through the offside. He tried to force the bowler to weaken the leg side field by putting extra men on the off. In 52 tests Sir Donald Bradman played 80 innings for 6,996 runs at an average of 99.94, a mark that surely

will stand for all time. Sir Donald regarded as technically his best innings a flawless 254 when Australia was facing an English total of 425 in the Lord's test in 1930. At the time he was just 21. He recalled:

It was the nearest to technical perfection.

Apart from one or two exceptions, every ball went where I intended it to go. I never hit the ball anywhere but in the middle of the bat and I never lifted one off the ground until the stroke from which I was out, to the best catch I ever saw.

Pursuant to sessional orders business interrupted.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

TAFE FUNDING

Mr O'FARRELL (Ku-ring-gai—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [5.15 p.m.]: I wish to speak about education in the electorate of Ku-ring-gai. I am angry about it. I suppose I should not be, because I am reminded that I was advised by the Treasurer after last year's budget that the only additional educational expenditure in my electorate for the whole of this year is \$20,000 to fund improvements to Wahroonga Primary School. I am pleased to report that those improvements have been made, albeit five years later than anticipated. Like many members of this House, on Monday morning I was sitting in my office attending to electorate appointments. A young man who lives at Gordon came in to see me. I will not mention his name because I do not want to embarrass him. He is in his fourth year of a plumbing apprenticeship.

This young man went to enrol in certificate four in plumbing technology at North Sydney TAFE and he paid his \$235 registration fee. He has been told that there will not be a place for him in that course and, as a result, his apprenticeship will be delayed by six months. I am angry because this is exactly akin to what would happen to a child who enrolled in kindergarten, who gets to grade three but is told there is not a place for him or her. We deserve to have these facilities better funded. This Government should fund these facilities better. I know from this young man that he is not the only person in this situation. He has a friend who is in an identical situation, and I have been told by those who are involved in the course at TAFE that they are glad this issue is about to be aired because it is common across the sector.

My anger increased when I went back to last year's budget paper and looked at TAFE. In the budget papers produced by this Government the first priority listed for the TAFE system is "assisting people to develop skills that are needed by industry and ensuring that training better meets the needs of customers". There can be no more pressing need. This man is in the fourth year of his apprenticeship, but because of this Government's failure to fund North Sydney TAFE his apprenticeship is about to be delayed for six months. Those involved in TAFE training tell me that this is happening across the city. But it gets worse. When I further look at the budget papers for last year not only do I see that enrolments in TAFE courses across the State have increased and are increasing but also that staff numbers are being cut.

When I examine the budget papers not only do I see those figures, but I also see that \$50 million has been slashed by this Government out of TAFE in this year. I am concerned about what this Government is doing to assist people such as my constituent, a fourth-year apprentice plumber, to complete his apprenticeship and get on with his life. I am angry because this Government appears heartless to this person and to many others like him across Sydney. I am angry because not only are my primary schools and my high schools being inadequately funded by this Government, but because this is a demonstrated case of technical education being underfunded and it having an impact on people's lives.

It is well beyond time that contracts were entered into and that, just as a kindergarten student who starts at a government primary school is assured of a future place for his or her primary school education, those who are enrolled in TAFE courses for their apprenticeships and those who are passing their exams each year are also guaranteed a continued place. Government bureaucracy and a lack of funding by the Carr Government are affecting this young man's life. It is a disgrace. I am concerned about it. I expect the Minister not only to provide me with an explanation but also to provide an explanation to those who live on the North Shore of Sydney as to why this Government continues to cut back TAFE funding in our area.

Mr BILL SNODGRASS AND THE NRMA

Mr E. T. PAGE (Coogee) [5.20 p.m.]: It is a sad time for corporate democracy and a particularly sad day for the NRMA when a longstanding member, in seeking to call a special meeting of members to put right a

couple of wrongs, collects nearly 200 member signatures—100 more than required under the constitution—delivers them to the NRMA, and is then threatened and browbeaten by NRMA lawyers who tell him that if he persists in calling such a meeting he will suffer severe legal consequences. That member is then issued with an injunction from calling the meeting. The member, Bill Snodgrass, is then dragged to the Supreme Court to fight the injunction. One man with no legal training is lined up against the NRMA's senior counsel, his junior, three solicitors and a posse of in-house lawyers who twice threaten him again with their huge court costs if he persists with his request to call a special meeting. What a way to treat an NRMA gold card member.

Bill Snodgrass interrupted his Christmas holidays to defeat that NRMA injunction, and won his argument. The Supreme Court judge hearing the case not only expressed irritation that the NRMA had refused to resolve the matter out of court but said that Snodgrass was within his legal rights to call a meeting and that the rules of the NRMA allowed him to call a special meeting of members and to put the two motions. Snodgrass was awarded costs. Luckily for the NRMA, Snodgrass' costs were a mere fraction of what the NRMA's costs would have been—costs that are paid by NRMA members, including me. Instead of accepting that court decision and allowing the meeting to go ahead, the NRMA is bent on spending even more of its members' money—a lot more—by taking Snodgrass to the Court of Appeal. This time he must pit himself, as a lay person, against three judges and an even bigger army of NRMA-paid lawyers trained in Court of Appeal strategies and tactics.

What is Mr Snodgrass seeking? He is seeking nothing for himself; he is seeking simply the payment of a \$528,000 costs order made in May last year in favour of longstanding director Richard Talbot, who ran up the bill during his legal challenge to the demutualisation of NRMA Insurance. The NRMA has promised to pay but has rejected six separate offers from Talbot to settle the matter. Snodgrass wants only to have these costs paid forthwith, but the NRMA is blocking every attempt to have that happen. The NRMA has dragged its feet for nine months in paying Talbot's costs in the hope that withholding payment might send him broke. It has already forced his resignation from the board as part of the costs payment deal but now it wants to see him crushed. In the meantime, the NRMA has created a lawyer's picnic, spending tens of thousands of dollars every time it goes to court without first seeking any approval from its members, without a single board resolution to spend that money, and without a bit of concern about whether its members' money is being wasted. It cheerfully splashed \$120 million around Sydney last year to pay a battalion of lawyers, accountants and investment bankers to get the demutualisation of its insurance arm on the road, but it will not pay a director's costs that were rightfully incurred.

The other matter Snodgrass wishes to put to a special meeting is the perfectly justifiable and valid requirement that directors facing re-election and new candidates to the board disclose the source of their election funding and the amount provided by donors for both future elections and the 1999 election. In that election, the Nick Whitlam-led Members First faction won all eight vacant board places and ensured that the faction, which has four other members on the board, gained control. I have raised this issue before in the Chamber. The 1999 half-board election resulted in the Members First team receiving generous advertising services from Saatchi and Saatchi, as well as valuable brochure mailing and printing services from NRMA service providers, without any disclosure to the full board of the potential conflict of interest as a result of the provision of those services. That conflict arose when the board later approved key contracts from service providers who had earlier provided board candidates with services without full disclosure to the board by the recipients of those private services. A few months after helping Members First candidates win their board seats, Saatchi and Saatchi received a \$3.7 million advertising contract in controversial circumstances after the intervention of the NRMA board, which sacked another advertiser who had received the same contract a day earlier.

Bill Snodgrass wants to level the playing field for all NRMA board candidates so that this cannot happen again and so that half the board does not feel that it owes favours to service providers. He is also seeking to clean the slate once and for all who paid for the huge advertising spread for Members First candidates led by Nick Whitlam in the 1999 board elections. Why does Nick Whitlam persist in using members' money to muzzle Snodgrass? What has he got to hide? He has refused to settle Talbot's legal bill, so let him meet the cost of calling a special meeting of members. NRMA members should ask themselves what favours are required by those who attended a lunch at \$5,000 a table to raise money for the next campaign run by the Members First faction. The NRMA is spending money like confetti on lawyers but it has cut a contract that gave \$700,000 to the Salvation Army. The winner in this manoeuvre is again Saatchi and Saatchi, which has received another contract while the Salvation Army has been cut out. I am told that that \$700,000 cut jeopardises the Salvation Army's Careline program, which saves lives—but apparently that does not matter to the NRMA.

COFFS HARBOUR FORESHORE DEVELOPMENT

Mr FRASER (Coffs Harbour) [5.25 p.m.]: I advise the House of the magnificent foreshore area at Coffs Harbour, of which I am sure the Minister for Small Business, and Minister for Tourism is well aware. More than 20 years ago this foreshore-jetty area was a scrappy piece of land that no-one really utilised. Three local service clubs—Lions, Apex and Rotary—got together and spent a lot of time and money revitalising that area. In fact, my children played on the foreshore at weekends while I worked with Apex. The amenities in that area are absolutely magnificent: there are barbecues, seating areas and playgrounds for young and older children. It is a safe area for children to play and it abuts the safe Jetty beach.

However, the area also abuts a railway station. During the term of the last Coalition Government, we eventually cleared all commercial rail activity—including the old Bailey's freight depot, Williams Brothers Freight, a bulk cement facility and a pole facility on the jetty—from that foreshore area. At the time, the railway gates were shifted and a new level crossing was built. The area looked pristine—to such an extent that State Rail gave it two national beautification awards for the work at the level crossing and on the area north of it. Everyone was proud of that absolutely magnificent community facility. It was well utilised during the week and on weekends, especially during winter when it was sheltered from the breezes. Many people enjoyed the barbecue facilities that were provided free by the Coffs Harbour City Council and by NorthPower.

The council now conducts ongoing maintenance of the amenities provided by the three local service clubs. It was the dream of the late Bob Bosler, and the then Labor Government gave more than \$300,000 to complete the project. Lindsay Brothers and local business houses and service clubs also did a lot of free work. Unfortunately, State Rail Authority employees and others now tell me that the State Rail land, which previously received two national beautification awards, is in such a state of disrepair that it is an embarrassment to those who use the area. The employees who approached me—I will not disclose their names to the House because they may be victimised in some way—say that they need about \$20,000 a year to return the area to its former beauty and to restore its landscaping. Today's *Coffs Harbour Advocate* states:

One of the DuneCare group, Desnee McCosker, said local rail staff were sympathetic, but the money they previously used to beautify and maintain the land had been 'centralised' and it appeared to be impossible to get State Rail to take the local situation seriously.

'If they gave us some money we could organise Work for the Dole and Community Service workers and really make an impact' ... 'The jetty is the focus of Coffs Harbour and State Rail is not pulling its weight.'

Another DuneCare member, Jane Ireland, said State Rail won a national beautification award for work at the new level crossing, but had totally neglected the area since.

Other problems include concrete being bulldozed into a bushland area during rail work, and a bulldozer that flattened banksia and other trees.

The article refers to attempts to restore the land, and continues:

The efforts include letters from Coffs Harbour City Council and the member for Coffs Harbour, Mr Andrew Fraser, to the Minister for Transport, Mr Carl Scully, and inspections by several senior rail officials who promised action.

No action has been taken. The DuneCare members, Jane Ireland and Desnee McCosker, are great people. They visit the area day in, day out to remove bitou bush and weeds and to try to beautify the area. They want this Government to give them a pittance so that they can continue their work or, alternatively, to provide the money that was previously allocated in the State Rail Authority budget for the maintenance of this magnificent area. An area that the people of Coffs Harbour are very proud of and that tourists love to visit is an eyesore. As I have said, the Minister for Tourism has visited the region and is aware of its beauty. That area, which is owned by State Rail, is going to rack and ruin. I appeal to the Minister for Transport, and Minister for Roads to reallocate money for the restoration of that land. [*Time expired.*]

TALKING ST GEORGE AND SUTHERLAND SHIRE LEADER TENTH ANNIVERSARY

Mr COLLIER (Miranda) [5.30 p.m.]: As a member of State Parliament one has a number of privileges. One of mine is that my electorate work brings me into contact with men and women, organisations and business firms performing wonderful unpaid work which benefits the community and makes the community a better place in which to live. On 19 February I was honoured to attend the tenth anniversary of the Talking St George and Sutherland Shire Leader and to congratulate and thank the volunteers, the management of the Royal Blind Society and, of course, the Leader itself on what I consider to be an outstanding achievement in my community.

To say that this achievement is outstanding is something of an understatement. It is a free, weekly, 90-minute talking newspaper produced entirely by volunteers—volunteer narrators, volunteer producers and volunteer distributors—which brings the local news to the visually impaired and to those who are ill, disabled or simply too frail to hold newspaper. And the focus is on local news. The Sutherland Shire is a very special place. As a resident of the shire I know how much interest my constituents take in local issues, local events and the general wellbeing of the community. I know some people who read the *Leader* from cover to cover, every issue, every week. Calls to my office—and I am sure this applies to the offices of other members—are often based on something someone read in the *Leader*. That is what makes this service so very special.

The Talking St George and Sutherland Shire *Leader* allows people who are visually impaired or print impaired to access the community. It keeps them up to date with the changes taking place in that community. The Talking St George and Sutherland Shire *Leader* allows more than 130 local citizens, who might otherwise not have the opportunity, to be part of and get involved with the Sutherland Shire community—a community they know and love. And the service does not just cover the bland news items; the items chosen for narration are from all sections of the *Leader* and cater for a variety of interests. I am told that they are read onto the tapes by the narrators without abridgment and without embellishment—something which we as politicians might find difficult to do.

The 2000 Olympics gave all Australians a glimpse of the extraordinary contribution volunteers make in our nation's great achievements. But it also made us more aware of the often unrecognised work of volunteers day in and day out. The volunteers of the Talking St George and Sutherland Shire *Leader* are an outstanding example of this. Indeed, on 19 February it was my privilege to present seven of these volunteers with 10-year badges and certificates for their service. Those volunteers were Ray Bowmer, Wynne Carswell, Tom Crozier, Eve Moggs, Ivy O'Dea, Dawn Smith and Peggy Williams. On behalf of all the constituents in the electorate of Miranda I sincerely thank those volunteers, the narrators, the producers and the distributors. I thank them for their unselfish commitment and dedication to such a wonderful service over the years.

Mr Ern Loxley, a recipient of the Talking *Leader*, spoke at the function and said that the Talking St George and Sutherland Shire *Leader* certainly made a difference to his life. I thank the Royal Blind Society and congratulate particularly the talking newspaper co-ordinator, Mr Brett Wightman, on the 10-year milestone for talking newspapers in the Sutherland Shire. On behalf of my constituents I thank and congratulate the *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader* newspaper, its editor, Mr Jim Burrell, and its management and staff for providing the local news and commentary, the raw material, free of charge to the society and its volunteer workers. The volunteers, the Royal Blind Society and the *Leader* have come together to form a wonderful partnership that allows the visually impaired and print impaired to have greater enjoyment of life. And that, in anyone's language, is an outstanding achievement.

SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS AMBULANCE AND RENAL DIALYSIS SERVICES

Ms SEATON (Southern Highlands) [5.35 p.m.]: Tonight I wish to speak about ambulance and renal dialysis services in my electorate. Most of us were horrified to read earlier in the week reports about the dramatic increase in delays in the time it takes for ambulances to attend people's homes. My electorate has borne the brunt of the problem with the death of a patient last year in the Bowral area as a result of an ambulance being called from an on-duty location at Picton, some 45 minutes away, rather than summoning an on-call person who was three minutes away from the patient. But that would have involved an additional cost for the Ambulance Service—\$100 or so—and it chose not to do that. In the Southern Highlands we are very sensitive to ambulance delays. Whilst there have been some improvements in the Bowral-based service, many people in the Picton area feel that it has come at their expense.

Recently we won a very hard-fought battle to maintain a full-time ambulance officer at Kangaroo Valley. I was pleased to meet that person at the Kangaroo Valley show a week or so ago. We need more services, more reliable services and adequate response times, particularly with people suffering cardiac problems. A relevant issue is patient transfers. Because there is such a dearth of specialist services, particularly from Bowral public hospital and in the Wollondilly area as well, many patients as a matter of daily business have to be transferred from the Southern Highlands to hospitals in the Sydney metropolitan area.

Many go by ambulance. A Bowral woman who is a renal patient received by mistake a bill from the Ambulance Service for patient transfer. On the basis of that bill the yearly cost for her transport to Sydney is \$300,000, which would probably cover the cost of a renal dialysis unit and the support services at Bowral public hospital. Other patients use ambulances for patient transfers on a daily or weekly basis. Obviously, every

ambulance that is involved in a patient transfer is one less available for on-call emergency work in the local area. Other methods of enabling people to access treatment in Sydney may be appropriate to their medical condition. We need to free up ambulance services. I do not know whether this woman's medical condition would enable her to take another form of transport. The local taxi people have offered to provide transport. That is clearly a matter between her and her specialist to decide.

At \$300,000 for one patient alone means that with a couple of patients the cost of a renal dialysis unit at Bowral hospital could be covered from the saving in transport costs. In addition to the cost savings there is the enormous gain to the quality of life of renal dialysis patients. Those patients tell me that they are virtually married to a machine. The closer they are to their place of treatment, the more of their life is regained. This also applies to their carers. These patients basically spend their lives in a car or an ambulance going backwards and forwards and hanging around hospitals for what might be only an hour's treatment, but it takes up an entire day. Priorities in my area include public ophthalmology, renal dialysis, urology, geriatric services, and drug and alcohol detoxification and rehabilitation.

I have continued to campaign to the chief executive officer of the Southwest Area Health Service. I let the Minister for Health know that I would be speaking on this matter today, and I rather hoped that he would be in the Chamber to respond to this very heartfelt plea from people in the Southern Highlands. We need more specialist services based at Bowral public hospital, and we need to find better ways of transferring patients to specialist services until that facility is available locally so that the patients can have a decent quality of life. This will also enable as many ambulances as possible to be on call and available for emergency services in the Bowral and Picton areas rather than flopping backwards and forwards between the Southern Highlands and Sydney. It is in the interests of the quality of life of those people and in the interest of medical treatment. [*Time expired.*]

MURWILLUMBAH FIREARMS REGISTRY

CRIME PREVENTION PLAN

Mr NEWELL (Tweed) [5.39 p.m.]: Last Thursday, 22 February, the New South Wales firearms registry opened in Murwillumbah. The registry was opened by the Premier, Bob Carr, with the assistance of the Minister for Police, Paul Whelan. With this project came 50 new jobs to the Tweed. As one worker said, "These jobs are a godsend." That may sound dramatic but in regional New South Wales the creation of 50 new jobs is vital, not only to those employed in the registry but to the flow-on effect to the community, small businesses and the housing market. Although those 50 new jobs are very important, the project also highlighted the co-operation of the three levels of government. Located in the same building as the registry are the new Centrelink offices and Murwillumbah's new community health centre, which was also opened the previous week by the Minister for Health, Craig Knowles. The co-operation between the three levels of government has brought to the community not only jobs but valuable services. Unfortunately, that level of co-operation is not common.

Last year I put forward to the community and to the Tweed Shire Council the benefits of the New South Wales Attorney General's crime prevention plan. Unfortunately, Mayor Lynne Beck, despite her enthusiasm for jumping in a vigilante car to patrol Murwillumbah in the wee hours of the morning to hunt down vandals, declined to embrace a comprehensive crime prevention plan for the whole of the shire. Under the Local Government Act councils have a duty to incorporate social planning into their activities and that is exactly what the crime prevention plan is about. Council's role in the plan would be minimal, with one staff member required to be involved on the crime prevention committee. The mayor's attitude makes me wonder just how committed she is to serving the residents to build a safer and better community. She is playing games with the safety of the elderly, our young people and our families. It is a pathetic attitude from a civic leader.

Byron Bay, Ballina and Lismore councils have all entered into the Government's crime prevention plan and have achieved good outcomes. The safety of residents in the community is a high priority for me, as I know it is for the elderly and families in my electorate. We have an excellent, hardworking Police Service and a dedicated Neighbourhood Watch network. Both groups deal with crime and the building of a safer community for all. The police emphasis is on dealing with crime when it happens. Neighbourhood Watch relies on the goodwill of volunteers watching over their local neighbourhood and alerting police to any suspicious activities, as well as taking other safety measures. But there is no one solution to crime, and that is why I have vigorously encouraged the Tweed Shire Council to adopt a crime prevention plan for the Tweed.

Traditionally, we have relied on police and the justice system to prevent and reduce crime in the community. However, it is becoming increasingly clear that much of the work of the police and the criminal

justice system is reactive: it deals with crime after the event. That does not mean that the police and the law enforcement agencies are not doing a good job or that we simply need to increase our resources. Rather, it indicates that relying upon the criminal justice system as the only means of reducing crime is not 100 per cent effective. If we want to prevent crime and reduce its impact upon the community, we have to intervene before crime is committed. Through the New South Wales Attorney General's Department I organised for a crime prevention officer, Patrick Shepherdson, to visit the Tweed at the end of last year. I had discussions with Mr Shepherdson and representatives of the Tweed Shire Council, together with Tweed police.

The following day I attended discussions with council counterparts from the Gold Coast and Mr Shepherdson. As a result, it was agreed that a cross-border crime prevention plan would be put into place. Unfortunately, that does not incorporate the whole of the Tweed because we were "Becked". As a result of Mayor Lynne Beck's refusal to embrace a comprehensive crime prevention plan for the Tweed, a large proportion of the shire residents will not reap the benefits of this State Government initiative. However, I am determined that the whole Tweed will eventually be incorporated into the plan. The New South Wales Government is committed to building a better regional-rural New South Wales by deploying services and jobs to our areas. I am also committed to bringing the very best that this Government can offer to the Tweed, and that includes a comprehensive crime prevention plan for the whole Tweed electorate.

I take this opportunity to thank the Premier and the Minister for Police for delivering on an election campaign promise relating to the New South Wales firearms registry and the 50 new jobs, and for their confidence in the Tweed to professionally deliver a valuable service to the State. The firearms registry was one of five points in a comprehensive policing plan that the Minister for Police put forward prior to the State election. This was the final unit of that plan, the others being the upgrading of police stations at Tweed and Kingscliff, the turning over of prison escort duties to the Department of Corrective Services, the firearms registry and the tactical action group grants, the flying squads. I look forward to reporting to honourable members in the future that a comprehensive crime prevention plan is in place for the whole of my electorate. *[Time expired.]*

Ms NORI (Port Jackson—Minister for Small Business, and Minister for Tourism) [5.44 p.m.]: I congratulate the honourable member on the excellent job he does in representing his area. I have had the pleasure of visiting the area on a number of occasions, particularly for tourism functions, and I can well understand why he would be delighted that the firearms registry has brought with it 50 jobs. He is quite right in saying that in a regional centre that number of new jobs is significant. Notwithstanding those very welcome 50 new jobs, it is the tourism industry that has provided employment to many of his constituents. Therefore, I am concerned to hear that the Tweed Shire Council is somewhat reticent in adopting a crime prevention plan. Nothing would kill a tourism industry faster than a lack of attention to crime issues.

The Tweed is a special area which relies heavily on tourism. The area does well from tourism because it is a great product, and it will continue to be a great product. I support the honourable member and urge him to encourage the local council to adopt a crime prevention plan, not only for the sake of the local community but for the sake of the tourism industry. A safety audit has been conducted in my own area. That is a good way of bringing the community together and improving safety. It provides some ownership to the community, and I congratulate the honourable member on the tack he has taken in relation to this matter.

MELVILLE HIGH SCHOOL FUNDING

Mr STONER (Oxley) [5.46 p.m.]: I draw to the attention of the House the withdrawal of funding for Melville High School, which is located at South Kempsey, an area with one of the State's largest Aboriginal populations. The area suffers massive social disadvantage: the rate of unemployment approaches 20 per cent; 11 per cent of families are sole parent families; and almost 40 per cent of families are low-income families. The area also has high rates of crime and truancy and low school retention rates. Melville High School has 960 students; 90 are Aboriginal, and 35 are students with disabilities. During the past five years the school has done an excellent job utilising funding from the disadvantaged schools program. It has been successful in keeping students at school and providing opportunities and hope for the most disadvantaged in society.

In November last year Melville High School was notified that it was to lose its disadvantaged schools program funding, which is now known as priority schools program funding. There was a massive outcry by the parents and citizens association, teachers and the community at the loss of \$95,000 and 4.6 teaching positions for at least the next four years. All public schools surrounding Melville High School received priority schools program funding. Therefore, my view is that the survey that was undertaken was obviously flawed, a view

shared by the parents and services association and teachers at Melville High School. Unlike some schools, Melville High School did not help parents to complete the survey form. In an article in the *Macleay Argus* dated 27 February Mr Phillip Harvey, a spokesman for the parents and citizens association, was quoted as saying:

We have shown the department that the survey results were flawed and provided data that demonstrated Kempsey and SWR [South West Rocks] were among the most disadvantaged communities in NSW, if not Australia.

Many in the community wrote to the Minister for Education and Training about this obvious inequity and injustice. They even developed their own postcard, "Melville High School needs your help", which they sent to the Minister. I wrote to the Minister on a number of occasions: on 10 November 2000, 14 November 2000 and 18 December 2000, but thus far I have only received an acknowledgment of the most recent letter. Parents and teachers protested outside the Cabinet meeting in Kempsey on 20 November and, unable to avoid the protesters, the Minister spoke to them. However, basically he snowed them, telling them that he would find out if funding could be found from another source. In the same article was also quoted as saying:

He also promised to personally ensure the matter was followed through but to date we have heard nothing from Mr Aquilina or Premier Bob Carr, despite numerous letters.

The parents and teachers were fobbed off. They heard nothing more until last week, when I arranged for the District Superintendent of Education to meet with the parents and teachers in my office. He told them that he could supplement the school with 2.3 staff and around \$21,000 in funding for this year only. That is a long way short of the lost \$95,000 and 4.6 staff. The Minister led these people to believe that he would correct this injustice. However, he has remained true to form—aloof, arrogant and remote from the people he should support. To this point his inaction and cynical manipulation of the parents and teachers has given credibility to a rhyme I have heard on more than one occasion: Nothing could be meaner than Johnny Aquilina. I do not expect a response to this statement. The Minister does not usually respond to me or to letters from my constituents. However, if no better effort is made than that made by the District Superintendent of Education, one can be sure the Labor Party will lose a lot of votes right across the mid North Coast. I will conclude by quoting again from the *Macleay Argus* of 27 February:

The impact of this discussion goes beyond the school. Education is critical to breaking the cycle of disadvantage and unless we can persuade the State Labor Government to provide needed assistance what we will see is increased school drop out rates, increased juvenile justice issues and the costs will be high, both socially and financially, to the community.

WOLLONGONG WOLVES SOCCER TEAM

Mr CAMPBELL (Keira) [5.51 p.m.]: This evening I to speak on a very positive issue and extend my congratulations to the Wollongong Wolves soccer team, the reigning National Soccer League champions and newly crowned Oceania champions. In January the Wollongong Wolves travelled to Port Moresby to participate in the Oceania qualifiers for the chance to represent the Oceania region in the World Club Championship in Spain in July and August this year. Although the conditions were not ideal, they were the same for all teams competing in the World Club Championship qualifiers. The Wollongong Wolves coaching staff and players realised that the conditions could not be changed and that they would have to overcome the conditions to be successful. In the end they had a hard fought 1-0 victory over Tafea, the team from Vanuatu, in the final.

I want to make special mention of coach Ron Corry and assistant coach Stuart Beedie. These two men physically prepared the players for the tournament and kept them focused on the task at hand. Ron and Stuart are great tacticians and both recognised that variable and questionable refereeing standards and playing conditions could play a major role in the outcome of the tournament. Ron and Stuart prepared the players mentally for these challenges. In return for this careful planning and professionalism the players came through with the on-field results.

Each player has his own story to tell, but perhaps the story of Sasho Petrovski becoming an instant hero with seven goals in the first half of Wollongong's first game in Port Moresby is one that should be mentioned. The Port Moresby locals worshipped Sasho from that moment. The story of Jay Lucas is another that is remarkable. Jay turned 16 while in Port Moresby, and recently completed his school certificate. He has also signed a lucrative contract with Southampton to play in the English Premier League. Some very good judges have huge wraps on this young man. Jay is, of course, a product of the local soccer system, having started his playing career with the Corrimal Rangers Junior Soccer Club, a club that I once played for as a junior—very poorly I might say.

Other local players to perform well at the tournament were Scott Chipperfield and Matt Horsely. Both played all their junior soccer in Wollongong and both have gone on to represent Australia. Scott Chipperfield

scored the winning goal in the final that sent the Wollongong Wolves to Spain. Matt Horsley has been an inspiration for the Wolves for more than 10 years and he thoroughly deserves the success he is presently revelling in.

Players such as Paul Reid and David Huxley who work very hard for the team often do not get the recognition and praise they deserve. The role of these players within the team is to protect the defence and move forward to join attacking movements. These two players in particular deserve an enormous amount of credit for their hard work and dedication to the team. The Wollongong Wolves defence deserves a great deal of credit also. In the seven games played, the Wolves conceded only two goals. That is an amazing performance considering the playing conditions, and the skills and speed of some of the opposition.

In particular George Souris—not our George Souris, but Wollongong's George Souris—is noted for his outstanding play and legendary sense of humour. George is a real team player and is always willing to give just that little extra effort to ensure success. The players were confined to the hotel when not playing. George Souris is the team clown and a practical joker. He kept people well entertained. George also started his own barber shop and shaved off the hair of a number of players. George was joined in defence by Alvin Ceccoli, Ben Blake, Paul O'Grady and David Cervinski. Together those players proved to be a miserly defence that gave nothing away to the opposition.

On the rare occasions that the defence did make a mistake, they could be confident in the skills of the goalkeepers, Grant Barlow and Daniel Beltrame. These two men were rotated during the tournament with Daniel Beltrame making what has been touted as a five million dollar save by *Illawarra Mercury* soccer writer Phil Murphy. Goalkeeping is a skill based very much on confidence and with the strong showing of those two young goalkeepers in Port Moresby their confidence is sure to be sky high.

The Wollongong Wolves camp was very much aware of the problems players could encounter in the humid conditions playing in Port Moresby. One player in particular, Stuart Young, had severe problems with dehydration and heat stress, but the management of the team ensured that those problems were overcome. With a full squad of 22 players at his disposal coach Ron Corry employed a policy of rotating his players. The major reason was to give players a break and a rest period, and also to expose some of the younger and less experienced players in his squad to the standard of football being played in this tournament.

Players such as Beren Sullivan, Stephen Dimitrievski, Andrew Smith, Daniel Aldridge, George Nohra and Scott Whalan were all given the opportunity to tour and gain first-hand experience of exactly what is needed to become a regular first team player in the National Soccer League. Dino Menillo and Robbie Stanton also made significant contributions to the win. Once again I take the opportunity to congratulate the Wolves on their recent success and wish them well in the World Club Championship in Spain in August.

Ms NORI (Port Jackson—Minister for Small Business, and Minister for Tourism) [5.56 p.m.]: It would be difficult for anyone not to have noticed the pride with which the local member spoke about this team. We should congratulate him for the enthusiasm he has displayed, and not only as a former junior. I do not believe he told the House that he is a former member of the board of directors of the club. Obviously, he has supported the club and shown a great deal of interest in it. I join with him in congratulating the Wollongong Wolves, the coach, the assistant coach and the players. Honourable members may not have thought about it but there is a bit of a tourism angle here. It is terrific to know that a team from Wollongong will play in Spain. They will highlight and profile that wonderful part of New South Wales known as "The Gong" and, hopefully, a few more people will visit as a result of their success, not only as players but also as ambassadors.

EMERGENCY CALLS

Mr DEBNAM (Vaucluse) [5.57 p.m.]: I speak about emergency call arrangements. On Sunday 18 February just after 5.00 p.m. I was in Old South Head Road just north of Rose Bay and saw the aftermath of an attempted bag snatch. I followed a fellow running up the street and when he got into a car I followed that car for some five or six minutes. During that time my wife and I attempted to make an emergency call to the police to say that we were following a bag snatcher. My concern is not with this particular incident but with the personal experience of the difficulties of trying to make an 000 emergency call.

Every member of this House would be aware of a number of media stories and constituent concerns about the 000 line and the delays inherent in the system. My recent personal experience certainly focused my mind on it and I would like to address that issue. My wife and I made two calls to 000. The Telstra operator

answered the first call and tried to put us through to the police. The phone rang and rang trying to get through to the police and then it dropped out. I do not know for how long it rang because I have not timed the tape from Telstra of that particular call, but it rang for a considerable period of time. We rang 000 once again and the Telstra operator once again tried to get through to the police. The phone rang for 40 seconds before the Telstra operator in frustration said that he would try another number.

The police answered that call and we spent a number of minutes trying to explain the sense of urgency. We had a feeling that the reaction that we were getting over the telephone was simply that it was only a bag snatch. We were attempting to explain that we were actually still following the bag snatcher, who was by that stage in a car. We gave police the details of the people in the car and a description of the car. I hope that that incident will be satisfactorily resolved through the efforts of local police.

The young lady who was attacked was certainly traumatised by the incident and I hope it will be resolved quickly. However, it raises two issues. I was very concerned to find out from Telstra that there is one call centre operating in New South Wales and one in Melbourne. I am not sure whether our call was handled by Melbourne or Sydney. It could have been handled by Melbourne, but it certainly raises the necessity for a local call centre. Taking economic efficiency in relation to emergency calls to the extreme by saying there will be a call centre interstate is absurd when one is dealing with an emergency call. However, the call centre should be local to avoid any confusion about the location that one is calling from. I am aware that with caller identification, Telstra can tell where a call from a fixed line is coming from.

Mr George: That does not work either.

Mr DEBNAM: I am told that does not work either. An increasing percentage of phones are obviously mobile phones and Telstra has not yet invested sufficient money to show which tower one is calling through. There are problems in the interface between Telstra and police. Police take about 14 million calls a year on the emergency line, two-thirds of which are nuisance calls. In my one experience of trying to get through, we had a drop-out on the first call and no answer for 40 seconds on the second call. I have written to the chief executive of Telstra expressing my concerns about the use of an out-of-State call centre and the potential for confusion over locations. I do not understand why people in New South Wales should put up with that. The emergency services in New South Wales should call on Telstra to make absolutely certain that calls go through a call centre in New South Wales to avoid any further confusion.

I ask the Minister for Police to address my concerns resulting from the experience I have referred to. My second call was redirected to another number after ringing for 40 seconds. Clearly, there are real problems in the interface between Telstra and the emergency service. I do not know what the problem is or whether the emergency services were having particular difficulties on the afternoon of Sunday 18 February. It is time we had a good look at the emergency calls and the arrangements for them. I call on the Minister for Police to urgently review the call centre arrangements and the interface between Telstra and emergency services for all calls in New South Wales. As I said at the outset, there are continual problems with emergency calls to the Ambulance Service. I am not sure how many calls to the fire brigade result in problems, but there are certainly problems with calls to police. It is time to fix the problem, because a loss of life could result.

Ms NORI (Port Jackson—Minister for Small Business, and Minister for Tourism) [6.01 p.m.]: I cannot comment at a technical level on the matter raised by the honourable member for Vaucluse. I undertake to draw the honourable member's concerns to the attention of the Minister for a direct reply.

WORONORA BRIDGE OPENING

BANKSTOWN REGIONAL AIRLINES PROPOSAL

Ms MEGARRITY (Menai) [6.02 p.m.]: I reflect on a very important day in the life of my electorate: Sunday 11 February 2001. On that day there were two significant events which could be subtitled the good news and the bad news. First, the good news is that shortly after 9.00 a.m. the Premier, the Minister for Transport, my colleagues the honourable member for Heathcote and the honourable member for Miranda and I jointly opened the new Woronora Bridge, which is worth almost \$50 million. It is true to say that the real value to my community cannot be measured in dollars. The opening was an extraordinary day of community celebration. Honourable members may have seen news reports of thousands of people walking across the bridge, accompanied by pipe bands with waving banners. It was an extraordinary day with people expressing their feelings about how good it was to have the bridge, and what it would mean to the everyday lives of people who will use it.

As we were walking across the bridge I thought about its construction process. I was able to experience the sensation of what is called "incremental launching", a term which I was not aware of until I stood on the bridge while it was being built on my side of the river in the electorate of Menai, and incrementally launched to the other side of the river, which is in the electorate of Heathcote. One of the benefits of that incremental launching, which was noted by many people on the day, was that it saved environmental damage to the river. It was not necessary to put heavy machinery in the river. Other environmental benefits of the bridge were the anti-pollution devices and the wetland that was constructed in the Jannali reserve, that will intercept and biologically contain contaminants before the water enters the river.

Run-off from roads can contain pollutants such as litter, tyre and brake particles, oil and spilled fuel. On that day many residents commented on that, because environmental protection is important to shire residents. Some of the first vehicles across the new bridge were the emergency services vehicles, including the very important bushfire protection and rescue vehicles. One of the main reasons for building the bridge was to allow better access for vehicles following the terrible bushfires of the past. At two local ovals, one on either side of the river, community activities continued well into the afternoon. I take this opportunity, as I did on the day, to pay tribute to the Government for delivering on its commitment to provide this vital link to the shire. I acknowledge the efforts of the Minister for Transport, who saw this project through to fruition. He signed the contract for the bridge so that my community would have it regardless of the outcome of the 1999 election. He made a commitment to people and he delivered on it.

The engineering feat at the hands of Barclay Mowlem Construction was a great job. Engineers came from all around world to check out this bridge, which, I am informed, had a vertical curve and a horizontal curve. On the day I did not have the opportunity to acknowledge and thank the Roads and Traffic Authority and the local community for organising and conducting all the activities. The local Lions and Rotary groups headed up the community effort and many people volunteered many hours towards setting up and conducting the activities on the day. They really showed their community spirit. The money raised from the gold coin donation to cross the bridge, and other activities, has gone to four local charities. I have heard that the proceeds may be as high as \$50,000, which is another good outcome.

I turn to the bad news. Immediately after the bridge opening celebration I went to another community gathering, one which was held in a state of anger. I attended a rally at Bankstown that was protesting against the Federal Government's announcement of the expansion of Bankstown Airport to take regional and jet aircraft. When I arrived at that rally I was greeted with a very different feeling from that at Woronora. Last night in this House we debated the impact of the proposed expansion on communities in south-western Sydney, particularly those in my electorate who live close to the runway, as I do. There has been no consultation between the Federal Government and local communities. People have vowed to fight this lose-lose proposal. It is bad news; there is no bright side for us at all. In a letter to me, one of my constituents wrote:

Any expansion would seriously affect the health, well-being and lifestyle of my family. The need to curtail healthy outdoors activities because of noise and frequency of aircraft, sleep deprivation and increased stress levels would be certain outcomes. There could be implications from an educational point of view for my child who attends a nearby public school and studies at home.

There will be pollution and noise emissions. As I said last night, our community will not stand for it and we certainly will not compromise.

WILDERNESS NOMINATIONS

Mr TORBAY (Northern Tablelands) [6.07 p.m.]: In October last year I raised in this House some of the anomalies that allow for irresponsible nominations under the current Wilderness Act. That creates problems in the northern region because of the perception that many areas are considered suitable for wilderness nomination. Since I spoke on the subject I have attended several meetings of concerned citizens and land-holders. I have also received numerous representations from organisations and individuals on this contentious subject. Clearly, some action must be taken to bring a bit of commonsense into the implementation of the wilderness nomination process in the long-term streamlining of the legislation.

Wilderness nominations, whether sincere or driven by extreme ideologies, set in motion a time-consuming and extensive consultation process that can take up to two years. It is expensive for taxpayers and puts land-holders and communities in an invidious position for too long. That is certainly the case at Torrington in my electorate, which has been through this process on a number of occasions. The process always results in the statement that there are no grounds for it to proceed. Community members volunteer their time and energy to assist the National Parks and Wildlife Service and they are concerned that the current processing of nominations is creating unnecessary community disquiet.

Committee members are also concerned that the dissension is wrongly giving the National Parks and Wildlife Service a bad name and interfering with the valuable linkages between the service and the community. In my view they have made the sensible suggestion that procedures be changed to allow co-operation between units within the National Parks and Wildlife Service so that local staff, nominees and wilderness assessors can meet to examine nominations which may not meet the criteria. At this stage a rejection of the areas not meeting the wilderness criteria could prevent the current lengthy rounds of notification involving affected land-holders; a rejection could cut it off at that point rather than go through the process knowing that it is going to fail.

At present, following nomination a wilderness proposal is considered by the National Parks and Wildlife Service [NPWS] Conservation Programs and Planning Division. The change suggested is that at this point in the process the area manager and ranger staff relevant to the proposed nominated area be consulted. If there is concern about the proposal or a portion thereof, a meeting should be arranged between the NPWS area manager and ranger, the Conservation Programs and Planning Division, the NPWS wilderness manager and the nominee. That meeting would determine whether the entire or part of the nomination could proceed towards the identification stage.

If the nominee agrees, then the proposal can be altered and, depending on the result, follow the usual procedures. If the nominee does not agree, then the NPWS would have to decide whether to proceed, based on criteria defined in the Act. That consultative step with the NPWS could thus avoid enormous and unnecessary community alarm. It would also save the time and money involved in a detailed investigation of areas that are plainly unsuitable for wilderness identification. The involvement of those NPWS sections and the nominee ensures checks and balances in the process. I urge the Minister to consider this alternative path. We are trying to provide a solution, rather than merely raising concerns. I believe it would improve relations between the NPWS and the community. Although it may require employment of more staff to make the initial evaluations, I feel confident that the streamlined process would generate considerable cost savings and efficiencies in the longer term.

Private members' statements noted.

[Mr Acting-Speaker (Mr Lynch) left the chair at 6.12 p.m. The House resumed at 7.30 p.m.]

DEATH OF SIR DONALD BRADMAN

Debate resumed from an earlier hour.

Mr MAGUIRE (Wagga Wagga) [7.30 p.m.]: Earlier I referred to Wagga Wagga as a city of good sports and one that has produced sportsmen and sportswomen over many years. They include the Mortimer brothers, Greg Brentnall, Steve Elkington, Greg Lawson, Mark Taylor, Michael Slater, Terry Daniher, Carey, Kelly, Roche, McMullen, Ellwood, Sterling and Weizel—the list goes on. The city continues to produce sportsmen and sportswomen. Most recently at the Paralympic Games Lee Cox was the winner of a silver medal. The city is rightly proud of his achievement at those Games. Wagga Wagga has a dedicated Hall of Fame into which we induct achievers from the diverse sporting sphere of our city. It is a legacy to the sportsmen and sportswomen who contribute to our sporting fabric, as Sir Donald Bradman contributed to the sporting fabric of our nation.

There may never be another Sir Donald Bradman, but his sportsmanship, humanitarianism, professionalism, dedication and love of sport should act as an example to all future sportsmen and sportswomen. On Sunday 25 March the nation will come to a standstill when a public memorial service is televised nationally to honour Sir Donald Bradman. This is a very fitting tribute to a great man. The people of Wagga Wagga are extremely proud and parochial about our city of good sports, sportsmen and sportswomen, and achievers. Wagga Wagga is a better place for having those achievers, and Australia and the world are better places for having had and loved an icon. Vale Sir Donald Bradman 1908-2001.

Mr MILLS (Wallsend) [7.32 p.m.]: I am pleased to join honourable members in support of the motion moved by the Premier to pay tribute to Donald Bradman on the occasion of his death this week. I acknowledge the learned contributions of many members of Parliament about his life and career. Anyone older than 50 years who speaks in this debate is likely to have some Bradman stories of his own. Most of the speakers to date have been younger than that. I well recall from my childhood the first time my father missed my birthday. Looking back at the records, I realise that it must have been in November 1946. I wondered why he missed my birthday. When I was a few years older he told me. He had missed my fifth birthday because he had gone to Brisbane to see Don Bradman bat in the 1946-47 series. That was the one chance in his life to see Don Bradman bat, and what a wonderful exhibition he provided.

Don Bradman scored 187 in the only innings in which Australia batted. The Poms were caught on a sticky wicket and were quickly out twice. In the typical brush with fame style, my memory of that occasion is that my father missed my birthday for the first time. Undoubtedly, the books and coaching pictures of Don Bradman batting were given to me as presents by my father to make up for having missed my birthday. The coaching book in foolscap size was one of my most treasured possessions throughout my youth.

The politicians versus the press cricket matches associated with the New South Wales Parliament do not happen very often now. However, I had another opportunity to link up with the Bradman legend in a 1993 cricket match when the former Premier John Fahey arranged to have the politicians-versus-media cricket game played at the Bradman Oval at Bowral. I was tickled pink that I was selected in the team to represent the politicians. The Bradman Museum had been opened and the atmosphere was truly magical. I have many wonderful memories. One memory was of my car, festooned with Labor slogans, parked outside the Premier's home on the night before the game. The media, who were present for the barbecue at John Fahey's place, wondered who would have the gall to park a car loaded with Labor slogans outside the Premier's house. We had an enjoyable night and a great game.

On that occasion the press beat the politicians. I acknowledge that another Don, the honourable member for Ballina Don Page, top scored for the parliamentarians that day with 92 not out. Something that had never happened to me before occurred—and I had played quite a bit of cricket in my younger years. I injured a groin muscle in the final over of the press innings and I dropped down to bat at number eleven because I could hardly walk. My runner was run out without my facing a ball. That was the end of the politicians' innings, and we were about 17 runs short of the press total. Nathan Vass from the *Newcastle Herald* made a good score for the media contingent that day.

Mr D. L. Page: Who was your runner?

Mr MILLS: I will not dob in my runner, but it was not Ron Phillips, John Fahey or Paul Whelan, and it certainly was not Brian Langton, who also injured himself in the course of that day. It was a memorable occasion and the atmosphere at Bradman Oval was magical. I will treasure the memory to my grave of my association with that place where the great Don Bradman grew up and first played cricket. I remember a school prize I received in 1954 for the sub-scholarship examination in Queensland, where I grew up. The book I received was *Farewell to Cricket* by Don Bradman. On Monday evening this week I took out the book and started to read it. I found it difficult to break away to attend a couple of meetings on Monday night. My wife is not a cricket fan; she is more of a cricket widow and had to put up with my absences on Saturday afternoons for many years.

Shortly after she came to Australia I took her to see a test match, Australia playing the Englishmen at Sydney in the 1970-71 series. Bill Lawrie played a long innings and, afterwards, my wife said, "Sorry, I am not going back." However, my wife took the book from me on Monday night and I did not see it again. She has enjoyed reading it. She was attracted by the stories that referred to an Australia before I was born. As she had come from overseas, she had not had an opportunity to see that. She was enthralled by the wonderful stories in Don Bradman's book *Farewell to Cricket*. That is an indication of the power of the man and the stories he told. He has reached out to the modern generation of Australians. Even people who were not born in Australia and do not particularly like cricket can appreciate his life.

My first cricket bat carried the stamp of Don Bradman's signature. A previous speaker said that cricket is our unifying national game, and it is. None of the football codes, even Australian Rules, achieves that status. Tennis does not achieve it either. Since the Don's retirement women's cricket has developed and prospered. A women's team associated with Wallsend District Cricket Club, of which I am honoured to be a patron, competes in the Sydney competition and is part of the progression and development of the women's game. The Australian women's cricket team are the world champions, or have at least been finalists in international competitions.

I certainly look forward to the day—and I rather suspect the Don would have also looked forward to it—when the media and the sponsors give women's cricket the same attention as they do to men's cricket. It is as entertaining a game as men's cricket, it just needs that kind of promotion to help the characters become international heroes. Don Bradman became a hero during the Depression of the 1920s and 1930s because of his uncommon deeds and his rare talent. He became a hero also because he was comfortable with his successes; they did not spoil him. He followed his cricket playing career with a distinguished career as a selector and administrator. He went from hero to icon to legend. In my youth Australia's Mr Cricket, either as chairman of selectors or chairman of the Board of Control, was Don Bradman. One heard a lot of him on the radio.

It is 52 years since he retired. No player anywhere in the world has come near his record of achievement. Don Bradman's death will not diminish his legendary status in cricket in Australia and around the world. The death of Don Bradman helps to unify the nation, just as his deeds on the field during his career helped to unify the nation, and did his deeds off the field did during the 1950s and 1960s. He will never be forgotten. He continues to make Australia proud.

Mr GLACHAN (Albury) [7.41 p.m.]: Like my colleagues, I have wonderful memories of the legend that was Don Bradman, a man said to have been the greatest cricketer the world has ever seen. I believe that if cricket is played 100 years from now, Don Bradman will still be revered and held in the highest esteem. He was an outstanding Australian and certainly an outstanding cricketer. He was a country boy, born in Cootamundra. He grew up in Bowral. He had country values and he retained those values all his life. In all circumstances he acted with dignity and sincerity, and whatever he did he did for the advancement of cricket. He acted as an outstanding ambassador for this country of ours.

I actually saw him bat on a number of occasions. Between the ages of eight and 10 I lived in the eastern suburbs of Sydney, a short walking distance from the Sydney Cricket Ground. I had a cousin who lived not far away, and in the summer school holidays I would pester my mother for sixpence. When I got that sixpence I would arrange to meet my cousin on the way to the Sydney Cricket Ground. We took our sandwiches with us, paid our sixpence, and spent the day on the hill watching whatever cricket was on. We did not know beforehand who would be playing, whether it would be a Sheffield Shield or a test match. We did not care, we were just kids and it was somewhere to spend the day. We ran around on the hill, picked up bottles, collected the deposits and spent the money on whatever we could afford to buy. There was always another boy—one we had never met before—who had a ball, and another who had a bat or a piece of wood, and we would have an impromptu game on the hill regardless of what was going on on the field. Sometimes I would watch the cricket with my cousin.

I still remember seeing Don Bradman bat, and I remember what a remarkable player he was. There was something about the way he played his strokes that captured your interest. Even as a child I knew he was a great batsman. I saw many of the greats we often talk about. I saw Keith Miller and Ray Lindwall. I was a great fan of Ray Lindwall because in those days every child wanted to be a fast bowler. Today they all want to be a spin bowler like Shane Warne. The interesting thing about Ray Lindwall was that he was also a great rugby league player; he played for St George.

Mr Thompson: He went to Marist Brothers, Kogarah.

Mr GLACHAN: Good. Another thing that is vivid in my memory is seeing Keith Miller being given out LBW when he was hit on the chest, because he was down on one knee playing a stroke. He was hit right in the centre of the chest and was given out LBW. My cousin and I were only little fellows, but all the way home we argued about whether you could be given out leg before wicket if you were hit on the chest. We could not fathom that and we talked about it all the way home. They were great days, and I was privileged to see that man bat. In those days Donald Bradman toured England—after all, it was the tests against England that we were all interested in; we did not care a lot about the others. I should also say that in those days it was not England, it was the Marylebone Cricket Club, the MCC. That one cricket club in London selected players from all over England to represent it, and it was not England that we played against; it was the MCC.

In those Depression days there were players and gentlemen, and they came in through different gates. I remember that when the players came in they opened their own gates but when the gentlemen came in someone in a white coat opened the gate for them. That distinction between professionals and amateurs was carried to an extreme, particularly in the United Kingdom, where it seemed to be very important. It was not so important in Australia, of course. In those days, before the Second World War particularly, when one went on a tour it was a six-week journey by ship to England, the long tour of England, and then six weeks back again. Players were away for a long time and they played for a pittance. The remuneration was minor but there was always the honour of playing for your country and distinguishing yourself on the cricket field. That seemed to be enough for them. One would wonder why, but that seemed to be the case.

Don Bradman must have been one of the few cricketers to have a special form of cricket developed to combat his skill. The bodyline attack was developed simply to deal with Don Bradman. I do not think he actually complained about it openly or publicly. He just went about scoring runs despite the fact that people were aiming the ball at him—at the man—rather than playing the game as they were expected to. During the Depression he brought hope to Australians. He gave them something else to think about. His success was something else they could think about and rejoice in rather than think about the difficulties they had in their daily lives. My mother, who is now 92, often tells me stories about how tough things were in the Depression.

Although people in our society think it is pretty tough today—and some of them are finding it difficult by present-day standards—those Depression days were hard for many people. My mother tells me about eating only two bananas in three days, walking around looking for jobs, having holes in your shoes, trying to save tram fares, desperate to get work when no work was available. Things were pretty tough but Don Bradman's performance on the cricket field seemed to lift people's spirits and give them some form of hope. He was around in the days when winning the Ashes, beating England, was the most important thing. The ashes of the stumps were burnt and put in an urn, and they became a symbol of the battle between Australia and England.

Don Bradman was a remarkable person. Recently, I learned that he was a great squash player a remarkable tennis player, a remarkable golfer and an outstanding musician. I did not know that. I thought of him as being the world's greatest cricketer. I had no idea that he had all these other talents. He was a modest man of strong Christian values who always tried to live by the code of conduct instilled in him by his father and the church, and which he believed was right. He always did what he believed was right regardless of what that might cost him in popularity. I agree that he was not only the greatest cricketer in the world but one of the greatest sons that Australia has ever produced. His name will continue to be revered for a long time by Australians and by people all over the world wherever cricket is played.

Mr THOMPSON (Rockdale) [7.50 p.m.]: Much has already been said about Don Bradman and his outstanding attributes as a sportsman and a human being. I do not intend to go over all that ground, particularly as earlier today my colleague in the St George district, the honourable member for Georges River—who has an outstanding association with cricket, especially in the St George district—spoke at length and in detail about Bradman and his involvement with our district. On being recruited by the St George District Cricket Club, Bradman initially lived in Penshurst, but soon after he moved to live with the Cush family in Frederick Street, Rockdale. I was born and bred in Villiers Street, three streets away, and I now live four streets away. That area is well and truly in my electorate of Rockdale. It is noteworthy that a couple of months ago Rockdale City Council resolved to seek heritage listing of the old Cush property because of the Bradman association.

An outstanding family in its own right, the Cushs would no doubt agree that Don's association with the house is a good enough reason to support the council's decision. The heritage proposal will be advertised shortly and a period of community consultation will follow, which will ultimately lead to the formal heritage listing of the Don's old home in Rockdale. An intriguing aspect of Don Bradman's life was his interaction, or perhaps lack of it, with those other great Australian cricketers Bill O'Reilly and Jack Fingleton. The general view was that there was a degree of animosity between those two men and Bradman. Regardless of that, they are both very generous in their praise of Bradman's talents as a batsman and a sportsman. An article in the *Sydney Morning Herald* of 27 February headed "Assessments of a remarkable man" contains the following excerpt from an after-dinner speech delivered by Bill O'Reilly in 1986:

There's never been and never will be in my estimation a batsman so good as that fellow. I don't care how many you like to pour into one—all the Chappells, the Borders and so on. Forget them, they're just child's play compared with Bradman, and I've seen them all. The Yanks talk about Babe Ruth and all that. To hell with Babe Ruth. This boy was a modern miracle.

In the same article is a quote from Jack Fingleton, who is described as a cricketer and writer. Jack was a very gifted writer; he was a man who was very gifted with words. He said:

His fundamental thinking and love of cricket were, if you like, basically sadistic. He loved the crash of the ball against the boundary fence; he delighted in seeing the figures revolve against his name on the scoreboard; he loved to murder bowlers and make the opposing skipper look foolish. There were, as I have written, no deft passes or pretty glides, but every bowler, every fieldsman, every spectator in Bradman's heyday sensed that he was not using a bat so much as an axe dripping with the bowler's blood and agony. He knew no pity; he was remorseless.

I suggest that is a pretty solid endorsement from a fellow who, at times at least, was reputedly at odds with the Don. There was another side to Don Bradman that I was pleased to read about in an article in yesterday's *Sydney Morning Herald* by Anthony Dennis. The article is headed "Aborigines to benefit from an old man's compassion". An excerpt of the report states:

A special "Bradman Memorial Fund" will be set up to help promote and encourage cricket among disadvantaged groups, including indigenous Australians, a segment of society for which Sir Donald developed a strong "social conscience" in the twilight of his long life.

The director of the Bradman Museum in Bowral, Mr Richard Mulvaney, yesterday said Sir Donald's decision to include a reference to indigenous Australians in his instructions for the conduct of the fund was largely influenced by the fact that his son, John, had attended school in Adelaide with an Aboriginal boy.

A strong friendship between the two boys had developed as a result. Over the years John Bradman had talked with his father about the plight of indigenous Australians, which had also influenced Sir Donald's attitude.

Sir Donald was aware that, unlike other major sports, indigenous Australians have never figured prominently at the highest echelons of cricket.

Mr Mulvaney said Sir Donald had expressed particular admiration for the exploits of the Aboriginal cricket team that toured England in 1868, the first Australian team to do so.

Mr Mulvaney said: "Don wanted the game of cricket to reach beyond the traditional boundaries. He did have a social conscience. He recognised that the Aboriginal population was a group that was disadvantaged."

That was one side of Don Bradman about which I knew nothing until I read that article yesterday. I am particularly impressed by it, and that is why I put it on the record. Don Bradman was truly one of Australia's greatest. He was an outstanding champion. He will forever be an Australian legend.

Mr WHELAN (Strathfield—Minister for Police) [7.56 p.m.]: I take this opportunity to join with other honourable members in a tribute to the greatest cricket legend that this nation and, indeed, the world has ever seen. I have heard a number of honourable members say that it will be many years before there is another Don Bradman: There will never be another Don Bradman. His cricket record is there for everyone to see. When he started playing cricket he was self-taught. He did not have the advantage of the modern cricket schools that are available today. He did not have the opportunity to play in either interdistrict cricket as a youngster or grade cricket from grades one to five, as they now play.

Don Bradman played in the local Bowral team. As history records, his prodigious nature as a batsman enabled him, as a 12-year-old, to play with adults and score century after century. He was always destined for greatness. His self-discipline as a youngster is retold in the many books that have been written about him. One of my memories of the many books I have read about Bradman is reading about his extraordinary hand-eye co-ordination. Don Bradman used to practise on an old handball court—a court with three walls, one front wall and two side walls—not with a cricket ball or a tennis ball but with a golf ball. He managed to hit the ball back and forward, not with a cricket bat but with a cricket stump. He would repeatedly hit the golf ball against the wall, wait for it to bounce, then hit it again. I decided that I would try it. I was embarrassed, and I took a lot of other people with me to see if they could do it.

Mr Ashton: That's why you're a member of Parliament.

Mr WHELAN: I was very lucky to be elected to Parliament rather than continue a career in cricket because there was no future there. Cricket is very dear to me. I have been very fortunate to have played the game. I love the game. I have been fortunate, as a member of Parliament, to be the patron of the Western Suburbs cricket side. I make this contribution not only on behalf of all the members of my electorate and myself, but all the cricket fans, particularly those from the western suburbs who revere cricket, the great memories of the bodyline series and the great times that cricket has given to Australia.

Bradman's passing is a time to reflect, and what a great time it is for us to reflect on the condition of Australian sport, and Australian cricket in particular. No cricket team comes within cooee of Australia at present. As I speak, it looks like the Australian cricket team will remain undefeated for the seventeenth time. That augurs well for both sport and the importance of cricket. The passing of Sir Donald Bradman was felt throughout the world. Many members have spoken of Don Bradman's family and the circumstances of his life. Don Bradman was unique and world class. When one considers the meaning of "unique" and "world class", there was only one Don Bradman. And there will be only one Don Bradman.

Mr KERR (Cronulla) [8.00 p.m.]: I intend to speak briefly because Sutherland shire and my electorate have had a long association with cricket, and I want to join in the tributes that have been made to Sir Donald Bradman. I recall a couple of stories that came by way of Peter Fitzsimons. In 1990 Sir Donald Bradman was talking to a number of Australian cricketers. Dean Jones, who had an average of, say, 55—I am speaking arbitrarily—said to Sir Don, "If you were playing cricket these days what do you think your batting average would be?" Sir Don said, "About 50". That made Dean Jones proud because he had bettered that score. Then Sir Donald Bradman added, "But of course, Dean, you have to realise I am now 83."

Another story relates to the great association between Nick Farr-Jones, a great sportsman, and Sir Donald Bradman. Some years ago after Australia won the World Cup, Sir Donald and Lady Bradman and Nick and Angie Farr-Jones arranged to have lunch at one of the better restaurants in Adelaide. When they rang to make the booking the person on the other end of the phone said, "I'll close the restaurant and you can have a private lunch." And they had lunch for about four hours. It was a great association. As I mentioned to the House on a previous occasion, perhaps the best summary of Don Bradman's achievements was given by Sir Robert Menzies in the chapter on cricket in his memoir *The Measure of the Years*. He said:

The great Don Bradman, as I have said on other occasions, defies all rules or definitions. As he is a human being, he must somewhere have had a weak spot, though bowlers found it difficult to discover. The immense *authority* of his batting, the complete justice with which he dealt with each ball on its merits and dispatched it on what seemed to be its predestined errand have made him the undisputed master batsman of my time. Century followed century with almost monotonous inevitability. We could find no fault in him. Yet perfection itself has a sort of sculptural quality.

Sir Donald Bradman captured not only a sport but also a nation because of the qualities he exhibited.

Mr WATKINS (Ryde—Minister for Fair Trading, Minister for Corrective Services and Minister for Sport and Recreation) [8.03 p.m.]: I support the remarks of previous speakers to note the passing of Sir Donald Bradman, Australia's greatest sporting personality. Earlier this year the Premier officially opened the Sydney Cricket Ground's Walk of Fame. Plaques were stationed around the country's most famous and historic sports ground as a permanent tribute to the feats of some of Australia's greatest sportsmen and sportswomen. Of course, Sir Donald Bradman's name was amongst those to be recognised, as it had already been recognised with the opening of the Bradman stand in 1973. The inscription on the plaque which bears his name states:

His prodigious batting feats, beginning with a world record for 52 not out for NSW at the SCG in 1930, have ensured his unique place in Australian sport. With a Test average of 99.94, he was not merely the best but was almost twice as good as most other greats.

There have been many attempts to characterise sporting personalities as greater than the game they played. Champions such as Walter Lindrum, Dally Messenger, Victor Trumper and even Dawn Fraser have all enjoyed the adulation and loyalty of generations of sports lovers. However, none of them has been elevated to the position which Sir Donald enjoyed. In many ways he became bigger than the game itself, although he was always quick to deny that statement. The reaction to his passing, both here and around the world, would seem to indicate that he represented something more than just a game.

It is not hard to understand the reaction here in Australia to the news of Sir Donald's death. He will always hold a special place in this country's sporting and social history. The Don represented many things to many people of different generations. To a country still suffering from the effects of the Depression, he offered hope and showed that determination, skill and courage could overcome tremendous odds. To a country coming out of the aftermath of the Second World War, he provided a focus for renewed national pride as he led his Invincibles to victory in England. In countries which he never even visited, particularly India, he was, and still is, revered as a deity by generations past and present.

Until recently, Sir Donald provided a generous and untiring resource for questions about cricket and life in general to the current generation of Australian children. His life has been celebrated in many different forms: books, songs, plays, television series, stamps, street names, web sites and even as a code for an assault by allied troops in Italy in 1944. One of the most charming and important tributes is the Bradman Museum in Bowral. I had the pleasure of visiting this wonderful place late last year in the company of a former member of this House and current Deputy Chairman of the SCG Trust, Rodney Cavalier, and the former Australian test captain, Ian Craig. It was a rare experience to be able literally to walk through someone's life—to follow that person's growth and development across some of the most turbulent and important stages of our country's history.

Now, with the Don's passing, the end of that extraordinary life can be recorded. English newspapers would simply record, "He's out"—a message that was immediately understood by every cricket follower in the country. Now the banner headlines record, "He's gone"—and we all know that we have been witness to a phenomenon whose name meant achievement, excellence, courage and triumph. He was a unique and sometimes complex character whose life we now celebrate as one of our country's greatest sons.

Mr RICHARDSON (The Hills) [8.06 p.m.]: As sportsmen go, they do not get any better than Don Bradman. A study conducted by Charles Davies and widely reported in the media last year concluded that Don Bradman's test average of 99.94 was so far ahead of that of any other player that he was an absolute freak, the best sportsman the world has ever known, or indeed may ever know. Don Bradman finished playing cricket in 1948, the year before I was born. Yet as a small boy growing up in England and later, after emigrating, here in Australia, I knew and marvelled at his prodigious feats, mainly performed during the Depression years before the war.

We have all heard about how the Don grew up in Bowral and how his interest in cricket was stimulated by his father. Naturally good at all sports, he could have been an equally gifted tennis player or a golfer, and would probably have made more money by so doing. In fact, I heard on the radio yesterday that when he first

took up playing golf he played off a handicap of one. That gives people some idea of the man's innate ability. So good a schoolboy cricketer was the Don that he did not have an average—he never got out. When Bill O'Reilly went in to bowl against the then 17-year-old Bradman at Bowral in 1925 he thought he had the Don's measure. Instead, he was belted all round the ground for 234. The last 50 included four sixes and six fours.

Not surprisingly, the boy from Bowral caught the eyes of the New South Wales selectors and he joined St George the following season, scoring 110 in his first innings. In December 1927 he batted for New South Wales against South Australia, again scoring a century. Two years later, at the age of 20, he was in the Australian team. The Don's debut scores of 18 and one at Brisbane were uncharacteristically low, and he was dropped for the next test. It never happened again. They brought him back for the third test in Melbourne and he scored 79 and 112, making him the then youngest Australian to hit a test century.

There were snide suggestions that he was a one-day wonder who could not sustain his brilliance. He silenced his critics emphatically with an unbeaten 452 not out for New South Wales against Queensland. Bradman the legend was born. In the Ashes series of 1930, in England, the Don scored 974 runs, averaging 139, including 334 at Headingley—309 in a day. Suddenly the press and the public could not get enough of Don Bradman. Can you imagine a newspaper running the headline "He's out" about any other player today not only in full knowledge that the public will know what the headline is about but expecting it to sell papers? In 1932-33 the English retaliated with bodyline bowling, of which Bill Woodfull famously remarked:

There are two sides out there; only one of them is playing cricket."

Bodyline slowed Bradman but it did not stop him. He continued to average 56.57—better than just about every other batsman in history—despite a run-in with the Australian Cricket Board over his journalistic activities. Bodyline was banned the following year and the Don's brilliant run rate resumed. He was public property: a hero who lifted the spirits of a nation during the long, dark years of the Depression. No one could have filled that role better.

Bradman was not only a great athlete and exponent of his sport but also a gentleman and a sportsman. He was never vain or boastful and was always willing to sign autographs and answer mail from his adoring fans. It is this, perhaps more than anything else, that will be the Bradman legacy: he was an ideal to which others can aspire. He put our current test players—as great a team as they are—to shame, with their sledging and foul language. He was a role model par excellence for generations of young cricketers. A non-smoker who drank little and rarely swore, he was married to Jessie for 65 years. He was renowned for his honesty and integrity. As the Prime Minister said of him two days ago:

During the desperate years of the Depression, his prowess on the cricket field lifted the hopes and spirits of the people who at times felt they had little else.

Bradman's extraordinary powers of concentration and recall have probably never been equalled among sports men and women. He could reportedly remember every shot he played, whose bowling he played it to and even how the fielders were placed. He applied the same formidable intellect when at the crease. In the 1980s former England captain Len Hutton wrote:

The Don must have memorised the position of each fielder before the ball was delivered. His agile brain enabled him to play the stroke with maximum safety.

Bradman saw the ball before anyone else could, read which way it would turn and dispatched it with his characteristic cover drive, pull shot or hook shot to the boundary. Hutton also told the story of the shot that should have got the Don out during his world record innings of 334 at Leeds. Bradman ran down the pitch to a slow leg break and slipped. It should have been the end of his innings; the wicket-keeper was ready to whip off the bails. Yet somehow the Don brought out his bat, cut the ball to third man and ran a single.

Offered a job with a stockbroking firm—it was impossible to make a living playing cricket in those days, no matter how popular you were with the crowd—Don Bradman went to live in Adelaide in 1934 and stayed there until his death. He was chairman of Rigby Publishers at the time of the company's takeover by James Hardie Industries a year before I went to Rigby's as General Manager Publishing in 1982. His name was revered throughout the company not just because of his cricketing prowess but because of the type of man he was. I had a chat today with Doug Walters, patron of the Castle Hill RSL Cricket Club, about the Don. He described what Bradman did for cricket as "unmeasurable". "He made cricket", he said.

Doug owes a special debt of gratitude to the Don as he was a selector when Doug was first picked for the Australian team. He recalls reading in a book as a boy that the Don made 100 runs in three overs in a match in the Blue Mountains—they were eight-ball overs in those days, but even so it was a phenomenal feat. "I

presumed he must have been a bloke who played sixes", Doug told me, "but in fact he hardly ever hit sixes because he said you can't get out if you hit them along the ground". Doug was no slouch with the bat himself but he believes we will never see the like of Don Bradman again. The *Daily Telegraph* yesterday described him as "one in 10 billion" and suggested that it could be 100,000 years before there is another Don Bradman. No longer the greatest living Australian, Bradman has become the greatest Australian of the twentieth century—a status that can never be lost.

Mr WEBB (Monaro) [8.12 p.m.]: I join other honourable members in speaking about Sir Donald Bradman and his contribution to Australia, to cricket and to sport as a whole. I do not believe I need to give the details of his wonderful career: the runs he scored, the games he played and the tests matches he figured in. However, I think it is important that the House and Australians stop for a moment to reflect upon the Don's life and his contribution to the fabric of our society. Through his cricket, Bradman became an icon for young Australians. It is said that, unless young people have something to aim for, goals to set and an icon upon which to model their lives, they are at a loss and often do not realise their full potential.

Like many other young boys in Australia over the past 30, 40 or 50 years, I remember my cricketing days. My father—who was a very keen cricketer—strung up a cricket ball on a wire in the backyard. He gave me a bat and taught me how to use it. I used to bat by myself all day and, as I did, I dreamt that I was an Australian test or Sheffield Shield cricketer putting a century on the board. I never got very far with cricket—I suppose that is regrettable—but I had that opportunity. I think it is important for young Australians to have some hope for the future and to dare to dream. I certainly believe the Don and his cricketing prowess enabled many young Australians to dream. Some, such as those who followed him into the Australian cricket team and those who have played in various State teams, have done very well—as has our current Australian team.

The whole of the Don's life has been exemplified in the past couple of days. Newspapers have paid fantastic tributes to a man who was a wonderful Australian not just during his cricketing career but throughout his life when he served as an ambassador for sport and for Australia. He was a wonderful character who was dedicated to inspiring young Australians to dream and to achieve—possibly as much as he had, but probably not because he was a superhuman figure in his chosen field. On behalf of my constituents in Monaro, particularly young people, I join other honourable members in taking off my hat to the Don and thanking him for his contribution to Australia.

Mr SCULLY (Smithfield—Minister for Transport, and Minister for Roads) [8.16 p.m.]: I join my parliamentary colleagues in acknowledging the life of Sir Donald Bradman. There will be many recollections over the coming days and weeks of the Don's statistical record and his impact on the world of cricket. I would like to reflect on that record and discuss Bradman's phenomenal impact on the way that we, as Australians, view ourselves today. When he recorded his final television interview in 1996, Bradman was asked what he would most like to be remembered for and he simply replied, "Integrity". The life of Bradman could be best summarised as a life of integrity: a lifetime of service to his sport and to his community.

From his late teens until his death, Bradman's life was subject to intense public scrutiny that no-one else could even imagine. Long before Beatlemania came into our lives, Bradman was the subject of hero worship beyond most people's comprehension. The manner in which he dealt with his fame is a study in humility: he never sought adulation and certainly never had training in media relations and the other things that modern sports stars receive these days. Bradman's approach to dealing with his fame was interesting. His autograph—probably his most valuable commodity—was dispensed at an amazing rate. I am not aware of any instance when Bradman refused to give an autograph: he was famous for signing anything at any time.

Mr Ashton: And he never charged for it.

Mr SCULLY: My colleague is right. Bradman received thousands of letters each month. He always took the time to reply personally to his many correspondents, and the tide of letters showed no sign of stemming more than 50 years after he last took the field representing his country. One of the greatest thrills that a young cricket fan could imagine was writing to Bradman and receiving a personal reply. *Wisden's Cricketers Almanac* recently conducted a poll to determine the five greatest test cricketers of the twentieth century. It is noteworthy that only one player received a vote from each of the 100 judges on the panel: Don Bradman. Bradman's achievements are legendary. He had an amazing batting average of 99.94—the nearest player's average is only half as good—and he scored 6,996 test runs. That is not too many when compared with modern players, but we should consider that he achieved that feat in only 52 test matches—he batted in tests only 80 times between 1928 and 1948. He was often quoted as saying that scoring runs was important but the speed at which they were scored was even more important. On his test debut in 1928, Bradman scored 18 and one and was dropped from the team. After his recall, he was never dropped again.

My son James, aged 12, has recently taken up cricket with an absolute passion. He loves the game as much as I did as a young boy. I must admit that I was absolutely hopeless at cricket at school but I adored the game, as does my son. Like most young boys getting started in team sports, my son can sometimes doubt his own ability to make the grade. In fact, he was somewhat distressed recently when he got a couple of ducks. In an effort to console him, I pulled out a copy of A. G. Moyes' book, which my father gave me when I was a young lad. The book was published in 1948, which was some time before I was born. I gave the book to my son, and I opened it at page 96. Between pages 96 and 97 are two series of photographs, which I pointed out to my son. I said, "The greatest batsman ever produced in the world was out for no score. Here is a picture: "Bowled Bowes for 0, at Melbourne 1932-3. This is the greatest player ever, and here he is bowled." I then turned over the page and said, "Here he is: 'Caught Allen, bowled Voce for a duck, 1936-7."

I then showed my son all of Bradman's other scores. We are all aware of the triple centuries, double centuries, and the countless fifties and eighties. But it seemed to lift his spirits a little to see that the greatest player ever actually did have a moment when he got out for no score. That made me feel a little better, because when I played as a kid there were lots of no scores. The other book which I have shown my son is *Bradman's Art of Cricket* from the old man. Unfortunately Bradman, although obviously blessed with an abundance of natural talent, suffered from ill health on several occasions, and in fact nearly died from illnesses on the physically demanding tours he went on. His service as a cricket player and administrator, his war service record and his outstanding contribution to the make-up of our society makes him entirely worthy of the praise being heaped upon him by the world at this time. To his family, his friends, and his many millions of admirers, I send my condolences on his passing, but I also call upon the public to remember his feats always.

Mr D. L. PAGE (Ballina) [8.22 p.m.]: On behalf of my constituents I wish to pay tribute to Sir Donald Bradman, an Australian icon, the best batsman of all time and a great Australian. It is rather interesting to note that as we are paying tribute to the Great Don the Australian team in India has made a fantastic recovery from being five for 99 to being now, as I understand it, nine for 349. India made 179 runs, I think it was. As we speak, all of the players in both the Indian and Australian teams in that test match are wearing black armbands in recognition of the wonderful contribution to cricket that Sir Donald Bradman made. I cannot help but feel that the centuries that have been posted by our own Adam Gilchrist and Matthew Hayden are possibly in some way a reflection of the determination that Don Bradman showed in coming back and doing what was required for his country to ensure that Australia did the best they possibly could.

One of my earliest memories is of my father telling me that when he lived in Sydney once the word went out that Bradman was batting at the Sydney Cricket Ground people would leave work and head straight out there to see him bat. It seems that employers understood the magnetism of Bradman and let their staff go. Bradman was not only a great batsman, he was a person who lifted the nation's spirits. His persona was etched on every young cricketer of his generation. He gave hope to a nation at a time of great economic and social challenge during the Great Depression, between the wars, and again after World War II.

In 52 test matches from 1928 to 1948 Bradman scored 6,996 runs, with an average of 99.94. That average is almost twice that of the next best test average and is unlikely ever to be repeated. It is worth noting that even in the bodyline series of 1932-33—Bradman preferred to call it the leg theory series rather than bodyline—Bradman still averaged 55 runs per innings. That is roughly equivalent to the best test averages below Bradman's. So even in that bad series he was still as good as the rest of them. As a keen cricketer myself, I watched with great interest the all too rare pieces of footage available today of the Don in action. He was obviously a great timer of the ball who had a wonderful array of punishing shots. In fact, other batsmen who were batting with Bradman would complain that they did not bat with Bradman—they ran with him while he hit runs.

Whilst members of this House are unlikely to have seen Don Bradman in action on the cricket oval, we do have a connection with Sir Donald in that six or seven years ago we held a match between the parliamentary cricket team and the parliamentary press gallery on the Bradman Oval in Bowral. This is the one and only opportunity for parliamentarians to actually have a genuine win against the press gallery. As it turned out, the day was a most enjoyable occasion, with the gallery winning this hard-fought match by a few runs. The setting at the Bradman Oval is superb, but perhaps the most impressive aspect of this complex is the Bradman Museum. It is a wonderful tribute to a wonderful man, and I thoroughly recommend to any person who has not visited the museum to do so.

Cricketers who played with Bradman say that despite his brilliance he did tend to play each ball on its merits, especially early in an innings. He was a classy batsman, not an arrogant one. He scored his runs quickly

and with consummate ease. However, to attribute his great success to raw talent would be to underestimate and misunderstand Bradman. Indeed, Bradman himself often said he played with and against more talented players than himself. What Bradman had above talent was a tremendous determination to succeed and tremendous powers of concentration which would convert fifties into hundreds, and centuries into double centuries and beyond. As Greg Chappell said recently, the secret to Bradman's success lay above, not below, his shoulders.

Sir Donald Bradman has left us many legacies, but surely one of them must be that a boy from the bush with an ordinary background can, with skill and determination and a will to succeed, achieve what most of us dare not to dream. The fact that some 52 years after Bradman stopped playing cricket he is so revered, so admired and so respected is testament to his unique contribution to our nation and to the game of cricket. He remains, even in death, quite simply the most famous of all Australians. Much has been written and said about Sir Donald Bradman since his passing at the age of 92 on 25 February 2001.

His success was not limited to the cricket field. He was a devoted husband to the love of his life, Jessie, and a strong family man. He was also a successful businessman. I understand that after his retirement from cricket he would send advice to the Reserve Bank Board on economic indicators and other relevant things that he felt were important and the board should be aware of. I understand this was related in part to his experience of seeing first-hand the widespread impact of unemployment on families that occurred during the Depression and his desire to see that this never happened again.

Sir Donald also had a great love of music and was a very entertaining public speaker. He set the benchmark for cricket administrators. Despite his undoubted talent and success both on and off the cricket field, he was a man of modesty, humility and kindness. He was also a legend—a legend who responded to his fan mail personally, which must have taken him many hours every week. He will be missed by all Australians, even those who did not know him personally but who have been touched by his legacy. This should be of great comfort to his son, John, and daughter, Shirley, as they deal with their father's passing. He will always be remembered, not just as the greatest batsman in the history of the game but as a great Australian who inspired a nation with his genius whilst retaining his humility and dignity in everything he did. We mourn the Don's passing, but we are grateful for his life, his wonderful achievements and the inspiration he has provided to so many ordinary Australians. Vale Sir Donald Bradman.

Mr MERTON (Baulkham Hills) [8.29 p.m.]: Tonight I speak, as my colleagues have done, about an Australian who rightly has achieved the often abused status of a legend. In the case of Sir Donald Bradman it is undoubtedly true. As many previous speakers have said, Sir Donald Bradman had a unique cricket record. In 52 tests and 80 innings he achieved a total of 6,996 runs—an average of 99.94. Some more recent players have achieved totals of 10,000 or 11,000 runs but the Bradman average is approximately 40 runs higher than the average of any other test batsman in more than 20 innings. The total of 6,996 runs was achieved in 80 innings, whereas other players had innings of 265, 150 or considerably more than 80. Greg Chappell had a similar total of 7,100 runs but took 137 innings to achieve it. Neil Harvey, another outstanding Australian batsman, got 6,149 runs, also in 137 innings.

Bradman came from humble beginnings. In 1948 in the book *Farewell to Cricket* he made some interesting observations that showed basically what type of a fellow he was. He was just an ordinary Australian who was particularly gifted as a sportsperson. The book tells of his birth at Cootamundra and the family's move to Bowral. It contains interesting personal observations that should be put on record. He wrote:

During weekends and after school I usually found myself without any playmates because nobody lived close to our home. For this reason I had to improvise my own amusement, and this during the hours of daylight almost invariably centred around the use of a ball. I was either kicking a football, playing tennis against the garage door or an unusual form of cricket which I invented for my own enjoyment.

At the back of our home was an 800 gallon water tank set on a round brick stand. From the tank to the laundry door was a distance of about eight feet. The area underfoot was cemented and, with all doors shut, this portion was enclosed on three sides and roofed over so that I could play there on wet days. Armed with a small cricket stump which I used as a bat, I would throw a golf ball at this brick stand and try to hit the ball on the rebound.

The golf ball came back at great speed and to hit it at all with the round stump was no easy task. To make the game interesting I would organise two sides consisting of well-known international names and would bat for Taylor, Gregory, Collins and so on in turn. The door behind me was the wicket and I devised a system of ways to get caught out and of boundaries. Many a time I incurred mother's displeasure because I just had to finish some important test match at the very moment she wanted me for a meal.

That shows the kind of beginning that Bradman had. It is now a matter of history that he played his first match when he was quite a young man. He made his first century at the age of 12 for the local school. He made his

debut in the Bowral senior team when he was 12, and he was not a big man even in later years. At the age of 17 he made 234 for Bowral. On his first-grade debut in Sydney he made a hundred. He did the same in his first game for New South Wales against South Australia in Adelaide. Many others have said this but I say it because of my connection with Western Sydney: negotiations were under way for him to play for Cumberland, a very fine cricket team, but they broke down when the club was unable to find money for his return fare from Bowral. He then went on to play for St George. Whilst an absolute genius and a person whose cricket feats will never be repeated, Don Bradman had his share of ducks. The Minister for Transport spoke earlier about his son getting a couple of ducks and being told by his father that Don Bradman had also had ducks. Bradman had 16 ducks in test matches. I think he must have been a nervous starter.

Mr Gaudry: I am a bit like that.

Mr MERTON: That is right. I have played against you and you are a bit of a nervous starter. Six of Bradman's ducks were on the first ball and three on the second ball. So of his 16 ducks nine were on the first or second ball. Don Bradman also had other amazing achievements. In 1931, while playing at Blackheath in the Blue Mountains, he hit 100 runs in three eight-ball overs. That is amazing. But he did not need all 24 balls; he scored a century off only 22 balls. Bradman was born in 1908 and when World War II commenced in 1939 he was at the height of his career. He played only 23 test innings after World War II. In 1946 he averaged 97.14; in 1947-48 in India he averaged 178 and in England in the 1948 series he averaged 72.57.

In 1948 he was 40. So it is probably true to say that fate took Bradman's best playing years away from him, because 5,000 of his 7,000 runs were made before the war and only 1,903 after the war. So he was truly at his peak in 1939 at the age of about 31. One can only surmise what Bradman's record would be had it not been for the Second World War. So the war years were taken away not only from Bradman but from cricket enthusiasts of the world. It is an interesting quirk of fate that his test career ended when he was bowled on his second delivery in his last innings. Going into that last match in 1948 his test average was 101.39, and his duck in his last innings brought his average down to "only" 99.94. Bradman made an enormous contribution not only to cricket but also to Australian morale during the Great Depression, as the Prime Minister has said. His book, *Farewell to Cricket*, contains a quotation from the *Canberra Times* which commented on his retirement. The journalist wrote:

In all these years he, Bradman, has given rise to cheers literally from millions of throats but no cheer has been associated with any act of violence or ill will. If a computation were to be made, it is probable that as many cheers have been invoked spontaneously by Bradman as were organised or demanded by Hitler. The man of violence perished by his own hand and millions died or suffered—and are still dying and suffering—through his deeds. There is no man, woman or child who has suffered aught but inspirational happiness from the career of Bradman.

This is the greatest test of the celebrity in world history. No violent passion, no harmful dealing, no vengeful spirit and no harm to any fellow can be subscribed to the life of Bradman. This is an exemplification of the basic appeal of cricket and justification of the place it has earned in the minds of the British people.

That quotation reflects the way in which cricket was described in 1948. I suppose the Bradman legacy is to be found in the inspiration, the joy, the happiness and, indeed, the encouragement that cricket still brings to many millions of people not only in Australia but in other places throughout the world, as we currently see from news film of the Australian team in India. I will conclude my speech by again citing Bradman's book, which was written shortly after his retirement. The book states:

It is a comforting thought that only happiness and inspiration to one's fellow man could result. The world today is beset by doubts and uncertainties. The men who shall guide our destinies in the future will need courage, enterprise and calm judgment. They will need to be vigilant and far-seeing.

Without doubt, the laws of cricket and the conduct of the game are a great example to the world. We should all be proud of this heritage, which I trust may forever stand as a beacon light, guiding man's footsteps to happy and peaceful days.

They are the Don's words: There is no better way to conclude my speech.

Motion agreed to.

ADDRESS TO HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR OF NEW SOUTH WALES

Debate resumed from an earlier hour.

Mr ORKOPOULOS (Swansea) [8.43 p.m.]: I am not a noted royalist but I am grateful for the work and dedication of the New South Wales Governor, Gordon Samuels, and his wife. I recall the time when the

announcement was made that Gordon Samuels was to be the Governor of New South Wales. A great hoo-ha erupted not only in relation to his appointment but also in relation to the peripheral issues relating to his appointment. The reaction of the Opposition was not against the character of the man. It was about the more mundane and silly matter—at least that is what I thought at the time—of where he should live. That subject was touched on earlier today by the Premier. Strangely enough, during this debate the Leader of the National Party persisted in berating the Government for not allowing our true representative of Her Majesty to live at Government House.

That is a sentiment that has long gone, since well after the referendum on the republic was held—a referendum which was indecisive, to say the least. It is important to note that we have moved along. The community is much more sophisticated in its knowledge of the theory of government. People have very fixed views on what constitutes government and they also have a more sophisticated understanding—perhaps more than we give them credit for—of the role and duties of government. I believe that on the whole the people of New South Wales are very satisfied and very pleased with the service that Gordon Samuels and his wife have given them. They have carried out their duties with remarkable ease, a minimum of pomp and circumstance but with great dignity. They have touched the hearts of many people in the different communities of New South Wales.

I recall meeting the Governor. It was not at Government House, in Parliament or in any other formal political setting. Rather, it was at Newcastle cathedral, where he was the honoured guest at a memorial service. He carried himself with quiet dignity and I was very impressed with his modesty. On behalf of the constituents and communities that make up Swansea, I thank the Governor and Mrs Samuels for their service to the State and wish them well in their other life.

Mr MAGUIRE (Wagga Wagga) [8.46 p.m.]: I join other honourable members of this House in congratulating the Governor, the Hon. Gordon Samuels, AC, QC, and extend my community's thanks to the Governor and, indeed, to Mrs Samuels for their contribution to my electorate over the years Mr Samuels has been the Governor of New South Wales. Mr Samuels visited the electorate of Wagga Wagga four times and Mrs Samuels visited my electorate five times. On each occasion they have taken the time to look at the various industries and entities in my electorate. On some of their visits, the Governor and Mrs Samuels visited the Riding for the Disabled organisation, which has branches throughout New South Wales. The Wagga Wagga Riding for the Disabled group is run by a energetic group of people who were pleased to show the Governor and Mrs Samuels through the establishment and explain the good work to which they actively contribute.

The Governor and Mrs Samuels also visited Chauncy Cottage, which is a retirement village situated in the centre of Wagga Wagga. They took a keen interest in the residents and their wellbeing. They also visited Kurrajong-Waratah, which has a long history in Wagga Wagga of providing services, employment opportunities, education and early intervention for disabled people. It has often been acknowledged that the facilities developed by Kurrajong-Waratah over the past 40-odd years are the best in the State. I would say that Kurrajong-Waratah provides some of the best facilities in Australia, if not the world. I can certainly vouch for the staff of the centre, who are most dedicated people. They took the opportunity of acquainting the Governor and Mrs Samuels with the services provided by that organisation.

In Wagga Wagga we celebrated a great occasion when a company by the name of Braggs, which is a supplier of agriculture products, opened its million-dollar building. The Governor officiated on the day of the opening ceremony. It was a great day for Hilda Bragg because of the large investment she had made in the building. It was also a great day for the city of Wagga Wagga to have a person of the Governor's stature taking a genuine interest in the development of business and industry in the city and supporting the city by officiating at the opening ceremony.

The Governor was also taken on a tour of the Charles Sturt Winery, the new cheese factory and the equine centre. Mr and Mrs Samuels always took a keen interest, and some of these visits took place in the company of my predecessor as the member for Wagga Wagga, the Hon. Joe Schipp. I know that on the last visit when Mrs Samuels came to Wagga Wagga by herself, she was very keen for the Schipps to be involved. Mrs Samuels carried out that duty extremely well. We needed someone of good standing and reputation as a guest of honour for the sixtieth anniversary of the Miss Wagga Wagga Quest. We invited Mrs Samuels to attend and we are thankful that she did.

On the day of the crowning of the sixtieth Miss Wagga Wagga it poured with rain, much as it did this afternoon. The event had to be moved from the outside venue in the Victory Memorial Gardens to the old Civic

Centre. Traditionally, the crowning of Miss Wagga Wagga attracts a crowd of some 3,000 people. The Civic Centre had a maximum capacity of 480 people. Honourable members can imagine the turmoil of the organising committee, of which I was the chairman, on that afternoon in having to transfer this major function, a highlight in the social calendar of Wagga Wagga, from this outside venue to an inside venue that had a total capacity of 480 and did not allow for people to stand in the aisles.

The doors of the Civic Centre were flung open so that people could view the ceremony from the outside. Of course, the city council would not allow the function to begin until the aisles were clear and proper precautions were in place. Honourable members would be aware that Mrs Samuels has a long history as a very accomplished actress in Australia and when the ceremony finally began she quipped in her inimitable fashion, "It's great to play to a sell-out crowd once again." And it was, because as far as the eye could see through the doorways people were present to witness the crowning of Miss Wagga Wagga and, more importantly, to get a glimpse of Mrs Samuels, who played her part in drawing the crowd and being guest of honour.

I mention that because quite often during debate one focuses on the role of the Governor, yet it is important to acknowledge the supporting role that the wife of the Governor has played. Mr and Mrs Samuels also attended a community function at Oura winery and the charities of which Mrs Samuels is patron received an invitation. In his speech the Governor said, "There are so many organisations here we didn't know which badges to wear." In fact, they had a container of badges from organisations of which Mr and Mrs Samuels are patrons, the Red Cross and the Country Women's Association to name just a couple. It struck me that the Governor and his wife should be commended for their effort and the time they contribute to charitable organisations. I extend the thanks of my community to Mr and Mrs Samuels for their genuine interest in the Wagga Wagga electorate.

I am pleased to acknowledge the appointment of Dr Marie Bashir as our next Governor. Dr Bashir was born in Narrandera, which is not far from the city of Wagga Wagga although it is in the bordering electorate of Murrumbidgee. We have some wonderful people in New South Wales and Australia who have the great credibility, education and experience to take on the role of Governor of New South Wales. I make the point that people from all walks of life can aspire to great office in our State and country. Dr Bashir started in a small country town and has worked hard and diligently as a citizen of New South Wales, as evidenced in her curriculum vitae. She is very accomplished. That achievement is available to all Australians and the appointment of Dr Bashir should provide encouragement and incentive. It is a great example of what one can achieve in this great country of Australia.

I congratulate Dr Bashir on her appointment and extend to the Governor, the Hon. Gordon Samuels, QC, AC, and Mrs Samuels the very best wishes of my community. I also thank the Governor's staff with whom we have had dealings. The Governor and Mrs Samuels were always at the forefront whenever a visit took place but behind them was a dedicated staff, who have certainly excelled in their duties. I note the contribution of Miss Glenys Gers and Todd Vail. My staff from Wagga Wagga wanted to ensure that I included in my contribution tonight their personal thanks to those people for making the arrangements relating to the Governor's four visits and the five visits of Mrs Samuels so memorable and easy to accomplish.

Mr MILLS (Wallsend) [8.56 p.m.]: It gives me great pleasure to join with the Premier, the Leader of the Opposition and other honourable members in congratulating Governor Samuels. Indeed, it is worthwhile reminding the House of the terms of the Premier's motion, which is:

We, the Members of the Legislative Assembly, in Parliament assembled, desire to express our deep appreciation to your Excellency on the occasion of your vacation of the Office of Governor of New South Wales.

We further offer your Excellency our sincere congratulations on undertaking the duties of your office with distinction and devotion and extend to your Excellency and Mrs Samuels the warm regards of the House.

Certainly, Governor Gordon Samuels distinguished himself in his term of office. We remember his service as a jurist, a judge and lawyer. We remember his war service. Indeed, traditionally in New South Wales, a military person, someone from the armed forces, has held the position of Governor more or less continuously in this State—I am not an historian so I cannot say how long.

Mr O'Farrell: For 208 years.

Mr MILLS: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition has advised me that it is 208 years and I accept his knowledge on these matters. The appointment of Governor Gordon Samuels, who came to the office as a

civilian, represented a changing of the guard, but I guess he had a foot in both camps because today we have heard about his distinguished war service during the Second World War. Gordon Samuels proved to be a bridge between the old qualification for Governor and what is obviously becoming a different qualification. I am not suggesting that distinguished military service would be excluded, but I am delighted that a second person of distinguished civilian service has been appointed by the Carr Government to the position of Governor.

I know from what Gordon Samuels said that he saw his role as Governor as a unifying force in the community, and I believe he succeeded in that. He certainly earned the respect of all people he met. He even earned the respect of those in the media who were keen to destabilise him and politicise the office in the early days. That was helped by some people in the Coalition parties who were keen to feed a bit of a media frenzy at the time, but Governor Samuels saw right through that and his distinguished service in the office won everybody over.

I also want to pay tribute to Mrs Samuels. I know that it cannot be easy for a professional person such as Mrs Samuels to slot into an accompanying spouse role, if I can call it that, but she carved out a role for herself that certainly assisted Gordon Samuels to be widely accepted in his role as Governor. An example in the Hunter region is when your wife, Mr Deputy Speaker, the wife of the honourable member for Newcastle and my wife were involved in a group of Labor wives on the LILAC committee led by Doreen Clough, the wife of Mick Clough. That committee went to various parts of the State and raised funds for local charities. The LILAC committee wanted to raise funds for the John Hunter Children's Hospital Research Foundation and invited Mrs Samuels, who was happy to attend at what turned out to be one of the largest fund raising functions ever held in the Hunter region. It was held at Western Suburbs Leagues Club, Newcastle.

Certainly one of the principal fundraisers for the John Hunter Children's Hospital Research Foundation is Lorraine Gardner, who is the wife of the General Manager of Wests, Philip Gardner. The function was magnificent and centred around Mrs Samuels, who is a great character and tells great stories. She is a classy down-to-earth person who put an Australian interpretation, which is certainly very different to a pommy interpretation, on the role of Governor's wife and quite different from any sort of militaristic milieu that might otherwise apply.

Mrs Samuels was a tremendous speaker and the efforts of herself and the wives of other Hunter parliamentarians raised thousands of dollars for the charity. I am greatly indebted to Mrs Samuels because one of my favourite charities is the John Hunter Children's Hospital Research Foundation. Other members of Parliament in the debate tonight praised Mrs Samuel's role, which assisted, augmented, supplemented and enlarged the Governor's activities to unify and benefit the community. I am happy to say farewell to Gordon Samuels.

Along with some other honourable members, I have respect for the office of Governor so long as that is the constitutional arrangement in New South Wales. I would be quite happy if we did not have a Head of State in New South Wales who was a representative of the English monarch, but that is another story. I know that before my lifetime is ended the office of Governor will have changed and probably will not exist, but so long as it is there, I respect the Constitution and law. That is the dilemma of the progressive person in society who is for the Republic in Australia. Well done, Gordon Samuels. You distinguished the office and thank you very much for your service. Finally, I congratulate the incoming Governor, Dr Marie Bashir, on taking up the role of Governor tomorrow.

Mr O'FARRELL (Ku-ring-gai—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [9.04 p.m.]: I join honourable members in paying tribute to the Hon. Gordon Samuels, AC. Gordon Samuels was the first Governor in 208 years to be appointed from a non-military background. Of course he followed a distinguished line that started with Captain Arthur Philip. Gordon Samuels was, and remains until midnight tonight, the thirty-fourth Governor of New South Wales. But of more interest is a comment made by my colleague, the honourable member for Wagga Wagga, that his appointment again reminds Australians that they can do anything in life.

In the previous Parliament I represented the electorate of Northcott. General Sir John Northcott was the first Australian-born person not only to be appointed Governor of New South Wales but to hold a vice Regal position in any Australian State. That only occurred in 1946, thanks to the efforts of Premier Bill McKell, to whom all Australians should be grateful. His appointment makes the point made by my colleague the honourable member for Wagga Wagga, which is that there is no office in Australia that an Australian cannot occupy. But there have only been six Australian-born Governors, and Gordon Samuels is the latest.

I am happy to pay tribute to Gordon Samuels because his was a significant appointment. Not only was he a learned jurist but he was also a significant member of the Jewish community. Whatever controversy

surrounded his appointment, I compliment the Premier on his choice of Gordon Samuels for the position. I correct my colleague because there was some political controversy which did not relate to the office of Governor or the personage of Gordon Samuels, but did relate, I remind honourable members, to the comments made by the Premier at the press conference announcing Gordon Samuels' appointment. The Premier again referred to the issue that the New South Wales Australian Labor Party has never been able to get over, that is, the dismissal of Jack Lang. My view is that if it had not been for the Premier's off-hand comments at the press conference that reminded people of that incident, much of the controversy would not have occurred.

I pay particular tribute to Gordon Samuels because I do not believe his training particularly equipped him well to be a Governor, because being a learned jurist and a distinguished judge does not always hone one's people skills. What always impressed me about Gordon Samuels was, first, that it was obvious that he was a reticent and shy individual but, second, that he worked hard at his job and interacted with all sorts of people extremely well.

I had the pleasure and honour to host a lunch last August when the Queen Mother turned 100 at which Gordon Samuels was the guest speaker. He charmed the audience with his experience of having dined with the royal family at Balmoral. It was an outstanding performance which was complimented by all those present. I also had the pleasure of attending, as you did Mr Deputy Speaker, the Scout Jubilee during Christmas. Gordon Samuels visited that day but was not able to stay for the closing ceremony that I attended. However, with little or no notice he recorded a video which was played to the 12,000 scouts there that evening which was not only apposite to what they had been through but was well received. That again is a tribute to the man involved. I wish him and his wife well for their future activities. I certainly hope that they get to have more of a private life together. On behalf of my constituents I express the debt of gratitude that we owe to him and his wife for his outstanding services as Governor of this State.

Mr PRICE (Maitland) [9.08 p.m.]: I support the motion moved by the Premier and supported by other honourable members of this Chamber in recognising the brilliant service of his Excellency Gordon Samuels and of Mrs Samuels in their leadership roles in this State as Governor and Governor's wife. I would first of all correct one matter and, lightheartedly, take to task the honourable member for Wallsend and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition in relation to the matter of the first civilian Governor. Last Wednesday night I sat with the Governor, who said that he was not the first civilian Governor. The Governor said he followed Sir Roden Cutler, who came from the diplomatic corps, not straight from the military. That was a very interesting distinction and one that I suspect none of us would have picked up; but a gentleman of his character and learning in that area was certainly able to sort me out.

I, too, was of the opinion that it was of some significance that a civilian Governor was a good idea after 200 years. So, we were marginally out of date with that! In his role as the thirty-fourth Governor of this State Gordon Samuels has witnessed significant progress here. We have heard reference to his judicial career, his presidency of the Law Reform Commission and his involvement with refugee groups within the State. He has had an incredibly diverse career, all of it with a social content.

Gordon Samuels is undoubtedly a shy man—that is his nature—but he can relate very quickly and has a very warm personality on a one-to-one basis. He is also a man who shows very little fear, in many respects. He played his role as a non-political appointee but for any who attended the Australia Day ceremony at Darling Harbour he did, quite consciously and by announcement, indicate his view of the Aboriginal situation in Australia—echoing Sir William Deane, I suspect. Nevertheless, it was interesting to gauge the timing. He knew he was approaching the end of his term and he wanted to say something of significance that would contribute to the social content of this State. He did so. It was well received and I think very well understood.

His Excellency's war service was noted. It is pleasing to think that someone with his background and war service saw fit not to refer to that service officially during his role as Governor. As a Queen's Counsel and Companion of the Order of Australia he has been recognised for his various duties and for his role as Governor of New South Wales. Mrs Samuels, as has been mentioned, made a great contribution as the Governor's wife. I understand from talking with her that she was the patron of no fewer than 35 organisations and actively participated in events to which she was invited. For a woman of her undoubted ability and personal professional skills it must have been difficult to take one step back and slightly to the left in procession.

I would like to briefly refer to some recollections dating back to the day of the Governor's swearing in, which was the first time I had ever seriously heard of Justice Gordon Samuels. I wondered how this man would go in that role. I found out very quickly. In the absence overseas of Mr Speaker I hosted the Governor's first

official function at Parliament House and learned first hand about the type of person he was and how he saw his role or function as Governor. As Head of State it has no doubt been a very interesting time for him as it has been an interesting time for us as members of Parliament.

Gordon Samuels has always carried out his duties as Governor with great dignity. As the Premier commented, in his role as President of the Executive Council if something was not correct he let it be known that it ought to be corrected. I believe that would relate very much to his judicial role. He approached his role as Governor with humility, but was comfortable in that role and comfortable with the people he dealt with. He appeared comfortable with the traditional duties of office. A significant number of persons had access to Government House at the end of Macquarie Street when it was opened up as a heritage building to the general community. Many hundreds of thousands of people viewed that residence in a way they had never had an opportunity to do in the past—and were never likely to have, had the old rule prevailed. That is another reason why we should thank His Excellency the Governor and Mrs Samuels.

His Excellency's contribution has certainly been of significance to New South Wales. He follows a very distinguished line of State Governors and I am sure that Dr Bashir will also do the role proud. It is pleasing to see a lady appointed as our State's first citizen, undertaking the role of Governor in the way that I know she will. To Gordon and Mrs Samuels, farewell and thank you. May you find your retirement just a little bit busy. We would not like to see you disappear from the scene altogether. But have a great time and enjoy your grandchildren.

Mr STEWART (Bankstown—Parliamentary Secretary) [9.15 p.m.]: On behalf of the Bankstown community, I join in paying a special tribute to His Excellency the Hon. Gordon Samuels and to Mrs Samuels. Some 213 years ago Arthur Phillip became Australia's first Governor. The governorship is Australia's oldest institution and the role of the Governor, as has been pointed out, has changed greatly from what was initially a very autocratic ruler to that of a democratic Head of State. Amazingly, only since 1946 have Australians been appointed to the role of New South Wales Governor. That was due to the input of Premier McKell, who declined the famous request from King George VI for his brother-in-law to be the next Governor of New South Wales. Fortunately, that request was not acceded to and Australians have been appointed to the office of Governor of New South Wales from that period onwards.

Without doubt Gordon Samuels, with the strong support of Mrs Samuels, has been one of the most exemplary and distinguished of the 34 Governors of this State to date. He has been a Governor with a new approach. He is close to the people of New South Wales and has worked closely with them. It is important to note the changes in the office of Governor—what I consider to be superficial changes—in that, for the first time in this State, we had a Governor who did not reside at Government House. As a result a great deal of criticism was levelled at the Government from a very small section of the community. So far as I am concerned it was not a general reflection of the overall view of the community.

It was disappointing when, day after day, members of the Opposition presented their petitions in this Chamber, urging the Government to review its decision about Government House. I must say that in hindsight it was clearly the right decision. For the first time countless thousands of people have visited Government House. I can recall as a child looking at Government House from a passing ferry and being told that that was where the Governor lived; that we were not allowed near that place; that it was very precious; and that I would probably never even get near the grounds of Government House. I am pleased that that impression and that focus has been removed.

It is pleasing to note that 270,000 people have visited Government House since early 1996, together with an additional 300,000 people who have visited the grounds of Government House and had a wonderful time there, looking at Government House and being a part of it; not being ostracised or kept away from the place, as had unfortunately been the tradition in the past. A total of 570,000 people have visited Government House since 1996. That is commendable and it has happened not only because the Government made that decision but also because we have had a Governor in Gordon Samuels who co-operated with that decision and understood it and who, as the Premier pointed out to this House, wanted to focus on that direction in the first instance. It was basically the Governor's suggestion that this was the way things should be.

As the Premier pointed out when speaking to this House recently on the subject of the outgoing Governor, the Hon. Gordon Samuels in effect gave up two homes. The first was Government House as the residence of the Governor. That, on reflection, was the right decision to make. The second was the Governor's own home in that it was from his home that the Governor did a lot of his work. Gordon Samuels made considerable sacrifices in doing so for the people of New South Wales. In Bankstown, Governor Gordon

Samuels and his wife are very much loved. The Governor and his wife made several visits to the Bankstown city region during his term. Those visits have resulted in warm mutual feelings with a community that has its difficulties at certain times, and a community that has a strong non-English-speaking background.

I must point out that His Excellency has gone out of his way to relate strongly to the different ethnic communities in the Bankstown area. There are some 122 ethnic communities in the Bankstown central business district alone. The Governor had no problem at all in mixing with those various communities and made himself welcome in them without difficulty. I am pleased to support the motion before the House. It is a sad day when we lose such a tremendous Governor, who, along with his wife, has served the people of New South Wales to the extent that he has. He has served this State with distinction. As I have pointed out, I regard him as amongst the best of the 34 Governors that New South Wales has had to date. History will record that he has been a people's Governor.

On behalf of the Bankstown community I wish the incoming Governor, Dr Marie Bashir, a very warm welcome. In doing so I would point out that Dr Bashir is the first person of Lebanese background to be not only a Governor of New South Wales but a Governor in Australia. She is also the first woman Governor in New South Wales. This is a proud achievement of a very distinguished woman who has an outstanding record in dealing with young people in great need. Young people are our future, and it is wonderful to have such a distinguished Governor follow in the footsteps of the Hon. Gordon Samuels and continue the focus on being a people's Governor. I commend the motion to the House.

Mr GAUDRY (Newcastle—Parliamentary Secretary) [9.22 p.m.]: I join the Premier, the Leader of the Opposition and honourable members from both sides of the House in expressing the thanks of the people of the electorate of Newcastle to the Hon. Gordon Samuels and Mrs Samuels for their distinguished service to this State and its people during his term as Governor. In particular, I recognise the enormous contribution of Mrs Samuels in supporting the Governor and bringing to her role as the Governor's wife the wonderful rapport she enjoyed with the community. Mr Samuels was a down-to-earth person who welcomed people from all corners of our community in the performance of her role.

I note, Mr Acting-Speaker, that in your contribution you mentioned an occasion in Newcastle on which Mr Samuels endeared herself to all of the people involved in a fund-raising function, not only by her speech but through the wonderful openness and ease with which she communicated. In company with the honourable member for Murrumbidgee, I had the pleasure late last year to represent the Minister for Emergency Services at the annual conference of the Volunteer Rescue Association in Narrandera, at which the Governor and Mrs Samuels were the principal guests.

On that day I had the opportunity to see the enormous amount of work that the Governor and Mrs Samuels did. Of course, as was mentioned by other honourable members who contributed to this debate, there was a great deal of organisation undertaken by the staff to ensure that every group in that community had the opportunity to have the Governor and Mrs Samuels attend a function, whether that be a Country Women's Association flower show, a pistol club event, a town celebration arranged for the day, or a formal dinner for the rescue association. That demonstrated the amount of energy and effort that went into that really enormous task and the balance that the Governor and his wife had to bring to their day to enable them to undertake those duties, which they carried out with great distinction.

As all honourable members have said, the Governor and his wife have given very distinguished service to New South Wales. As the honourable member for Bankstown said, there had been a very significant change in the role of Governor in that Government House became a House of the people of New South Wales, and was accessible to everyone. The Governor, of course, still used that magnificent establishment for receptions and formal functions of Governor, but otherwise it was available to all in the community to visit.

I join all honourable members of this House in welcoming our next Governor, Dr Marie Bashir. As the honourable member for Bankstown said, this is a really significant event in the history of New South Wales. She is the State's first female Governor. Dr Marie Bashir is a representative of the Lebanese community. All honourable members have referred to the fact that people in this State in particular, and in other States of Australia generally, have the opportunity not only to contribute with excellence to a job but have the capacity to rise from any position in the community to be the principal head of ceremony in this State, the Governor of New South Wales. As has been said earlier, within the structure of our State at the moment that is a very significant position. While it is retained, it is wonderful that the First Citizen of New South Wales can come from any part of our society. In conclusion, I congratulate the Hon. Gordon Samuels and his wife for their distinguished service to New South Wales, and I welcome our next Governor, Dr Bashir.

Motion agreed to.

APPROPRIATION (BUDGET VARIATIONS) BILL

Bill introduced and read a first time.

Second Reading

Mr GAUDRY (Newcastle—Parliamentary Secretary), on behalf of Mr Aquilina [9.27 p.m.]: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The practice of seeking approval for supplementary appropriations to cover payments not provided for in the annual Appropriation Act has now become entrenched. This Government in presenting further appropriation bills has sought, as far as possible, to allow the Parliament to scrutinise anticipated additional funding requirements prior to expenditures being incurred. Not always is it possible to seek Parliament's authority in advance for pressing expenditure needs. However, Parliament has previously established procedures to provide for this eventuality. Each year Parliament makes an advance available to the Treasurer to meet unforeseen expenditures. In addition, section 22 of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983 enables the Governor to approve of payments to cater for the exigencies of the Government, in anticipation of appropriations by Parliament.

By introducing a further Appropriation Bill in this session, it is possible for the Government to account to the Parliament for how the advance to the Treasurer has been applied and to seek an adjustment of the advance prior to the end of the financial year. It is also possible to seek appropriations to cover expenditures approved under section 22 before the year's end. The further Appropriation Bill also seeks additional appropriations to provide for payments which are intended to be made during the remaining period of the current financial year and in respect of which provision was not made in the annual Appropriation Bill.

The Appropriation (Budget Variations) Bill in respect of the 2000-2001 financial year seeks appropriations of \$168,429,000 in adjustment of the advance to the Treasurer, and \$100,623,000 for services approved by the Governor under section 22 of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983. Under the bill appropriations totalling \$478,138,000 have been sought for additional recurrent services. An appropriation of \$236.5 million is required to enable a further contribution to be made to various rail entities for essential improvements and a range of measures to be introduced, following Justice McInerney's inquiry into rail safety and the establishment of the Office of the Co-ordinator General of Rail.

An amount of \$63.9 million is needed for agencies which had previously been allocated capital works and services funding at budget time and now find that the funding applied for should have been classed as recurrent funding. The additional appropriations required in relation to the First Home Owner Grants Scheme, \$60 million, and \$62 million for additional administration costs in relation to the goods and services tax, will both ultimately be repaid to the State by the Commonwealth. The Department of Education and Training requires \$43.7 million to assist in financing the teachers' salary increase and \$12 million to fund the teachers' career transition scheme.

The bill also seeks appropriations to adjust certain payments made during the 1999-2000 financial year either from that year's advance to the Treasurer, or approved in that financial year by the Governor under section 22 of the Public Finance and Audit Act. Each of the payments made has been included in the 1999-2000 audited financial statements of the agencies making those payments. The practice of introducing further appropriation bills has enhanced accountability for the expenditure of public moneys from the Consolidated Fund. It is further evidence of the Government's commitment to transparent and full financial reporting to the Parliament and the community. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned on motion by Mr Debnam.

NATURE CONSERVATION TRUST BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 29 November 2000.

Mr ORKOPOULOS (Swansea) [9.33 p.m.]: Since coming to office this Government has demonstrated an outstanding commitment to conservation. The National Parks and Wildlife Service owns 45.6 million hectares of high conservation value public land across New South Wales. That is 33 per cent more

than in 1995 when the last Coalition Government was in office. Our efforts have not been confined to protecting public land. The Government has also recognised the importance of finding new ways to encourage private land-holders to manage their land for conservation outcomes. The Government has continued to successfully deliver a range of programs and assistance directly to land-holders, including voluntary conservation agreements under the National Parks and Wildlife Act, and property agreements under the Native Vegetation Conservation Act. The level of that success is demonstrable: over the past two years alone the number of voluntary conservation agreements has grown from around 30 to more than 90.

Mr Fraser: Are you sure?

Mr ORKOPOULOS: Yes, more than 90. The Government is aware that more can be done. A number of land-holders across the State would be keen to manage their lands for conservation outcomes if they had access to an independent source of advice and assistance that was not delivered by any single government agency. Many land-holders are also looking for an independent body which has a broad range of expertise but which can understand the specific issues that they face in managing their land. The Nature Conservation Trust Bill has been developed with precisely those issues in mind. The impetus for the bill has come directly from the community and it has been drafted in close consultation with both conservation groups and the New South Wales Farmers Association.

Its genesis represents a truly unique and co-operative approach to conservation on privately managed land that has never before been attempted in this State. Therefore, I am very pleased to note that the bill contains a number of provisions which will protect the independence of the proposed Nature Conservation Trust while it continues to represent the diverse interests of land managers across all areas of New South Wales. Among the most important of those provisions are those relating to the trust's membership. I note that a trust board is to be established, comprising 10 people who must bring a wide range of expertise and knowledge to the trust's operations.

In keeping with the trust's independent status only two board members will represent government agencies. Quite sensibly those board members will be drawn from the National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Department of Land and Water Conservation, which are the two agencies most heavily involved in private land conservation. All remaining board positions will be drawn from the general public. The appointment process will involve a statewide advertising campaign to invite nominations to fill those positions. Collectively the board will represent a wide range of interests and provide expertise in a number of areas, including the management of private land, including agricultural land; attracting and maintaining financial support; ensuring effective financial management; and increasing public knowledge, understanding and appreciation of conservation on privately managed land.

Those provisions of the bill will ensure that the conservation trust is run by a group of people who not only know how to attract wide-ranging support from various sectors of the community but who have in their midst individuals with first-hand knowledge of the issues and concerns of land-holders, including those involved in primary production. That will prevent the trust from being captured by sectoral interests and will ensure that it continues to operate as an independent and objective source of advice and assistance. At the same time, the conservation trust will be given the power to negotiate conservation agreements and property agreements between land-holders and Ministers without the need to involve government agencies that normally deliver those programs.

It is anticipated that this will attract a whole sector of land-holders who, for whatever reason, would prefer not to deal with government departments when entering into legally binding agreements. The trust will also be able to enter into its own trust agreements with land-holders in order to provide technical advice and financial or other forms of support. Those agreements, which will be between land-holders and the trust only, will enable the trust to explore innovative and flexible forms of assistance to meet the various needs of land-holders and will complement the more formal and binding forms of agreement already provided for by the Government.

Importantly, the conservation priorities to be pursued by the trust are required to be consistent with the Government's priorities. Without compromising the independence of the trust body, these provisions will ensure that the actions of landowners, non-government organisations and government agencies will result in enhanced conservation outcomes for all concerned. The Nature Conservation Trust Bill demonstrates this Government's willingness to listen to the community and to help the community establish its own structures and mechanisms for enhancing conservation outcomes on privately managed land.

Ms SEATON (Southern Highlands) [9.40 p.m.]: I indicate at the outset that the Opposition supports the Nature Conservation Trust Bill. I congratulate the New South Wales Farmers Association, Greening Australia, the Worldwide Fund for Nature and the Nature Conservation Council on their ground-breaking initiative in developing this bill. One of the most important things in the context of this bill is the current state of our environment. Everyone in this House noted with some alarm some of the observations that were made in the "State of the Environment" report which was released a few days ago. Less than 7 per cent of the New South Wales land mass is under the management of, or is in the form of, national parks or reserves.

Dr Mike Archer, director of the Australian Museum, and distinguished scientists in the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation all make the point that, if we are to sustain and nourish our current conservation estate and the biodiversity therein, let alone make improvements, we must ensure that we are getting better conservation outcomes. That will mean conserving in some way up to 30 per cent of the land mass of New South Wales. That does not mean turning it into national parks; it means conserving it in such a way that we are protecting and nourishing that biodiversity. I am pleased that this bill adds one more item to the menu of available tools that we and private landowners can use to achieve those objectives.

Late last year the Premier made some comments about a discussion paper that I issued, which proposes some innovative ideas that we might all adopt to improve conservation outcomes across the State. The Premier rejected key discussion concepts, such as adopting principles of prevention as a priority, co-ordination and not duplication, and placing objectives ahead of processes in our planning and conservation activities. He rejected the notion of improving our environment with integrated environment, planning, resource and land-use decisions. He rejected the idea of focusing on bio-regions as the essential environmental planning unit and creating a reliable database for good decision-making.

That is an important point because one of the observations in the "State of the Environment" report that was issued this year is that if we try to compare the information in that report with the information in the 1995 and 1997 reports we will be comparing apples with oranges. No-one can directly compare this year's results in air quality, biodiversity and marine environments with the results from the same report three years ago. I wonder whether that has been a process of deliberate obfuscation. I would have thought that if the "State of the Environment" report was to be useful to anybody, it should be comparable from edition to edition so we can truly and accurately understand whether or not we are making any progress.

Other things that the Premier rejected included the notion of ensuring that our national parks and reserves have sufficient and complementary off-reserve support to effectively preserve habitat and biodiversity. He also rejected the following concepts: finding achievable responses to experts' estimates that we must conserve at least one-fifth of our State's habitat to halt our record-breaking rate of species extinction; finding ways to increase and reward participation by the community, farmers, volunteers and the private sector in sustainable land use; developing innovative business and conservation ideas, such as paying farmers who have been successful sustainable farming innovators to teach others; and using financial incentives such as stewardship payments to encourage farmers to protect up to 30 per cent of the natural values of their property.

Last year the Premier rejected out of hand a range of important innovations, including relocation of more national parks jobs to regional communities; providing opportunities for new environmental and technology based industries to provide sustainable job opportunities to replace jobs in traditional industries, such as coalmining in regional issues—an important issue in my area; and providing innovative incentives for people to participate in private land conservation and conservation trusts. That is the very thing we are talking about today. The Premier, in his comments late last year, rejected those sorts of notions out of hand. Another important issue was improving the environmental performance of government. All honourable members should be concerned about and take seriously the national pollutant inventory results for the year before last. Government agencies involved in particular in sewage treatment and energy generation were amongst the top 10 polluters in New South Wales.

One of the important things in the "State of the Environment" report is the list of issues about which we need to take a lot more care. We need to see vast improvements particularly in the use of private cars for transport. Waste disposal to landfill has fallen by 22 per cent. Approximately 12.3 million hectares of land and between 80,000 and 150,000 hectares of native vegetation are facing salinity problems. I commend the *Daily Telegraph* of 22 February for providing a concise list of some of our worst environmental issues. Fifty per cent of urban rivers are classified as in poor health; vehicle kilometres travelled rose by 25 per cent in seven years; energy consumption has risen by 6.8 per cent; we are facing high benzene levels, and feral animals are increasing, particularly in our national parks. Eleven species of fish have been declared as endangered or vulnerable.

That is a snapshot of the issues of concern that were raised in that report. Even the Environment Protection Authority [EPA] spokesman, John Dengate, said in an interview on the ABC on 21 February that high smog levels were a worry. A representative from the EPA actually said on air that he was worried about high smog levels—so we have it from the horse's mouth. In addition, the Nature Conservation Council and the Total Environment Centre are urging the Government to do better. The *Sydney Morning Herald* of 23 February quotes Katherine Ridge of the Nature Conservation Council of New South Wales as accusing the Carr Government of "presiding over a clear decline in each of the State's key resources—native vegetation, water and soil."

On the same day, the director of the Total Environment Centre said that although the Carr Government had clearly identified what needed to be done, it was "failing to deliver". One of the objects of the Nature Conservation Trust Bill is to enable private land owners to give or sell land with high conservation values to a non-government body corporate trust, which will then manage the land and the agreements, apply appropriate covenants for use or resale, and undertake management or rehabilitation of that land. The trust will also have the power to enter into voluntary conservation agreements under the National Parks and Wildlife Act and property agreements under the Native Vegetation Conservation Act. The trust can also make new agreements to protect natural and cultural heritage.

The Crown is a potential participant, in the sense that it is a landowner, but it can only participate with the full written consent of any existing lease holders on that Crown land. The trust will also operate a revolving fund scheme which will buy or acquire land, arrange for appropriate covenants, sell or perhaps lease land subject to a covenant, and use the proceeds of sale to buy or lease other land. An important feature of the trust is that it will promote public knowledge and appreciation of the conservation of our natural heritage. Of course, the trust has a role in enforcing compliance with agreements in the Land and Environment Court and it will provide technical and financial assistance to land-holders.

The board will comprise 10 members, including one Aboriginal person, two representatives from State government agencies, and eight others. The independence of the board will ensure the success of the trust and its important work. All existing rights, including native title claims and mining and exploration rights, will be preserved. The board must develop a plan, which is to be approved by the Minister for the Environment, to guide its strategy for acquisitions. All property transactions into or out of the trust are to be exempt from duties and all land owned or vested by the Forestry Commission is exempt.

Funding for the trust will come, in large part, from the private sector. Private landowners and philanthropists will have the opportunity to make a contribution to the conservation of parts of our State. There is a seed funding of \$2 million, \$1 million of which comes from the New South Wales Government Native Vegetation Fund and \$1 million from the Commonwealth Natural Heritage Trust. The board must be both independent and seen to be independent if it is going to be successful in attracting private sector sponsorship. It will only be an attractive proposition if the private sector and individuals consider that it is truly independent of government.

I raised some potentially contentious issues with the Minister's staff, and I thank them for their answers. There is the potential for a future Minister for Land and Water Conservation, who considers that the financial impost of managing Crown land is particularly onerous, to see the trust as an advantageous way to offload his obligations and responsibilities in the management of land. For the integrity of the trust, it must be seen as promoting opportunities for private sector donation of land, rather than perceived as a cheaper option for government agencies or Ministers in charge of Crown land to take the easy way out and offload their on-budget responsibilities.

The Minister must ensure when considering the plans presented to him by the trust that it covers all parts of New South Wales that are desperately underrepresented in our conservation system. That includes the western woodlands and native grasslands, particularly in the far west. As most of the western division is Crown and leasehold land, it is very important not to dominate the use of these funds through Crown land. The private sector and private landowners should have the best possible opportunity to participate.

Another major issue that has been raised with me is whether or not the management of this land will be acceptable. Many neighbours of National Parks and Wildlife Service land and Crown land are aware that feral animal and noxious weed control on land owned by State agencies is often deficient. Those neighbours do their best to control weeds, feral animals and pests on their land. Yet they often find that all their good work is undone when feral animal or plant species come flooding across a boundary from a national park or Crown land.

If the trust is to be respected in the community as a good neighbour, it must apply the highest standards of management to the land that it acquires. If it does not, the objects of the trust will fall apart and the private sector sponsorship it so keenly wants to attract will not be forthcoming. No-one wants to be the neighbour of a bad land manager. I am sorry to say that in this State the worst land managers are often government agencies.

This bill is a step in the right direction. Until now, past State governments have assumed near monopoly control through the national parks and reserves system, which covers less than 7 per cent of our State and underrepresents many New South Wales habitat types. If the Australian Museum Director Mike Archer is right, our national parks cannot be sustained with the level of conserved areas currently in the system. Many areas have intensive human land use up to their boundaries, and while they played an important role in halting post-war industrial impact on our wildlife they are not sufficiently large enough to be sustained. Some people have put the label "china cabinets" on our national parks. They are cherished but they are fragile and vulnerable to single events such as disease, fire and long-term degradation through their boundaries.

Mike Archer argues for 300,000 hectares reservation for each habitat type. The CSIRO and other ecologists argue that 20 to 30 per cent of original vegetation should be conserved on farms and the World Commission on the Environment and Development wants approximately 10 per cent land protection to be enacted worldwide. Much as we might love that 7 per cent which is protected in national parks, no environment Minister should rely on parks to do the whole job. It involves the rest of the community to help us achieve those conservation outcomes outside the reserve system.

Threatened species recovery programs are worthy objectives, but of the 707 recovery plans needed only 71 had been drafted by 1998. Less than half our parks and reserves have a plan of management. Today's Auditor-General report outlined that of the 498 plans of management that are required to be produced and finalised only 119 have been finalised. In total, only 205 are under way or finalised. This is not criticism of National Parks and Wildlife Service staff, who do a terrific job with limited resources. It is acknowledgment that the job is bigger than the resources available. At the same time there are people who want to share the burden and responsibilities and see value in those successes. There is no shortage of work to be done. To that extent, the Nature Conservation Trust Bill provides us with a valuable new tool for community participation.

The experience that some people in New South Wales have had with voluntary conservation agreements also needs improving. I note that the conservation trust has the capacity to enter into voluntary conservation agreements under the National Parks and Wildlife Service Act. The National Parks and Wildlife Service should take a more flexible approach to allow people who have the demonstrated credentials and provide all the environmental conditions to enter into wildlife breeding programs and to allow responsible private landowners to play a role in species recovery programs. I have spoken to a number of landowners who have had enormous difficulty in getting access to breeding pairs of endangered animals, even though they have all the credentials and the environments in place. They are keen to share the work in this important job, but they meet with red tape.

I was recently speaking to a Peak Hill farmer who has a most outstanding voluntary conservation agreement on his property. He outlined in a recent speech the problems he had trying to fulfil his obligations with the National Parks and Wildlife Service. His experience is at odds with the supporting actions set out in the New South Wales biodiversity strategy, which states:

National parks and wildlife service should include ex-situ conservation options in recovery plans for threatened species, and improve coordination between agencies involved in ex-situ conservation and species reintroduction and restocking.

To date, only 6,000 hectares are under conservation in 72 voluntary conservation agreements around the State. We need more of those agreements.

I am pleased to say that in the middle of last year the Opposition, in my draft discussion paper on conservation issues, encouraged the whole idea of private conservation, a version of which is what we are seeing in this bill. I refer to the United States of America experience. Leading environmental organisations around the world have already made the shift and are proving results in a climate that welcomes institutional diversity. There are 1,100 private trusts in North America, including the Nature Conservancy and the American Farmland Trust, and four million acres of environmentally sensitive land are now managed in this way. I saw a media report last year where the Nature Conservancy bought three Hawaiian islands to add to its conservation areas.

These are all entirely independent of government. For example, the Nature Conservancy has 828,000 members and has protected 9.5 million acres since 1953 and currently manages 1.3 million acres. There are

some other important versions of private trusts in the United States, including the Farmland Trust which protects farmland from development pressures, and that is something we will have to put our minds to in Australia as we see population growth encroaching on some of the most productive agricultural land in New South Wales. My area is one of them, and it is of great concern.

In Australia the Bush Heritage Fund also has similar goals. It has made some important acquisitions in the Daintree and the Liffey Valley. In the United Kingdom many estate owners have responded to taxation incentives that have seen major heritage and natural estates conserved and managed sustainably and ultimately given to public ownership and enjoyment. So, while the Nature Conservation Trust Bill is important and a step in the right direction, we still have a long way to go. It will still involve a degree of co-operation with Federal governments to make sure that the tax incentives are there are to gift important conservation-value land, but certainly this bill is a step in the right direction.

Land trusts of this sort are another item on the menu of conservation that is available to us. This bill is a welcome departure from the normal mindset of monopoly of government as a self-nominated agent of conservation. I wish the trust great success. It has a very important job to do. Its success will largely come from how well it manages the land that is gifted to it or acquired by it and how independent the trust is of the political masters of the day. It is important that this trust makes inroads into adding ecosystems that are currently underrepresented in our conservation system, particularly the western woodlands and native grasslands, so we can have a much more effective conservation of diversity that exists across New South Wales and we can truly make inroads into protecting our biodiversity.

Debate adjourned on motion by Mr Thompson.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Routine of Business

Motion by Mr Whelan agreed to:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to provide that on the resumption of the House on Thursday 1 March 2001 at 2.15 p.m. the routine of business for the last sitting day of the week shall apply.

[Mr Acting-Speaker (Mr Mills) left the chair at 10.04 p.m.]

Thursday 1 March 2001

[Continuation of Wednesday's sitting.]

[The House resumed at 2.15 p.m.]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Routine of Business

[During notices of motions]

Mr MERTON: For the information of members I place on the table a CD entitled "Fix It Now."

BILLS UNPROCLAIMED

Mr SPEAKER: Pursuant to standing orders, I table a list detailing all legislation unproclaimed 90 days after assent as at 28 February 2001.

PETITIONS

Illicit Drug Use

Petition requesting a multi-media campaign to educate the general public on the dangers of illicit drug use, received from **Dr Kernohan**.

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**.

State Taxes

Petition praying that the Carr Government establishes a public inquiry into State taxes, with the objective of reducing the tax burden and creating a sustainable environment for employment and investment in New South Wales, received from **Mr Debnam**.

Cronulla Police Station Upgrading

Petition praying that the House restores to Cronulla a fully functioning police patrol and upgrades the police station, received from **Mr Kerr**.

Surry Hills Policing

Petition praying for increased police presence in the Surry Hills 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**.

Eastern Suburbs Police and Community Youth Club Closure

Petition praying that the House stops the Board of the Police and Community Youth Club New South Wales Ltd from closing and selling the Eastern Suburbs Police and Community Youth Club, received from **Ms Moore**.

Malabar Policing

Petition praying that the House notes the concern of Malabar residents at the closure of Malabar Police Station and praying that the station be reopened and staffed by locally based and led police, received from **Mr Tink**.

Randwick Police Station Downgrading

Petition praying that the House notes the concern of Randwick residents at the major downgrading and possible closure of Randwick Police Station and praying that the station be staffed 24 hours a day by locally based and led police, received from **Mr Tink**.

Northside Storage Tunnel Gas Emissions

Petition praying for the installation of an acceptable system to address health risks associated with the discharge of sewage gases from the northside storage tunnel, received from **Mr Collins**.

Genetically Modified Food

Petitions requesting an inquiry into all genetically modified food, received from **Dr Kernohan** and **Ms Moore**.

Private Schools Funding

Petition praying for opposition to any reduction in funding for private schools, received from **Mr Richardson**.

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**.

South Dowling Street Traffic Management

Petition praying that the Roads and Traffic Authority investigates all possible traffic management options and implements measures to restore residential amenity and safety to South Dowling Street between Flinders and Oxford streets, received from **Ms Moore**.

Surry Hills Clearway Restrictions

Petition praying that the clearway restrictions on Albion, Fitzroy and Foveaux streets, Surry Hills, introduced by the Roads and Traffic Authority, be removed, 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**.

National Parks Entry Fees

Petitions praying that the proposal to introduce a \$5 entry fee per car per day into national parks be rejected, received from **Mr George, Mr Oakeshott, Mr Slack-Smith, Mr Souris, Mr Stoner, Mr J. H. Turner, Mr R. W. Turner and Mr Webb**.

White City Site Rezoning Proposal

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

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I welcome to the Chamber the President of the New South Wales Indochina Association and members of his group.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

KINGS CROSS MEDICALLY SUPERVISED INJECTING ROOM

Mrs CHIKAROVSKI: My question is directed to the Premier. Given that there is agreement on both sides of the House that taverns should not be located close to schools, why does the Premier insist on locating a heroin injecting room opposite one of Sydney's busiest railway stations and near a bus stop, both used daily by hundreds of schoolchildren? What protection will those children have if the injecting room decides to turn away users who arrive already affected by heroin or alcohol?

Mr CARR: The fact is that our society, like every other society in the world—I was going to say every Western society but what I am saying applies to the developing world—for the most part has a problem of heroin dependency. Around the world—Australia is no exception—there are people injecting heroin into their veins in laneways and parks. Our view was expressed at the Drug Summit, and I was persuaded by the evidence put in front of us at the Drug Summit, that we ought to at least try something that represents an improvement on that situation. I am not saying that there is anything happy or satisfactory about a medically supervised heroin

injecting facility. I think it is lamentable that our society is at the point where we have to contemplate such a thing. But sometimes in life and in public policy there is a choice between a situation that is disastrous and one that is unpalatable. And I think it is unpalatable that we have to contemplate a medically supervised injecting room. But it just might be a little better than having people injecting themselves in a laneway or a doorway.

Ms Moore: It is getting it off the streets.

Mr CARR: As the honourable member for Bligh said, it is an opportunity to get it off the streets. More important, there is an argument that has not often been put about this matter and it is one that I would like to put. When we send paramedics out to follow up a heroin overdose in a street or a laneway we ask them to engage in unpleasant, distasteful and, not infrequently, dangerous activities. We have an obligation to think about the occupational health and safety of workers in that area. Given that the Drug Summit was held as I recall in early 1999, I am struck by the fact that it has just dawned on the Leader of the Opposition that the proposed location of the heroin injecting room is Kings Cross. I thought that had been widely publicised, and there were sound reasons for locating it there rather than somewhere else. How can Opposition members make policies on drugs when they are so out of touch with what the experts are saying. They should go to Kings Cross and talk to the experts.

Mr O'Doherty: What do the businesses say?

Mr CARR: The honourable member for Hornsby is concerned about businesses. Some of the businesses include sex shops, low dives and other disreputable establishments that, in some cases, were involved in providing space for the illegal injection of heroin without the promise of any medical facilities or medical intervention.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Yesterday there was far too much interjection, both from the Opposition frontbench and from Government members. The Premier is attempting to answer a serious question and members should remain silent and listen to that answer. Any member who has asked the Premier a question and is dissatisfied with his answer has an opportunity to ask a supplementary question, as the Leader of the Opposition did yesterday. I again ask the House to come to order and to listen to the Premier's answer in silence.

Mr CARR: I invite the House to think of the position that now prevails at Kings Cross. Schoolchildren who move through the streets to use the railway station or move out of the railway station will face, as it happens, heroin-dependent people in the gutters, in the laneways and on the streets. That is thoroughly unsatisfactory. Let us trial a different approach, that is, get the people off the streets and out of the laneways.

Mrs Chikarovski: Do you guarantee that they will not be there?

Mr CARR: I cannot guarantee anything when it comes to heroin dependency, I am sorry, and nor can you, nor can anyone—except this: Our society has a great problem, and we are going to work hard to see if we can offer better solutions.

COUNTRY ENERGY

Mr MARTIN: My question without notice is to the Premier. How is the Government improving the delivery of electricity supplies to country New South Wales?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I place the honourable member for Hornsby on three calls to order. I place the honourable member for Port Macquarie on three calls to order.

Mr CARR: Today I announced a plan to create a single, rural electricity distributor for country New South Wales—

Mr Souris: Here we go—200 jobs.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I place the Leader of the National Party on three calls to order.

Mr CARR: —without any loss of jobs. I must say how interesting it is that the Leader of the National Party mentioned 200 jobs. How many jobs went in the electricity industry in New South Wales during the seven years of the Coalition Government? Thousands and thousands and thousands, let alone the railways.

[*Interruption*]

Don't throw that newspaper article away, Carl, or use it for any other purpose than production in this House. We are going to call it Country Energy. I am not ashamed to use the word "country", even in the name of my own political party. The Leader of the National Party took the word "country" out of the name of his party. Is there anything to be ashamed of in living in the country and working for country people? We do not think so.

Country Energy will have an annual turnover of around \$1 billion, employing almost 2,500 staff. Rural and regional businesses will have an electricity supplier with the commercial muscle to compete with the biggest city-based retailers. Rural and regional families will now have an electricity supplier that is as strong and efficient as its city-based counterparts. They will have an electricity supplier making decisions in the best interests of country people. Country Energy springs from a merger of our three smaller electricity distributors: Advance Energy, Great Southern Energy and NorthPower. Industry experts agree that these businesses are too small to compete in a fully contestable electricity market. They lack the commercial grunt necessary to negotiate the best deals for their customers.

Unlike the approach taken when the Coalition was in power, there will be no job losses as a result of this merger. There will be no redundancy program because no-one will be redundant. Indeed, as in all our actions, this is focused at retaining the skills base in country New South Wales and attracting new skills to the region. Services staffed by local people will continue to be staffed by local people. Service levels will be maintained and in many cases enhanced. There will be cost savings as a result of the merger. Expensive information technology and data systems will no longer be duplicated. Country Energy will be better placed to provide competitive prices to attract industry to the country. The Managing Director designate of Country Energy will be Mr Craig Murray, the current chief executive of Advance Energy. He will remain based in Bathurst, with his top managers working in country centres across the State. One example is the office in Port Macquarie, which I will officially open in April.

[*Interruption*]

The honourable member for Port Macquarie sold his home and has not bought a new one in Port Macquarie. The level of criticism has mounted. He must be the most unpopular member in this House. I think he is getting ready to vacate the seat. Decentralisation will be the watchword of the new organisation. The Chairman of Country Energy will be Ms Barbara Ward, the current Chair of NorthPower. Great Southern Energy will also be represented on the new board. Country Energy is expected to be up and running by mid-year. Customers currently with one of the three companies to be merged will automatically transfer to the new retailer. The mergers will need to be cleared by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission.

[*Interruption*]

The honourable member for Tamworth should just worry about his preferences and be on his best behaviour at all times. Until clearance is obtained the three companies will be separately managed. This is a winning move for country New South Wales—affordable and reliable services to the people of country and regional New South Wales.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the Leader of the National Party.

Mr SOURIS: Mr Speaker—

Mr SPEAKER: The member for Cabramatta.

Ms MEAGHER: My question without notice—

Mr SOURIS: Point of order—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! If the Leader of the National Party is given the call he should address the House. If he does not address the House I will give the call to the next member who seeks it. Does the Leader of the National Party wish to ask a question?

Mr SOURIS: I do indeed.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the National Party has the call.

KINGS CROSS MEDICALLY SUPERVISED INJECTING ROOM

Mr SOURIS: My question is directed to the Premier. Is it fact that under the Premier's legislation drug users stopped by police while carrying one gram of heroin—which can be enough for as many as 20 hits—will no longer be arrested automatically, provided they tell police they are on their way to the Government's injecting room in Kings Cross? Does this give drug users a get out of gaol free card?

Mr CARR: We had this debate in the House. We had it two years ago in the House. I feel very confident that in a difficult area of public policy, after the exposition of all of the views that took place during the Drug Summit, we are leading the people of New South Wales with us in an approach that is evidence based; an approach that says we have increased resources for rehabilitation. We have the experiment of the Drug Court which, based on the latest assessment, is proving useful in getting people into rehabilitation. We have a massive increase in the methadone program, as I announced in the House late last year, and better management, reform management, of methadone. We have these programs and, as one part of a multifaceted approach on drugs, we have an experiment in a medically supervised injecting room because we happen to believe it might be better to get people, in the relatively special circumstances of Kings Cross, under medical supervision instead of dying in the streets.

LIVESCAN ELECTRONIC FINGERPRINTING SYSTEM

Ms MEAGHER: My question without notice is to the Minister for Police. What is the latest information on the Government's election commitment to install electronic fingerprinting in police stations?

Mr WHELAN: I am pleased to say that this is yet another groundbreaking initiative in policing in New South Wales delivered by this Government. New South Wales police have become the first law enforcement agency in the country to introduce a state-of-the-art digital finger and palm printing system called LiveScan. The potential of this technology in the fight against crime is enormous. Its impact is on a par with the DNA testing program and the state-of-the-art ballistics identification system that this Government introduced, and is an equally powerful tool for police. It will build on the plans of the Government for a smarter, high-tech intelligence-led Police Service.

Criminals have plenty to fear from LiveScan. Quite simply, it allows police to identify offenders and people in custody within minutes of being brought into a police station. LiveScan is the biggest breakthrough in fingerprinting since the method was pioneered by British police in 1897. Here in New South Wales it is the biggest advance in fingerprinting since 1903, when this State established Australia's first fingerprinting bureau. Even after 100 years, New South Wales continues to lead the way. The traditional system is cumbersome and outmoded. It relies on printers ink and rolling the offender's fingers onto paper. This process can produce ink prints that are substandard and distorted. Until now police have had no choice but to waste valuable time conducting physical comparisons against the thousands of fingerprints on file, in a process that can take weeks, if not months. LiveScan eliminates ink-based fingerprinting. It allows police to take instant digital scans of finger and palm prints from offenders. I am advised that, unlike ink, these prints are guaranteed to be crystal clear.

The benefits to operational police are far-reaching. It will enable police across New South Wales to quickly identify and check the records of suspects in custody. Each digital scan will be fed into a central database which will provide police with full criminal histories, outstanding warrants and links to unsolved crimes in as little 20 minutes. LiveScan complements other police computer systems and databases, enhancing intelligence and information gathering. Under the old system there was a risk that an offender using an alias could be inadvertently released on bail because of the time lag in checking against fingerprint records. I am advised that this technology will eliminate that risk.

LiveScan also has the potential to reduce violence against police officers taking fingerprints because it is a relatively passive process for offenders. I am pleased to say that police at a number of stations have already started to use the technology with considerable success. This includes Cabramatta Police Station, where it is just one of a range of initiatives in that area designed to tackle crime. Since January, police in Fairfield, Newcastle, Surry Hills and Bankstown have been using LiveScan, and they will be followed in the coming months by another six to eight stations.

By 2003 it is expected that LiveScan will be fully operational in 80 to 100 stations throughout New South Wales and police will be fully trained in the system as it is rolled out statewide. I fully expect that all

these stations will enjoy the same success as Burwood Police Station experienced after it became the first station in Australia to use the system when it was implemented during the Olympic Games. On one occasion an offender using an alias was arrested by Burwood police for a minor shoplifting offence and his fingerprints were checked against the central database. Within moments LiveScan revealed the man's true identity and allowed police to charge him in relation to 10 outstanding first instance warrants.

LiveScan presents police with a further opportunity to tackle the criminal element of New South Wales with greater efficiency than ever. I am confident that the New South Wales Police Service, already recognised as a world leader in law enforcement, will harness the full potential of LiveScan and other technologies for the benefit of New South Wales. As I have said, criminals in New South Wales—indeed, in Australia—have plenty to fear from LiveScan.

Mr SPEAKER: Whilst the member for Vacluse is approaching the lectern, I welcome students from the Kurrung High School in Wagga Wagga to today's sittings.

KINGS CROSS MEDICALLY SUPERVISED INJECTING ROOM

Mr DEBNAM: My question is directed to the Premier. Can the Premier explain why restaurant owners in Kings Cross who provide matches and ashtrays to patrons will face prosecution when heroin users will be able to walk 100 metres down the road to shoot-up heroin legally and without penalty in the Government's injecting room?

Mr CARR: What a comeback! What a comeback for the former shadow Treasurer! During the recess I read about him in the *Australian Financial Review*. It was an article that quoted a former senior New South Wales Liberal member of Parliament—that could be anyone. Think of all those who lost their seats at the last election under the leadership of the Leader of the Opposition. The former member of Parliament stated:

They are going to be—

That is the Liberal Party in New South Wales—

a bigger non-event in 2001 than they were in 2000.

The article went on to say of the member for Vacluse:

There is Peter Debnam but he doesn't seem to have a power base. He is operating in a vacuum and doesn't have any mates around him.

I wonder why! But in one respect he had the guts to stand up in the party room and move no confidence, a secondary no confidence motion in the Leader of the Opposition. She made an interesting contribution on 2GB Radio this morning. Did anyone hear it? I might circulate a transcript. There she was—

Mr Hartcher: Point of order: You have always allowed Ministers to respond to interjections and you have allowed them to make preliminary remarks. The Premier has made some preliminary remarks. There have been no interjections. It is now time for him to answer the question put to him by the honourable member for Vacluse.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order.

Mr CARR: While we are talking about drugs I am inspired to mention the *Australian Financial Review*. There was an article in the second half of last year by the shadow Minister for Urban Affairs and Planning advocating the decriminalisation of drugs.

Mr Brogden: You are a liar!

Mr CARR: I am a liar? Perhaps I should take the article and circulate it and allow people to determine whether I have stood up in the House and lied about it. There were no qualifications.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I place the honourable member for Wakehurst on three calls to order.

Mr CARR: The article was in the *Australian Financial Review*, it was by John Brogden and it did urge decriminalisation of drugs.

Mr Brogden: No, it didn't.

Mr CARR: Yes, it did. Members of the Opposition, working overtime—two years after the Drug Summit, two years after we announced the policy—struggle into the House and quiz us about something that was debated in this Parliament. The legislation passed the Parliament. Working overtime, they decide: When we debate this we will show how alert we are. It is a little like the performance on the related matter on 2GB this morning. I have never heard from any politician in this country a more disdainful, snobbish or condescending approach. The head of the Marrickville Chamber of Commerce rang 2GB this morning and challenged what the Leader of the Opposition said about getting shot in the Marrickville shopping centre. The transcript gives the most astonishingly condescending approach. The Deputy Premier heard it as he came in today. He came into my office—

Mr Debnam: Point of order: My point of order is to relevance. I am asking about ashtrays. The Premier should answer the question.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! No point of order is involved.

Mr CARR: Six months after the ban on smoking in restaurants was announced and two years after the medically supervised injecting room was announced, they get around to asking questions.

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

Mr CARR: And, by the way, the Opposition supported the initiative of the Minister for Health; members on the other side supported it. At the present time in Kings Cross people in these fine dining establishments are able to witness people injecting themselves in gutters, parks or laneways. The Government proposed an experiment, a different approach, that might clean up the streets and, above all, might save lives and, incidentally, might make the work of paramedics easier, not harder.

HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE

Ms MEGARRITY: My question without notice is to the Minister for Education and Training. How is the Government helping students get a head start on the new higher school certificate [HSC] being introduced for the first time this year?

Mr AQUILINA: Mr Speaker, I was pleased to note your welcome to students of Kurringal High School, a fine school with outstanding passes in last year's HSC. This is the first year of the new HSC. More than 60,000 final year students will sit the new HSC at the end of this year, following the Government's restructure of final year education announced early in our first term. This year a total of 90 subjects will be examined including Hebrew, chemistry, legal studies, food technology, drama, Maltese and classical Greek. Today I am releasing the specimen examination papers for the new HSC. Those papers are a model of the final exams and a chance for students to practise their skills and develop an understanding of a way that the examinations are structured.

This is also a chance for the entire community to see for themselves the calibre of teaching and learning in our schools and the type of questions being asked as part of Australia's toughest school exam. Questions asked in the new HSC are of the standard once expected of first-year university students. This reflects the rapid advances in teaching and education, not least the rollout of computers and Internet research tools in schools across the State. Students in New South Wales schools now have unprecedented access to information, research and primary resources from around the globe. The new HSC reflects this access by the increased degree of difficulty and the expectation that students will have devoted time and effort to expanding their knowledge outside of core texts.

The new HSC is harder, more varied and more detailed than its predecessor. Students will need to study these papers and associated materials closely and discuss them with their teachers and parents over the coming months. It is important that every student get a feel for the type of question and degree of difficulty that the new HSC involves. These papers will be an invaluable guide for students preparing for their final exams. The new HSC is also a snapshot of the standard of education in the final years of school; that snapshot is an impressive one. It shows that students are meeting standards of knowledge and comprehension previously expected of first-year university students.

In vocational subjects, it shows that this year's year 12 students will have a hands-on understanding of their courses not normally developed until apprenticeship level. Language students will graduate with a genuine

understanding not just of spelling and grammar but also of that nation's cultural and linguistic structure. Drama and dance students will demonstrate skills worthy of public performance immediately on completion of their final exams. This year's year 12 students will be the first to sit the new HSC, replacing the Wyndham Scheme which has operated in New South Wales for more than 30 years.

Although the Wyndham Scheme was initially introduced as a New South Wales-based examination structure, it was quickly copied by other States and Territories and is the basis for most final year exams in Australia. The introduction of the new HSC in New South Wales is, therefore, a significant event in education in Australia and is likely to lead to changes in examinations in other States and Territories in coming years. A key feature of the new HSC is that for the first time students will be marked directly on the basis of what they know and can demonstrate. Unlike in previous years, the marks of students will not be scaled on the basis of the overall cohort, that is, on what other students from around New South Wales achieved.

The community has a right to expect that students are finishing school with the skills they need to find jobs. We all need to take an interest in what our schools are teaching and what standard of learning our students receive. Unlike previous HSC exams students will receive a mark based on their performance instead of being scaled against the rest of New South Wales. A minimum expected standard has been set for each course. Students who reach or exceed the minimum standard will be awarded a mark of 50 or more out of 100. In the new HSC students will have a much clearer understanding of what they need to do in order to receive high marks.

The new HSC specimen examination papers and associated marking guidelines are now available on the Board of Studies web site. I urge everyone—parents, students, employers and the community—to take the time to examine the papers and take an interest in what our young people are expected to know. From time to time my staff accuse me of having withdrawal symptoms from being out of the classroom. I like to mark the letters I receive to make sure that the grammar and the spelling are accurate and correct. I have the "2001 HSC Specimen Paper for English (Standard) and (Advance)". I appeal to members of the Opposition that if they wish to complete this I will undertake to mark it for them.

SOUTHERN MEATS GOULBURN ABATTOIR

Ms HODGKINSON: How does the Minister for Regional Development respond to the manager of Southern Meats at Goulburn, Mr Neville Newton, who is so fed up with the Minister's failure to cut red tape, such as the Sydney catchment area draft environment plan, that he is considering closing his abattoir and taking his business and 500 jobs interstate?

Mr WOODS: Southern Meats in Goulburn has concerns about the State Government's draft regional environment plan; they say it will impact on their business. This is a matter of serious concern and more properly a matter for the Minister for Urban Affairs and Planning. However, the Government is committed to protecting Sydney's drinking water and is seeking community input into that draft regional environment plan. Consultations are being carried out and are continuing across the catchment. I understand that the Minister has extended the period of consultation on the draft plan and he will arrange a second exhibition before it is finalised. Some misinformation is being distributed in the area which has caused unnecessary community concern. A number of the comments of the local government representatives are misleading and they do not properly reflect the draft plan. We will make every effort to ensure that Southern Meats is happy and to assist them in any way we can.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I place the honourable member for Gosford on three calls to order.

Mr WOODS: The Leader of the Opposition interjects, and well she might. So should the Leader of the National Party. People have been calling the Federal Leader of the National Party the weakest link. They are now calling the Leader of the National Party in this State—the chief of the bunyip aristocracy—the missing link, because he will not make any statement on the policies of One Nation.

Ms Hodgkinson: Point of order: My point of order is relevance. This is an important issue about the potential loss of 500 jobs in Goulburn. I ask that the Minister be directed to address the relevant points of the question.

Mr WOODS: The missing link knows well, as we all do, what One Nation stands for. It stands for policies that would cease immigration, reintroduce protectionism and stop assistance to disadvantaged people. If he wants to cease being called the missing link, he needs to make a comment on these policies.

REGIONAL BUSINESS INVESTMENT TOURS

Mr NEWELL: My question without notice is to the Minister for Regional Development, and Minister for Rural Affairs. What is the latest information on the Government's regional business investment strategy?

Mr WOODS: The Government has a strong strategy for attracting new investment to country New South Wales. Part of that strategy is the regional business investment tour. Economic growth in country New South Wales in many areas has prospered.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Five members on the Opposition frontbench are on three calls. All members who have been called to order are now on three calls.

Mr WOODS: The regional business investment tours are an important part of the strategy to bring capital to country New South Wales. Business has been written as a result of the tours. The Government has held four tours, which have been very successful. Networks have been forged and contacts have been made.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I ask the Serjeant-at-Arms to remove the honourable member for Orange. I have given the House sufficient warning. One second after I gave the warning, the honourable member for Orange immediately interjected.

Mr R. W. Turner: You referred to those members who had been called to order. I had not been placed on a call.

[The honourable member for Orange left the Chamber, accompanied by the Serjeant-at-Arms.]

Mr Hartcher: Point of order—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I understand the point of order the honourable member for Gosford seeks to take. The Chair extends the courtesy of warning members three times, although the Chair is not obliged to do so. The fact that I placed all members on three calls to order should have acted as a warning. If a member interrupts after the Chair has given such a warning, that member runs the risk of being ejected from the House. That is what has now occurred.

Mr WOODS: These regional business investment tours offer city investors a unique opportunity to visit regional centres and to see the true potential of regional New South Wales. So far we have taken 65 senior investors to centres across New South Wales, such as Griffiths, Tamworth, Armidale, Bathurst, the Tweed, Nowra and Lismore. The tours have been well received by the financial community and regional business. The tours provide businesses with an opportunity to gain a real understanding of what investors are looking for. I am pleased to inform the House that a fifth tour will be held between 18 and 20 April. Twenty investors from Sydney will visit Albury, Narrandera and Mudgee. I am sure that members who represent those electorates will welcome the investors to their respective patches.

A mix of representatives will be on the tour: senior bank personnel, venture capitalists, business angels, accountants and business advisers. The investors will look at industries such as viticulture, agribusiness, transport and value-added processing. These tours expose city investors, who are often restrained in the Sydney central business district, to new opportunities for investment. On the other side of the coin, the tours give country businesses a unique opportunity to access the capital that is often lacking in regional areas. Investors such as the Australian Stock Exchange, the National Australia Bank and the Quadrant Capital Fund have all been represented on previous tours, and they have found them enlightening. Our tours have led to investors developing important relationships with regional businesses.

Many regional companies have gained professional advice from investors on the tour as to how they can further develop their business. For example, in Tweed Heads, Blackwatch Boats was able to raise local finance when it started to define its capital needs as preparation for the business investment tour. Nimbin Sawmill on the North Coast was successful in raising equity to market a prototype mobile sawmill, which it will exhibit in the United States of America later this year. At least a further 15 companies are either in negotiations with investors from the tours or in discussions with other venture capitalists as a result of the exposure they gained on the tour. The companies are as diverse as the regions they represent: a vineyard in the Murray; an olive company in the north-west; a boat manufacturer in Nowra; a software company on the North Coast; and a grain processor and marketer in Moree.

The regional business investment tours form a crucial part of the Government's Country Lifestyles program that aims to promote regional New South Wales as a good place to live and a good place to do business. One of the main problems impeding investment in country New South Wales is the negative perception in some people's minds, particularly those in the city, about doing business in rural and regional areas. These investment tours are about matching up city investors—the people who have the capital and the desire to invest—with innovative and promising ventures in country New South Wales. I have said it before: Rural New South Wales is an important part of the State's economy and it offers some of the solutions for the State's economic prosperity.

Aside from the environmental advantages, country New South Wales provides a variety of resources, in particular, human resources. With advances in telecommunications and computer technology, it is even more desirable to invest in rural and regional New South Wales. We learnt a great deal from the first tour, which took 26 investors to Grafton and Dubbo. The theme that came out of the trip was the need for rural businesses to be what investors call "investment ready". We used that principle when planning for the second tour in June, which took 14 investors to Griffith, Tamworth and Armidale. On a third tour 15 investors visited Bathurst, Tweed Heads and Nowra. The fourth tour took 20 investors to Lismore, the Upper Hunter and the Murray shire.

This Government will continue to provide those opportunities and to look for new investment and new jobs in country New South Wales. That is in direct contrast to the Opposition, particularly the National Party, which has nothing to say on policy or strategy, and no contribution to make to country people. Country people see that day in and day out, time and again. That is why the Federal Leader of the National Party is known as the weakest link and the Leader of the National Party in this State is known as the missing link. He is quick to interject, but he needs to tell people, because they are entitled to know, which camp he is in. Is he in the Causley-Katter camp or is he in the Anderson camp? Causley says this, because this is what they think, "I've never had any problem with One Nation policies." That is what the Causley-Katter camp says. Why would he have a problem with One Nation policies when he says this, talking about the stolen generation, "I never hear anything from them"—that is the Aborigines—"saying they're thankful, that we were saved from death."

Mr Piccoli: Point of order: I refer to relevance and your ruling that everybody is on three calls and that they should not interject when the Minister is making a statement. I ask you to draw the Minister's attention to the fact that the answer is a statement, and I ask that you not allow him to have this free time to take scurrilous shots at members of the Opposition.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The point of order has some relevance.

Mr WOODS: I am, in fact, responding to the interjections of the Leader of the National Party. I remind the Opposition of the other camp, the camp of Anderson and Borbidge. Rob Borbidge said, "We must not be tempted to flirt with the ugly extremes of Australian politics." Why does the Leader of the National Party not have the guts to walk out of here and tell us where he stands?

HONOURABLE MEMBER FOR FAIRFIELD FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Mr HARTCHER: My question without notice is to the Premier. Does he endorse the extraordinary action of the Speaker in giving financial support to the honourable member for Fairfield, Mr Joe Tripodi, when the apprehended violence order taken against him by Ms Yael Larkin has not even been heard at Waverley Court?

Mr CARR: Yes.

Mr HARTCHER: I ask a supplementary question.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Gosford understands that a supplementary question must arise from the information given in the answer.

Mr HARTCHER: It certainly does. In view of the fact that the Premiere endorses the Speaker's action, will he now introduce legislation to change the law on contempt of court, which provides that people should not comment on guilt or innocence before a matter is heard by the court?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! That is not a supplementary question. I rule the question out of order.

COALITION LAW AND ORDER POLICY

Mr THOMPSON: I direct my question to the Premier. What is the Government's reaction to the Opposition's recent statements on law and order and related matters?

Mr CARR: This is definitely not a Thursday report. I was going to say nothing. I was going to take it relatively easy today, but the incessant provocation, which I am sure provoked the sympathy of all members on this side of the House, forces me to draw the attention of all members and, indeed, the public to the transcript of the remarkable interview given on the Terry Willesee program today by none other than the Leader of the Opposition, who now withdraws from the Chamber. She accepted an invitation by the Willesee program, but she was taken by surprise when Morris Hanna, the President of the Chamber of Commerce at Marrickville, phoned up to object to her remarks yesterday that one could not go shopping in Marrickville without getting shot. Morris Hanna made a number of points. He said:

We've worked very hard for three years. We've got regular meetings with the local police. Why are you singling out Marrickville? Why are you saying these things about Marrickville?

He pointed out that many members of his Chamber of Commerce vote Liberal, live outside of the area and are distressed by her comments. She is working very hard to get the world's highest disapproval rating. You do not get a 50 per cent disapproval rating without lots of hard work! This is a good example. Terry Willesee asked a lot of questions about whether she said it and what she meant. Her twisting and turning, as she developed an aggrieved dismissive tone, is something that honourable members would appreciate more by listening to it on tape rather than simply reading the clinical transcript.

Mr Brogden: Then sit down!

Mr CARR: I am coming to you, so just relax—fasten your seatbelt! The Leader of the Opposition offered a range of explanations. By the way, Terry Willesee got the reporter to play the tape. Willesee said:

Okay, Mrs Chikarovski, there seems to be a grey area here. I have a tape here from our news reporter Cameron Hamilton who was covering that story, and here's a sound byte from what you said. Here it is.

The tape was played to 2GB listeners, and I understand that the Deputy Premier, the honourable member for Marrickville, nearly drove off the road as he had to listen to it. This is the sound byte:

People in the community rightly feel that they can't go shopping. You can't go shopping in Marrickville nowadays because someone's likely to be shooting in the streets. That is ridiculous.

The explanation for the statement is this:

Well, if you actually listened to the tone of that remark, Terry and Morris, you'll see that it was a question—you know you can't go shopping in the streets?

She inserted a question mark. She said that it was not a statement and it cannot be treated as a statement. It was not a clarifying sentence. It is not to be considered, weighed or assessed as a statement. She was, in fact, asking a question. I have to say that on the tape there is no hint of a remodulation. There is no sudden lift; there is no glaring inflection. It was a statement. Her defence is that she was asking a question. I do not want to be cruel; I will not elaborate on that. The transcript speaks for itself.

As for this grand attack on drugs, I have made some remarks about the primitive view of members of the Opposition. They discovered that two years ago an announcement was made about a medically supervised injecting room, and legislation passed through this House. It has been on the agenda for two years, but it has taken them until now to raise it. That is how they got around to raising it in question time, which rather forces me to point out some comments made by members of the Liberal Party. For example, the Hon. J. F. Ryan in the upper House answers the question for me. He said:

The bill does not prevent police from exercising discretion for people selling drugs. That is absolutely untrue.

That is the Liberal member John Ryan, a member of the Legislative Council [MLC]. He also said:

The proposed trial is not a blind rush to decriminalise heroin—

Mr Hartcher: I reject that.

Mr CARR: The honourable member for Gosford rejects that. This is a member of the Liberal Party, his parliamentary colleague. The Hon. J. F. Ryan continued:

—it is a trial on a very tight legal leash.

He then said:

I personally support this bill because I am motivated by a strong sense of compassion, which I am sure extends across the House; I do not claim a monopoly on compassion. I accept that people who take drugs have made a foolish life decision.

I endorse that; I could not put it better myself. He continued:

They are breaking the law, and the few drug addicts I have known are not, in the main, pleasant people to know. Often they are selfish and self-seeking.

However, I do not think any of us would expect them to pay for these misdeeds with their lives if it is possible to avoid that.

Those words are from a member of the Liberal Party speaking in the upper House. Of the trial at Kings Cross he said:

I hope it will rescue the dying.

He said that when he visited the Kings Cross area the facts spoke for themselves. He gave an account of his visit to Kings Cross and said:

I also saw two young people in stairwells in close proximity to the street. They were shooting up as plain as day.

That was happening in the street and in the stairwells at Kings Cross. He said that was taking place in the sight of all at Kings Cross. I could not have put it better. That is why we persuaded the Parliament—not only this House, where the majority speaks for itself, but the other House—to commit itself to this trial. John Ryan said:

I found that only one business person was totally opposed to the injecting room of the type proposed by the bill. Many of the others had views that I am sure honourable members of this House would find fascinating, ranging from either full support to reluctant but nevertheless strong acceptance.

He made those comments after his visit to Kings Cross. During the debate in Committee about injecting rooms, the honourable member for Hawkesbury moved an amendment. I do not want to risk putting words in his mouth, so I will quote a little from *Hansard*. He referred to:

... my great concern that the efficacy of a single injecting room operating for only seven hours a day will fail in terms of the initiatives being pursued by the Government. Overseas experience indicates that while most injecting rooms operate for only seven hours a day, because of the stress present amongst workers in the area ... most cities have more than one injecting room to allow a spread of hours.

The honourable member made that constructive contribution in an effort to get this trial as right as we can—I do not claim simply that we can get it right—given the difficulty of dealing with heroin addiction. That was a thoughtful contribution by a Liberal Party member of this House. On 12 October 1999, the Hon. Dr B. P. V. Pezzutti acknowledged what the Government is doing with a series of alcohol experiments. He said:

I acknowledge the Premier's commitment to obtaining results in this area. The Premier, quite rightly, said that he is prepared to try anything, as long as it is reasonable, to conduct trials in this area and to achieve evidence-based outcomes. That was a commitment he made at the Drug Summit.

The Hon. Dr B. P. V. Pezzutti said, by implication, that it was a worthwhile experiment. He did not embark upon the ridiculous rearguard response that the Opposition trundled out at question time. In the *Australian Financial Review* of 20 June 2000, the honourable member for Pittwater is quoted as saying:

A progressive Liberal agenda must address—

among other issues—

drug law reform.

Mr O'Farrell: Is that decriminalisation, Bob? You claimed that he said "decriminalisation". You lied.

Mr CARR: That is not the end of the quote. The honourable member continued:

We gain nothing from criminalising addiction instead of treating it.

Mr O'Farrell: You still lied to the House.

Mr CARR: The honourable member said:

We must be brave enough to experiment with solutions to drug addiction that recognise the failure of criminal law ...

The *Manly Daily* of 29 October 1999 said:

Mr Brogden said he stood by his views for a more compassionate, pragmatic approach to helping addicts.

'However, the majority of the parliamentary Liberal Party held another view, and that view prevailed at Tuesday's party room meeting.'

'I took the opportunity to argue my views within the forum provided by the Liberal Party and my position was unsuccessful on this occasion.'

The fact is that this Parliament accepted our legislation, which provides for a trial. The trial in itself is not the answer; we have never pretended that. However, we think it is worth doing in the context of a range of other approaches because it might save lives, minimise the risk to health workers in the field, clean up Kings Cross and offer some way forward. I am happy for any observer of State politics to examine the *Hansard* record of today's question time because it will show which side is trying and working sincerely and which side is a bunch of blow-hard opportunists.

Questions without notice concluded.

DRUG USE DECRIMINALISATION

Personal Explanation

Mr BROGDEN (Pittwater) [3.23 p.m.], by leave: Earlier today the Premier said in Parliament, as he has said in the past, that I supported the decriminalisation of drugs in New South Wales. I repeat that that is certainly not, and has never been, my position. The Premier lied to Parliament; he has lied in the past and he continues to lie about my position on this matter.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member knows very well that the Chair takes exception to a member saying outright that another member has lied. I ask the honourable member to withdraw; he may use other language. That word is not acceptable to the Chair because it is not acceptable to those in the gallery listening to the debate. The honourable member is as aware as all other members of my stance on this issue. I ask him to be more temperate in the language he uses in his personal explanation.

Mr BROGDEN: The Premier was clearly mendacious in his position; he was not truthful. Mr Speaker, under your ruling, if the Premier were to take umbrage at my allegation, he could come to the Chamber and correct the position. He has not, and has never, done that. My statement about this matter is quite clear. I do not support the decriminalisation of drugs, I simply believe the criminalisation of drug addiction and simple legal treatments beyond other optional treatments do not work. My position is clear; there is a difference between the two positions. The Premier's willingness to tell untruths about this matter is very sad.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member cannot launch a personal attack on another member under the pretext of making a personal explanation.

Mr O'Farrell: He was attacked.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! That is okay. The standing orders are explicit: members cannot make a personal attack on another member under the pretext of making a personal explanation. I draw that to the honourable member's attention.

Mr BROGDEN: The Premier's mendacity in this matter is extraordinary. He continues to be misleading about this issue, which concerns me. His attacks should cease because he is simply being untruthful. I ask you, Mr Speaker, to seek to protect the honour of individual members when the Premier or Ministers tell untruths about them in the future.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Chair does not usually reply to those sorts of comments, but for the edification of others I point out that the Chair is never in a position to determine whether a statement made by a

member in this Chamber is correct. That is why the standing orders make provision for personal explanations, which allow honourable members to draw the attention of the House to their interpretation of events. It is not up to the Chair to determine the veracity of any statement made in this House.

CONSIDERATION OF URGENT MOTIONS

Livestock Diseases

Mr AMERY (Mount Druitt—Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Land and Water Conservation) [3.27 p.m.]: I ask the House to give priority to my motion regarding Australia's livestock industries. In support of this motion, I cite the recent publicity given to the foot and mouth disease outbreak in Britain, the quarantine of livestock in that country and the concern expressed by livestock producers and consumers. This motion should be given priority so that we may place on record what Australian and State authorities are doing in light of worldwide concern about this disease outbreak.

Violent Crime in New South Wales

Mr TINK (Epping) [3.28 p.m.]: There is a high rate of violent crime in New South Wales, particularly in Sydney, and it is plain that armed hold-up statistics are more important than the matter that the Minister for Agriculture has raised. If my motion is given priority, I will show that this State lags behind every other State in the Commonwealth in tackling the incidence of armed hold-ups. I will demonstrate that the clear-up rate for armed hold-ups in this State is an absolute disgrace compared with all other jurisdictions in the country. I will also show that since the Carr Government came to office the rate of armed hold-ups in New South Wales has increased by 139 per cent. If my motion is given priority, I will reveal how the public was grievously misled by claims in the press today that the rate of armed hold-ups is under control. I will show that hold-ups—armed and unarmed hold-ups, hold-ups with weapons and hold-ups with weapons other than firearms—are at crisis level in this State.

My motion, if given priority, will enable me to show that in many parts of Sydney there is a very real risk of ordinary members of the public being caught up in armed hold-ups. My motion, if given priority, will enable me to demonstrate that in my area, which is a low-crime area according to the Minister's official crime statistics, the Pennant Hills Bowling Club was held up the other night during trading hours and 12 people were told to lie on the floor while the place was ransacked. My motion, if given priority, will enable me to show that the problems that befell Pennant Hills Bowling Club the other night are befalling clubs, businesses and ordinary people all over Sydney, particularly in south-western Sydney, western Sydney and rural and regional New South Wales.

My motion, if given priority, will allow me to demonstrate that the rate of crime, the solving of crime, and particularly the solving of violent crime, are an unmitigated and absolute disgrace vis-a-vis any other jurisdiction, State or Territory, and vis-a-vis any other major policing jurisdiction in the Western world. New South Wales is the worst crime jurisdiction in this country. A recent independent and influential survey by the Dutch Ministry of Justice that compared jurisdictions around the world showed that New South Wales and the Minister for Police, after six years, have the worst rating anywhere in the Western world.

My motion, if given priority, will allow me to demonstrate why, if the Minister cannot get the situation under control within 12 months, he ought to resign. He should get armed hold-ups down at least to the national average. All I am seeking in the motion is that the rate of armed hold-ups be rolled back to the national average and the rate of solving armed hold-up crimes be raised to the national average. If the Minister cannot even put in an average performance over the next 12 months it will be time for him to go. By that stage New South Wales will have had seven years of ministerial incompetence in the police portfolio. There will have been seven years of mayhem on the streets of Sydney in particular. Not a day goes by when there is not a major drive-by shooting reported somewhere. This situation has arisen under this Minister and under this Government.

It is a level of crime that was foreign to New South Wales prior to this Minister taking over the police portfolio. There is an appalling level of solving of violent crime. The level has not been so low since the Minister moved into the office in College Street. The Minister should be allowed but one more year to deal with the situation and then he ought to be given his marching orders. Today the Premier spoke about Marrickville. He should have listened to members of the public who telephoned to support the Leader of the Opposition in relation to violent crime in Marrickville and elsewhere. [*Time expired.*]

Question—That the motion for urgent consideration of the honourable member for Mount Druitt be proceeded with—agreed to.

LIVESTOCK DISEASES

Urgent Motion

Mr AMERY (Mount Druitt—Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Land and Water Conservation) [3.33 p.m.]: I move:

That this House:

- (1) notes that Australia, particularly New South Wales, has the cleanest livestock industries in the world; and
- (2) further notes that the future of Australia's agricultural industries depends on maintaining vigilance against importing disease.

I thank the House for giving precedence to my motion, which is particularly urgent in light of the shocking crisis which is current in Great Britain. Several weeks ago we were told of the problem with bovine spongiform encephalopathy [BSE], which is known to many as mad cow disease. This week we have read reports about the devastating foot and mouth disease which has now taken hold in Britain. This is an opportunity for members of this House and members of the farming community in New South Wales and around Australia to send their deepest sympathies to the farming community in Britain, which in the past few years has gone through a sequence of events which have virtually brought the livestock industries to their knees.

While members of this House can boast about the great work done by our livestock people, our farming community, rural lands protection boards, government departments and so on to protect Australian industries, and although we may be proud of our record, we cannot be complacent. With livestock disease outbreaks there is no such thing as a 100 per cent guarantee. Foot and mouth disease is one of the world's most contagious animal diseases, affecting cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, et cetera. I am informed that 27 farms in Britain have now been confirmed as being infected with foot and mouth disease. The television footage of farmers burning their livestock by the thousand is, of course, necessary but also still very shocking. As the British Prime Minister, the Hon. Tony Blair, has said:

The funeral pyres of farm animals are the worst nightmare for livestock farmers.

That was reported in today's *Australian* newspaper. We have also heard that foot and mouth disease is spreading to the mainland of Europe. Authorities in France, Germany and the Netherlands have directed the slaughter of more than 38,000 sheep, cattle, pigs and deer. There is an absolute crisis in Britain at the moment, and it is appropriate for us to reflect on the hardships being experienced. It is imperative that there is not such a crisis here in Australia. The Newcastle disease outbreaks were a major disease control operation for New South Wales. But they were not on the scale of the mass slaughter of livestock which could face us if a foot and mouth outbreak occurred in this country. Britain's countryside—including race meetings and some sporting events—has come to a virtual standstill.

The New South Wales Government has nominated two New South Wales Agriculture officers to be considered by the Commonwealth as part of Australia's contingent to help out in the United Kingdom. They are Mr Bruce Christie, supervisor of the Centre of Excellence for Animal and Plant Diseases at the Elizabeth Macarthur Agricultural Institute in Camden, and Dr Regina Fogarty, who is executive assistant to the deputy director-general and has a background in animal welfare and pig husbandry and research. We await news from the Commonwealth on their appointments. We are proud of the work we are putting in to prevent such diseases coming to New South Wales and Australia, and the results that the work has generated. Australia has not experienced an outbreak of foot and mouth disease in more than 100 years. This is despite the disease being considered endemic in parts of Asia, Africa, South America and the Middle East.

Australia is one of only six countries in the world which enjoys the highest category one freedom status from BSE. In light of our clean status, I am pleased to note that the Federal agriculture Minister, Warren Truss, issued a statement last week outlining the moves the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service [AQIS] has taken to protect animal industries in Australia. AQIS has suspended imports of semen and embryos of cattle, deer, sheep and goats from United Kingdom. It has also revoked all current import permits for those products. It has suspended imports from the UK of items which include material derived from affected animals, including dairy products and meat-based flavourings. I congratulate AQIS and Minister Truss on these important immediate moves.

I am informed that there is very little threat to Australia from the British outbreak of foot and mouth disease. This is partly due to the distance between Britain and Australia, and also the prohibition of imports

which I have just mentioned. I can also inform the House that the swill feeding of pigs has been implicated as starting the outbreak in the UK. But swill feeding of pigs on food such as table scraps or hospital and restaurant scraps has been banned in Australia for many years.

But all this does not mean that we can rest easy. Yesterday we were notified of a foot and mouth disease outbreak in Taiwan, a country still trying to recover from a foot and mouth epidemic in 1997. If this disease were to spread to Australia it could cost our economy billions of dollars. Fortunately, Australia has imported no meat or foot and mouth disease risk-products from Taiwan since that 1997 outbreak. Continued vigilance and preparedness are vital. Provisions are in place for a rapid and effective response should an exotic disease outbreak occur. Australian livestock industries and veterinary authorities have already put a great deal of effort into developing an emergency plan for such outbreaks. This is known as the Australian veterinary emergency plan [AusVetPlan]. This gives the framework for a joint Federal and State response to an exotic disease outbreak.

In relation to BSE, Australia is one of only six countries that are categorised as being free of the disease. The others are New Zealand, Argentina, Paraguay, Chile and Norway. This status has been achieved through bans on the imports of cattle and beef products from risk countries. We have also banned meat and bone meal feed. There is also active, ongoing surveillance nationwide. We must continue to maintain our freedom status and ensure that feed bans, in particular, are complied with and are fully understood. There is no evidence of producers or feed manufacturers flouting these feed bans.

However, New South Wales Agriculture and rural lands protection board officers are holding discussions with producers to ensure that they fully understand all the requirements with which the bans need to comply. Audits are also being carried out on retail outlets to ensure full understanding and compliance. The national industry-government organisation, Safemeat, has established a ruminant feed ban working group, which is responsible for re-evaluating current exemptions to the existing ruminant feeding restrictions. The Safemeat group has recommended urgent field trials of new BSE tests, further development of animal feed tests to ensure compliance with mammalian feed bans and a revision of exemptions to the current ban on mammalian ruminant feed. It recommends that meat and bone meals containing porcine, equine and macropod materials should no longer be exempt from feed bans, as well as blood, blood products and meat that has been approved for human consumption then cooked, reheated and processed into the animal feed.

The Safemeat working group considered there was no basis to vary existing exemptions allowing the feeding of tallow, gelatine and milk products to ruminants. It also noted that poultry meals, or offal and feather, and fish meals can be fed to ruminants in Australia under the current legislation and that there was no scientific or regulatory basis to change this practice. These recommendations will be considered by the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Resource Management [SCARM] and the Agriculture and Resource Management Council of Australia and New Zealand [ARMCANZ] in early March, and New South Wales will alter its legislation in line with the ARMCANZ decisions.

The positive side of all this is that Australian producers can tap into further export markets, as it has done with the pork industry into Asia in recent times. Our livestock, cropping, horticultural and other primary industries are considered the best in the world for wholesome residue-free status. This is because of the ready adoption of quality assurance standards by our farmers. New South Wales Agriculture will continue to promote this vitally important aspect in all its research, advisory, education and regulatory roles. I again ask the House to note this as a matter of urgency. We send to farmers in the United Kingdom the deepest sympathy of all producers and authorities in this country on their plight. If our nominated people in New South Wales are accepted by the Federal authorities, hopefully New South Wales will be part of the contingent to help authorities and farmers in the United Kingdom and Europe deal with this devastating outbreak of foot and mouth disease.

Mr ARMSTRONG (Lachlan) [3.43 p.m.]: I lead for the Opposition on this matter and at the outset wish to state the support of the Opposition for the spirit and intent of the Government's motion. My colleague the honourable member for Barwon will also make some comments on behalf of the Opposition. This is probably one of the most serious problems besetting governments and the entire population of this country that we have seen for some considerable time. Only this week a national paper reported on its front page that the rural economy is recovering, it is basically enjoying a boom in some products and an increased return for some products. However, we now have the real threat of potentially inheriting one of the worst diseases known to mankind.

It is significant that only yesterday the Government moved a motion in relation to the export of lambs into the United States of America. Although the motion was slightly political, it made the strong point that the

export of lamb to the United States is one of our fastest-growing industries. Tragedy could hit this country in the form of disease being carried here, perhaps in the webbing of a backpack worn by a backpacker who worked on a farm in England a week or two ago. Or it could be carried through someone arriving by plane, who was wearing boots with caterpillar soles, and who then became a fruit picker in Young or wherever. It is not well recognised that carnivorous and herbivorous animals, including humans eating sushimi-type meats can transfer foot and mouth disease and, therefore, the potential for disease is horrific. It also can be airborne. Indeed, one of our equestrian members, Andrew Hoy, found himself isolated in Europe with his horse because the disease can be carried in horsehair on the bottom of a saddlecloth, highlighting the ease of transmission.

This country has already experienced exotic diseases. Over the years there have been a couple of minor outbreaks, particularly in the north, of some of the blue-tongue vectors but not, fortunately, the more serious one. Unfortunately, New South Wales joins Victoria, South Australia and now Western Australia in having the problem of ovine Johne's disease [OJD], and the devastating effect that has on producers, the economies of those regions and confidence in new investment. One can imagine what would happen if Australia had an outbreak of foot and mouth disease. Historically, the outbreak occurs on one or two dairy farms, maybe in the midlands.

To demonstrate the gravity of this problem, an outbreak of the disease means that an area of approximately 50 kilometres is completely destroyed of all animal life and is quarantined for weeks. It is essential that we support the spirit of this motion and I join with the Government in calling upon the Commonwealth to enlist and marshal all resources so that the most stringent quarantine provisions can be put in place. This should apply not only to animals, animal products and food products but also to people entering this country, particularly those who have had contact or may have had contact with rural areas in England in recent months. Australia cannot afford to have this disease.

The Minister for Agriculture is responsible for the health of food in New South Wales. I call upon the Minister to ensure that the New South Wales food authority is responsible for the hygiene and quality of foods in this State in accordance with the Profile of Safefood Production New South Wales, which was announced last year. It is a statutory body established under the Food Production (Safety) Act 1998 and commenced on 1 July 1999. Safefood is responsible for the safe production, processing, wholesale and distribution of all primary produce and seafood for human consumption from the paddock or ocean to the back door of the retail shop, with additional coverage for retail butcher shops and supermarket meat departments. Where national food safety standards are in place, Safefood is responsible for ensuring their implementation in the industries it covers.

These standards currently include those in the meat industry developed by the Agriculture and Resource Management Council of Australia and New Zealand [ARMCANZ] and will include the proposed food safety standards developed by the Australia-New Zealand Food Authority [ANZFA]. That authority is the most powerful authority in this State on food safety, health, hygiene, production, abattoirs and so on. However, it is being starved of resources. I ask the Minister to meet with officers of the authority and ascertain which resources are deficient, preventing the authority from being able to function properly. I also ask that he meet with, or call into his office, the warring parties who have been in contest for eight or nine months. I ask the Minister to wave the white flag and ask for a truce—good luck in that—because this problem exceeds the idiosyncrasies of individuals.

If the Minister will do that, he will have the full support of the Opposition. I am sure I speak for the shadow Minister, the honourable member for Barwon, when I say that the Opposition will co-operate with the Minister and assist him in every way possible to resolve the personal difficulties that have occurred in some of the structure between the various players. So far as the budget and resources are concerned, that is entirely within the Minister's province—and that of Treasury, I suspect. Once again, I will be happy to lend my support to the Minister if any approach is necessary to the Premier or to anyone else.

This is not an occasion on which we can play politics. It is white flag stuff. We need to have the co-operation of all governments and all departments. Responsibility goes beyond the Department of Agriculture. The Minister has an onerous responsibility. The Department of Land and Water Conservation is also involved—although that, too, comes under the responsibility of the Minister. It could also be said that the Department of Health has an extremely onerous responsibility and the Department of Planning could well be seen to be involved. The Ministers for Regional Development and State Development must also bear in mind that they have additional responsibilities. They have to ensure not only that we seek new business in this State but also that we have in place the necessary safeguards and protections and that they are applied to agricultural and primary industries.

I make the point that, despite considerable debate relating to the economy and what is happening in rural Australia, there are a number of undeniable facts. Rural Australia and agriculture in particular as a single industry continues to be the biggest employer in this nation today. It is bigger than the motor vehicle industry and bigger than the retailing industries. The other thing that might surprise many people is that over the past five years agriculture has had the fastest take-up rate of new jobs in Australia. Rural Australia is also about to exceed urban areas in the creation of new manufacturing jobs in Australia, albeit in a small way. The agricultural economy is important, so far as our export industry is concerned, not only to the farmers and processors, but also to the provision of new jobs. It is the best opportunity we have today.

I draw the Minister's attention to the fact that the Australian Bureau of Agricultural Resource Economics [ABARE] stated last week that Australia can expect significant, almost dramatic, growth in export income from agricultural products. Most of that growth is attributable to one factor: Australia's enviable reputation for clean green food. We can provide arguably the safest food in the world today. If we can protect that position, with the problems that Europe is experiencing and that much of Asia is experiencing, and in light of the problems that England is experiencing, it will put us in an extremely strong position. We have a responsibility not only to Australians but also to the world at large to ensure that we continue to be able to guarantee the provision of safe food, healthy food free of blue tongue and foot and mouth disease. It is a challenge that we join the Minister in fighting. It is a challenge we do not relish but one that we are going to beat.

Mr BLACK (Murray-Darling) [3.53 p.m.]: Country Labor is happy to support our great Minister for Agriculture in this matter. For the second day in a row we have had an outbreak of goodwill between Country Labor, the honourable member for Lachlan and the honourable member for Barwon. It is becoming a bit of a worry. I fully support what the Minister has had to say and I support the substance of what the former Leader of the National Party had to say. Whilst in the electorate of Lachlan last Thursday, 22 February, I had reason to visit the *Lachlander*, a great newspaper indeed. Whilst on those premises I noticed a press release from the Hon. Warren Truss. I read it, but I could not believe it. Finally, Warren Truss has got something right! I remind the House that in earlier debates on this matter Warren Truss, John Anderson and Joe Hockey would not, and still will not, give us the insurance ombudsman that the farmers in flooded areas of this State so desperately need.

I also remind the House that he wants to bring in apples with fire blight, pineapples and bananas from the Philippines that contain all kinds of exotic diseases, and bring salmon into Tasmania. But on this occasion—and I am sure that in this outbreak of goodwill the honourable member for Barwon is going to agree—he most certainly has got it right by keeping something out. The headline on the press release reads, "Australia Moves Quickly to Guard against UK Foot and Mouth Outbreak." It is a tremendous achievement for Warren Truss to move so quickly because his other activities as Federal Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry have been unseemly and not in the best interests of agriculture, land and water conservation, or any other matters that he deals with at the Federal level. I agree, in the spirit of goodwill, that we need to put in place the most stringent quarantine in respect of this matter. There can be no doubt about that.

We all should know the magnitude of foot and mouth disease [FMD]. Foot and mouth disease is one of the world's most contagious livestock diseases affecting cattle, sheep, goats, pigs and a number of other animals. The viral disease causes severe ill thrift and is capable of inflicting high mortality, especially in young livestock. Foot and mouth disease can be spread by direct or indirect contact with droplets from the breath of infected animals—and as was mentioned by the honourable member for Lachlan, even by the hair under a saddle—by humans working with infected animals and also by farm vehicles and equipment. Research shows that airborne FMD particles can be infective after travelling 60 kilometres overland and 300 kilometres over oceans. Foot and mouth disease is considered endemic in parts of Asia, Africa, the Middle East and South America. However, as the Minister stated when leading in this debate, sporadic outbreaks occur in disease-free areas. One occurred in Thailand in 1997 and one has now occurred in the United Kingdom.

Foot and mouth disease causes severe pain to affected animals. Vesicles or blisters form on the tongue and in the mouth and on the hoof tissue of many species. Symptoms include excess salivation, lameness and significant production losses. Because FMD is spread easily, slaughter and destruction of FMD-suspected animals and thorough disinfection of premises and equipment is the accepted method of control. As was stated yesterday by honourable members from both sides of the Chamber in the fat lambs debate, we in Australia have an enormous advantage of being seen by the rest of the world as a clean industry, as a clean nation. We cannot have any danger confronting this nation from foot and mouth disease. We must press on with the stringent quarantine conditions that the Minister is seeking, which I hope will be put in place absolutely tightly to ensure that foot and mouth disease does not reach this great nation of ours.

Mr SLACK-SMITH (Barwon) [3.58 p.m.]: First may I inform the House that Ireland announced today that, as of this morning, it has an outbreak of foot and mouth disease. Apparently, approximately three farms are infected. Australia is a very lucky country. Europeans first discovered this land in 1606. Australians have always complained that they are isolated compared with the rest of the world, but Australia is a very lucky country. However, Australia should not be complacent. We have the great advantage of isolation. I believe that that is the only reason that we do not have BSE or foot and mouth disease in this country. We have eliminated tuberculosis and brucella abortus, and we do not have blue tongue or many other exotic diseases, but we have a long way to go before we can say that we are free of all those diseases. We cannot be complacent. It is important that we keep this country clean and green. The demand for our beef and dairy cattle from Asia and the European Union [EU] is enormous, so much so that we may not be able to keep up the supply.

What will happen in the EU in the next two years? Its people will suffer from a severe lack of protein because of the horrific foot and mouth disease. Its people will suffer because of the fear of BSE—mad cow disease—and because of its practice of having animal industries completely under the thumb of the animal liberation movement. That movement has made the animal industries expensive and it is virtually impossible for many producers to exist. In Australia there are a couple of things we must do, and we must do them now. Previously I have urged the Minister and I ask him again today to take the lead and push for a stock identification scheme in New South Wales.

I make that request for three reasons, two of which are minor compared to the third. First, a positive electronic identification scheme for stock, especially cattle, will enhance good management and, therefore, we will be able to produce better quality stock. Second, stock theft is a multimillion-dollar industry in Australia. Third, and most important of all, we need electronic identification of livestock in this country. If we have an outbreak of serious diseases—and God forbid that we do—we need the fastest possible identification of the area the stock came from so we can isolate that area. It is imperative that we be responsible; we must be proactive and we must act now.

I salute the Australian Customs Service, AQIS, and Safe Food Production for the work they have done. I congratulate Warren Truss on banning animal imports from the European Union. That is a great move, a responsible move, and it had to be made at the time. The ban will help to keep Australia's industries safe. As the honourable member for Lachlan said, the returns for our livestock are quite good. Wool has picked up and fat lambs have reached a realistic level, as has the beef cattle industry. New South Wales has a massive amount of feed at the moment and the future looks bright. But, it will take only one report of an exotic disease in the country to bring all our exports to zilch.

If that happens, we will have a catastrophe on our hands. We must do all we possibly can, we must tackle scabby mouth in the sheep industry, ovine Johne's disease and bovine Johne's disease. We must be proactive to keep our country, our products and our livestock industries under total surveillance so that we can reap the advantages. We have the potential for huge markets and the only way we can govern the supply of our livestock to the world is through price. If we do it right, we will have a great advantage over the rest of the world.

Mr MARTIN (Bathurst) [4.03 p.m.]: I congratulate the Minister on the timeliness of this urgent motion, which I support. I thank the two Opposition members who spoke in support of the motion. Yesterday I moved a motion for urgent consideration on current free trade negotiations between Australia and the United States of America. I urged the Federal Government to be proactive in making sure that Australian primary producers get a fair deal. No matter what happens, no matter how hard we work to protect our high-quality markets to get a fair deal with countries including the United States of America, as the honourable member for Barwon said, one slip-up concerning an exotic disease would put that market at risk. It would not matter how efficient we were as negotiators, or what sort of an impact we make on the world trade organisation, our overseas markets would be wiped out if an exotic disease were discovered in Australia.

We should not try to take advantage of the ill fortune of our friends in the United Kingdom, but the current circumstances allow Australian livestock producers to expand their markets. Because Australia in general, and New South Wales in particular, enjoy the highest category of freedom from bovine spongiform encephalopathy, foot and mouth disease, and other highly contagious diseases, we are presented with that opportunity at this time. While it is good to be proactive, and to take advantage of any opportunities, we must be mindful that eternal vigilance is our great saviour.

However, there are other threats. This morning my Country Labor colleagues met with representatives of the poultry growers industry. One matter that came up was the threat of Thai chicken imports, whether

cooked or half-cooked. Another area of concern is fire blight in New Zealand apples, and I am sure that that matter will be mentioned in this House again. Other countries criticise Australia for being, perhaps, over vigilant or stringent in that area, but there are no second chances. For that reason we have to err on the side of caution. We must be conservative in this matter. The Minister has spoken about organisations that react to outbreaks of diseases.

In recent years there have been outbreaks of Newcastle disease in the chicken industry in this State. We were able to react quickly to that major problem. Through co-operation between the New South Wales Department of Agriculture and the industry, not without some pain and some cost, that disease was contained. Because of Australia's disease-free status we are the preferred supplier in some international markets. There have been a few slip-ups in recent times, such as a problem in the meat export industry when unscrupulous people substituted kangaroo meat and, more recently, problems caused to the beef cattle by some feed. Those problems did not result from a lack of quarantine administration or procedures, but from a criminal conspiracy on one hand and plain bad management, or perhaps ignorance, on the other.

We were very quick to learn from those two incidents. Although we may be seen as complacent, we do have a good record. It is more than 100 years since Australia had an outbreak of foot and mouth disease, but that is no reason to be complacent. That is all the more reason to give greater urgency to and follow through with strict quarantine restrictions. Because of economic rationalism AQIS has been forced to outsource some of its services. Some members of the Federal Government would like to privatise AQIS, but I warn against that. It is important that governments in this country keep control of quarantine services, they should not be trifled with. One mistake in that area and we could wipe out millions of dollars of livelihood for rural industries. I support the urgency motion and commend the Minister for bringing it to us.

Mr AMERY (Mount Druitt—Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Land and Water Conservation) [4.08 p.m.], in reply: I thank the honourable member for Lachlan, who led for the Opposition; the honourable member for Murray-Darling; the shadow Minister for Agriculture, the honourable member for Barwon; and the honourable member for Bathurst for their contributions to the debate. The honourable member for Murray-Darling said that he is encouraged by the outbreak of goodwill that is shown in our rural and agricultural debates. All the speakers said that whilst we can be proud, perhaps even boastful, of our clean and green image, we must recognise the problems involved in the handling of livestock and our horticultural and citrus industries. For example, the control of ovine Johne's disease, bovine Johne's disease, Newcastle disease and anthrax, which was referred to by the honourable member for Lachlan, is a high-profile management issue.

Many people are concerned just at the mention of the word "anthrax", and for obvious reasons. Occasional outbreaks of anthrax have occurred on properties throughout a number of States. Honourable members may recall a substantial outbreak of anthrax a couple of years ago in Victoria. Australia put down the shutters and applied all the quarantine rules, but we still felt the precautionary actions that were taken by our Asian neighbours. They shut their gates very quickly until we gave the all-clear on the anthrax outbreak. On that occasion the authorities worked well and our experience in the management, control and eradication of diseases came to the fore. That massive outbreak of anthrax was centred in Victoria, although outbreaks have occurred on properties in this State.

Throughout the system the government departments, rural lands protection boards and farming communities were able to work together and manage the outbreak to the satisfaction of our trading neighbours. We were able to get back to trading as soon as we gave the all-clear. We are proud of that show of confidence in our authorities to not only protect against incoming disease but also to manage an outbreak of disease. The honourable member for Lachlan pointed out that we are dealing with high stakes. The value of our agricultural industries in New South Wales alone totals over \$8 billion. We are talking about the State's biggest industries and they need protection. The honourable member for Lachlan asked me about the role of Safe Foods and he made a couple of shots about it being starved of resources. I can inform the honourable member for Lachlan that Safe Foods is going through an evolution at the moment. Peter Frawley and Bruce Standen have undertaken a review of its role with the former Meat Industry Authority and the Meat Industry Consultative Council, and I understand that they will report to me on the issues that the honourable member for Lachlan referred to.

The honourable member for Murray-Darling spoke of the advantages of our clean and green image. That comment was repeated by the honourable member for Bathurst, who also referred to the importance of our trading and stock identification. He signalled a warning that whilst we congratulate the Federal Government on the role it has taken through the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service [AQIS] to bring down the shutters on this problem, a number of other issues, such as fire blight and our salmon industry, remain in the too-hard

basket as yet-to-be-resolved issues. I can tell the honourable member for Bathurst and the honourable member for Barwon that those important issues will be discussed at the upcoming Agricultural Resource Management Council of Australia and New Zealand [ARMCANZ] meeting. As to stock identification, I can also inform the honourable member for Bathurst and the shadow Minister for Agriculture that they will not get any resistance from me. A great deal of work is going on in this State and throughout Australia on this issue.

I have some interesting statistics. As at 9 February this year a total of 1,099 beef cattle producers had bought and attached national livestock identification system devices to their cattle. I take the honourable member's point seriously because stock identification is crucial in the management of diseases. It is virtually a requirement of any trade with the European Community. I take their points seriously and I will report any further information I receive to the House. I thank the honourable members for the support of the motion.

Motion agreed to.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Mr Whelan agreed to:

That the House at its rising this day do adjourn until Tuesday 6 March 2001 at 215 p.m.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

WESTERN SYDNEY ORBITAL

Mr LYNCH (Liverpool) [4.15 p.m.]: I wish to speak of constituents' concerns at the proposed route for the Western Sydney orbital, which will go to the west of the suburb of Cecil Hills. Cecil Hills is currently a residential area with extraordinarily attractive features. It is described as quiet and tranquil. Many people chose to live there precisely because of those qualities. On 4 January this year the Environmental Impact Statement [EIS] was released for the orbital. The EIS managed to comprehensively shatter the peace and quiet of Cecil Hills. As one resident said at a public forum held last Friday, "We were buying peace and tranquility. What we've got now are concrete walls and many decibels of noise."

The EIS refers to three possible routes for the orbital near Cecil Hills. The preferred route alignment is the eastern alignment. There are two other possible routes: the central and western alignments. The eastern alignment is, without doubt, a disaster for residents. For some residents the roadway will be only 40 to 50 metres from their homes. The implications of this are obvious. The visual impact will be appalling. Noise and airborne pollution will be significant issues and will certainly worsen for many. The most absurd thing about the eastern alignment is that there are easy and obvious alternatives. Both the central and, particularly, the western alignment would dramatically improve the proposal. Residents are not arguing against the orbital. Indeed, many have made it clear to me that they support it. They simply want a much more reasonable route.

The position of the residents in their opposition to the eastern alignment is, in my opinion, immeasurably strengthened by the history of the route selection for the orbital. Residents bought their properties with no warning that they might have a major roadway on their doorstep. The first they heard of this eastern alignment was in January this year. That is because for many years the proposed route of the orbital was well to the west of what is called the eastern alignment. Many residents checked maps and plans before they bought their properties. They saw maps that showed the orbital route well away from their blocks, so they purchased those blocks in good faith. They did the prudent, sensible and reasonable thing. Having done that and having purchased their land, they are now told, "Sorry, the route's changed". That is wrong and immoral.

The proponent of the project, the Roads and Traffic Authority [RTA], has an answer, but the answer is unimpressive. The RTA says it did everything it could to let people know about the new route. That is inadequate and inaccurate. The suggestion of the eastern alignment was first made by the RTA in mid-1998. At that stage many houses, which will be badly affected by the eastern alignment, were already built in Cecil Hills. Specifically, houses in the northernmost part of Cecil Hills in streets such as Renee Place and Isabel Street will be affected. There is no doubt that these houses were built well before anyone suggested an eastern alignment. The proof for this is eloquently set out in the RTA's own documents, which first mentioned an easterly route. Those documents contain aerial photographs of the area, which very clearly show the houses already built.

It is false and silly to claim that anyone could tell these residents of the proposed route change before their purchase. Their houses were bought and built before the eastern route was first proposed. The RTA also tried to emphasise that its public consultations in mid-1998 alerted prospective purchasers to the likelihood of an easterly alignment. This claim is objectionable on a number of grounds. First, the public meeting was very inadequately advertised, as I can personally attest. Another problem is what people were told at those consultations. At the forum last Friday one resident, who had been at the 1998 consultation, reported that whilst the RTA had said there were several possible options, it said it had no preferred option. In retrospect, that seems very far from being an open or transparent position.

In this case the onus on the RTA for notifying potential purchasers was a very great one, particularly because it had widely distributed documents that had showed a road well to the west. I have copies in my office of a report published and republished that clearly shows westerly alignments. The RTA also says that in 1998 it delivered a model of the orbital to the Cecil Hills Landcom office showing the easterly alignment. That obviously provides no answer for people who purchased before 1998. It also assumes that everyone purchased through Landcom. That, of course, is palpable nonsense. A large number of residents purchased from private developers.

This includes people with houses in some of the worst-affected streets, such as Anjou Circuit and Toulouse Street. Indeed, it seems to me that the more recently a block in Cecil Hills was purchased the less likely it is to have been purchased from Landcom, and therefore the Landcom model would be of less use. In brief, large numbers of people bought land after having checked maps and ascertained that they were well away from the Orbital, only to discover that it will be right on top of them. This is totally unsatisfactory. The eastern alignment must be rejected and a more acceptable alignment adopted. I should acknowledge the acute distress and concern generated by the eastern alignment amongst residents.

It should also be acknowledged that the residents have attempted to prevent the eastern alignment from going ahead, and they have formed the Cecil Hills Action Group. I should particularly acknowledge the contributions of individuals such as Ray Schembri, Sam Araboghlian and Joseph Israfil. I met with the action group on 29 January, and I was a participant and speaker at the forum they organised on 23 February, last Friday, which was chaired by Councillor Wendy Waller. The Cecil Hills Action Group will do everything in its capacity to change the eastern alignment, and I am delighted to say that I will do everything I can to help in that effort.

WAGGA WAGGA STORM DAMAGE

Mr MAGUIRE (Wagga Wagga) [4.20 p.m.]: On Tuesday 27 February at 4 p.m. a terrible storm with strong winds, hail, and driving and torrential rain hit Wagga Wagga and left the city in a state of total destruction. The damage bill is expected to exceed many hundreds of thousands of dollars. Emergency services personnel were put on alert. Trees were ripped from the ground, powerlines were brought down and buildings were flooded. Roads were flooded and cars were floating under an underpass that is affectionately known as "ships dip". Motorists who were caught in the middle of the storm were forced to dodge branches, falling limbs and sheets of tin. Two women were lucky to escape with their lives when a tree, which brought down powerlines, fell on their car in Mount Austin. Luckily, no-one else was injured in that terrible storm. We can thank goodness for small mercies that no-one was killed.

Part of the roof of the Airborne Gymnastics Club in Nagle Street was torn off. The roof of the Kyeamba Smith Hall was partly dismantled and thrown onto Bourke Street, which stopped traffic. At the time the road was congested with traffic. The storm also hit Holbrook, Lockhart, Henty, Culcairn, Collingullie and Tarcutta, leaving the suburbs of Koorringal, Lakeside and Tatton, as well as Charles Sturt University, without power for some time. Both commuters and shoppers had problems. The large centre in the central business district of Wagga Wagga was flooded and was forced to close for some time. The reason I bring to the attention of the House the destruction caused by the storm is to acknowledge the great work of the services that came to the rescue of the people of Wagga Wagga.

Apparently, places like Glenfield Park resembled a bombsite, with fences toppling and buildings, including a brick carport, crashing to the ground. About 110 requests for assistance were received before 7 p.m. Most of those requests for assistance related to falling trees and unroofed houses. I place on record my thanks and the thanks of the community for the State Emergency Service units from The Rock, Temora, Junee and Cootamundra, as well as the New South Wales Fire Brigades the Rural Fire Service volunteers, the police and the ambulance officers, all the services that shine whenever we are faced with a disaster such as the one that

resulted from the storm in Wagga Wagga this week. I would also like to thank the 80-odd customer representatives from Great Southern Energy who repaired the power faults caused by the storm in Uranquinty, The Rock, Henty, Culcairn, Holbrook, Junee, Lockhart and Mangoplah, as well as many other suburbs in the city.

Emergency crews came in from as far as Yass, Albury, Cootamundra, and Tumut to assist the people of Wagga Wagga. Even the fire personnel were on call to douse the fires ignited by lightning in the surrounding areas of the city. It is important to recognise the contribution of the volunteer units, particularly as this year is the Year of Volunteers. It is timely that I thank those who have helped Wagga Wagga return to some form of normality. It will not look the same for quite some time because of the amount of damage that was sustained. The wind cut a swathe through the Botanic Gardens and the streets of Wagga Wagga and many trees were uprooted. Honourable members who have visited Wagga Wagga know that it is a very leafy and a very old city. Many of our beautiful trees were cut to pieces by the storm. I place on record my thanks to all of the dedicated emergency services personnel, the Wagga Wagga City Council and everyone who has helped Wagga Wagga get back to normal after the storm.

TRIBUTE TO Mr NEVILLE McLACHLAN

Mr HUNTER (Lake Macquarie) [4.25 p.m.]: I wish to pay tribute to Neville McLachlan. A few weeks ago it was an honour for me to be asked by Neville's family to deliver the eulogy at his funeral. As a friend I was proud to speak about Neville McLachlan on that day, and to tell the assembled about his life, and what he meant to his family and many friends. On that day we celebrated Neville's life. Neville was born in Lithgow on 4 October 1934 to Edna and Les. He passed away on the Sunday before the funeral after a relatively short battle with lung cancer. He was only 66 years old. As I said on the day, that is certainly too young; he should have had more time with his family and friends.

Neville grew up in Lithgow and at Sunny Corner. Like most young fellows, he loved to play football and ride motorbikes. He followed most sports. After leaving school he moved to Sydney where he was an apprentice tiler, and he worked in the brickworks near Ryde. He was called up for National Service in 1951. After his time in the Army he returned to Lithgow, where he met Colleen. They were married in 1957. They moved to Wangi in 1959 for Nev to work at the Wangi Power Station, where he worked until 1986. Many of the people at the funeral service—like me, my father and my brother—worked with Neville at Wangi Power Station.

Neville and Colleen had been married for 44 years and they had five children: Denise, Jo, James, Ritchie and Gilly. They also have six grandchildren, whom Neville loved very much. His love of kids and sports saw him very involved with the Wangi junior rugby league, where he coached for many years. As he got older he steered away from the more physical sports and golf became his game. But Neville found golf to be more stressful than relaxing. The more stressed he became the more expensive the sport was. Week after week he would come home after wrapping another club around the nearest tree. Colleen told me that that is when Neville decided to take up lawn bowls, which he enjoyed very much and played very well.

Neville was very well respected by the members of the Wangi Bowling Club. They elected him president for a period. The Wangi Bowling Club supplied the refreshments after the funeral. I would not be exaggerating if I said that Neville loved a beer and a bet. He loved horses, especially those on which he had a chance of making money. He enjoyed his day at the races with his mates. Harold Park dogs were a favourite with him and my father, Merv Hunter, whom I know was proud to call "Nifty" his mate. Over the years they certainly enjoyed a few days at the races. In later years Neville and Colleen went with my mother and father to the Grafton Cup and the Muswellbrook Cup, events that they very much enjoyed.

If Nev had a good day you could bet that the family would share his good luck, although his generosity was never restricted to winning days only. His family and friends can attest to that. After he retired from the Electricity Commission in 1986, many years at Wangi Power Station and a short period at Vales Point Power Station, he said he worked only a couple of days a week. His duties involved studying the form guide and placing bets. The days that Neville was not working at the TAB he would spend cultivating his abundant fruit and veggie garden, where, I am told, he grew everything from carrots and parsnips to the more exotic mangoes and pepinos.

Nev always enjoyed his music: he had an extensive jazz collection. He played his compact discs very loudly and very often. His family tell me they hope the rest of the street enjoyed the jazz as much as he did. Nev

was awarded the National Medal for his service as a volunteer firefighter. He was active with the Wangi Fire Brigade for more than 15 years. He risked his life for other people and their property. Neville was a staunch Labor Party supporter. He was a member of the party for 36 years. Up until his passing he was the President of the Wangi branch. He was the branch's campaign director and a delegate to the Australian Labor Party's Lake Macquarie State Electorate Council for many years. He was a campaign director for me, my father, my brother—who is a councillor—and the former Federal member of Parliament Bob Brown, who was a Minister in the Hawke and Keating governments. He enjoyed visiting Parliament House with my father and I and having a drink and a meal. He said he was pleased to be getting back his taxpayers' money.

Neville was also a staunch unionist. If he disagreed with some aspect of party policy, he certainly made his views known. When we hear that Australia is the clever country, we should think of people such as Neville McLachlan. When considering the idea of the clever country, many tend to think of the top brass or of champions, but Australia would not be the country it is today if men like Neville did not fight for the conditions of the worker and for the better working methods that have helped to make this country clever. At the service on behalf of his family, I thanked the Wangi Bowling Club—which offered its facilities after the service. Neville loved his family dearly. He was a loyal supporter and a good friend. He will be sadly missed. Vale Neville McLachlan. [*Time expired.*]

GOVERNMENT AGENCIES MAILING LISTS

Mr ARMSTRONG (Lachlan) [4.30 p.m.]: I draw to the attention of the House a letter that was received recently by my constituents Mr and Mrs Head of West Wyalong. Mr and Mrs Head own a child care centre called Mulberry Cottage at Macquarie Fields. The letter was addressed to "The Director, Authorised Supervisor, Mulberry Cottage, Box 138, West Wyalong". The only documentation that records Mr and Mrs Head as being the owners or authorised supervisors of Mulberry Cottage at Macquarie Fields is held by the Department of Community Services, Centrelink and Family and Community Services. Therefore, it appears to my constituents and to me that the relevant address that connects Mr and Mrs Head to Mulberry Cottage, which they certainly own, must—unless somebody else can argue otherwise— have come from one of those three government authorities. The letter was sent by an organisation calling itself the Social Justice in Early Childhood Group, and states:

Be Part of History in the Making. In 1978, Gilbert Baker of San Francisco designed and made a flag with six stripes representing the six colours of the rainbow as a symbol of gay and lesbian community pride.

The Rainbow Flag, and its rainbow of colours—red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple—represents the diversity of our community.

According to Baker, the colours of the Rainbow Flag represented respectively: sexuality, life, healing, sun, nature, art, harmony, and spirit.

The Social Justice in Early Childhood Group is organising the first ever early childhood entrant into the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras. You're invited to be a part of this.

Who can become involved?

Anyone who is committed to social justice, equality and the rights of lesbian and gay parents and children. Parents, children and childcare staff are all welcome to contribute.

How can I help?

You can help in various ways. You can join the Social Justice in Early Childhood Group, or help us design and make the float, or join us on the evening and march.

I raise this matter in order to ascertain whether mailing lists have been sold, stolen or given away by the Department of Community Services, Centrelink or Family and Community Services. I do not question the particular authority or otherwise of the Social Justice in Early Childhood Group; I simply want to know how it got access to the address of owners of a child care facility at Macquarie Fields when there is no other apparent reference or connection between the owners and that organisation apart from those government authorities. It is out of order if information about that or any other childcare centre was leaked, sold or otherwise obtained by private enterprise for the business of soliciting membership or some other action on the part of those centres. I ask the respective Ministers to address this question and to comment on it. We must first ascertain how this information was supplied, and, second, ensure that it does not happen again.

FIREWORKS DISPLAYS

Mr CRITTENDEN (Wyang—Parliamentary Secretary) [4.34 p.m.]: I wish to raise the issue of fireworks and their cost. In January and February this year so many of my constituents raised this matter with

me that I decided to do some checking. It would seem that the issue arose initially as a result of the fireworks display on New Year's Eve 1999 and has gathered momentum since then. I point out to the House and the wider community that the New Year's Eve celebrations in both 1999 and 2000, including the Centenary of Federation celebration, were paid for by Sydney City Council and a large number of sponsors. The fireworks associated with the opening and closing ceremonies of the Olympic Games, both in Sydney and in regional areas, were paid for by the Olympic Co-ordination Authority, and the Sydney Organising Committee for the Olympic Games paid for the fireworks displays in Stadium Australia.

This issue has been in the public arena for some time and has undergone a number of permutations. People are concerned about the pollution impact of fireworks displays. I spoke to the Minister for the Environment, who advised me that the Environment Protection Authority [EPA] undertakes air quality monitoring but does not monitor fireworks displays specifically. We must put this issue in context: the EPA has also advised that the smoke and particle pollution impact of fireworks is localised, short in duration and small scale compared with many other sources of pollutants, such as motor vehicles. The issue was first raised on the Central Coast and in the Hunter area by Hugh Dwyer on 28 September last year, and the Premier responded on 29 September in that august journal the *Newcastle Herald*. He said:

The New South Wales Government is not spending one cent on New Year's Eve Fireworks.

The fireworks are entirely paid for by Sydney City Council.

The Premier then went on to point out that the Government was spending \$1.7 billion on rural and regional health. I believe this matter should be put in a relevant context. The *Newcastle Herald* took up the issue again on 2 December 2000 in an article that confused the fireworks displays on New Year's Eve with fireworks displays during the Olympic Games. I believe consternation about that article flowed over into my electorate. I assure my constituents that New Year's Eve celebrations are paid for by the City of Sydney through the Sydney City Council and by a large number of sponsors. The State Government has not spent one cent on fireworks displays on New Year's Eve for the past two years.

ALBURY BYPASS

Mr GLACHAN (Albury) [4.39 p.m.]: For more than 30 years the people of Albury have been waiting for a decision about what would be done to ease traffic congestion in the city. Promises were made many years ago to build a deviation of the Hume Highway that would follow the railway line through Albury and link up with improvements to the Hume Highway through Wodonga. This route of the highway would pass through only a short section of housing and then would go through industrial areas and open countryside. Some time ago there was agitation in the community for the route to be changed to an external route which would pass well away from the city and have very little bearing on the relief of traffic in Albury, because each day 38,000 vehicles passed between Albury and Wodonga across the one bridge that spans the river between the two cities, and the Roads and Traffic Authority [RTA] has estimated on a number of occasions that only 6,000 vehicles would use an external route if one were constructed. So the pressure was on for the internal route. But I must say that a large number of people in the city of Albury are opposed to that and want instead a completely external route for through traffic.

A commission of inquiry heard arguments on both sides and recommended the internal route. The New South Wales Minister, acting on that advice, indicated to the Federal Government that New South Wales would support the internal route. Then Federal Minister for Transport, Mark Vaile, came to Albury and announced that the Federal Government would construct a deviation of the Hume Highway through Albury known as the internal bypass. Subsequently a new Federal Minister for Transport reopened negotiations because he said that the RTA figures on the cost of the road were flawed. Only last week he came to Albury and announced what he said would be a combination of both routes—a single-lane external route and a single-lane internal route—hoping to please everyone, but really pleasing no-one. The local television channel conducted a poll and, of 894 people who rang in, 291 said that it was a good decision and 603 said that it was a bad decision.

I should also point out that to sustain his decision about this internal road the Minister stated at his press conference in Albury that New South Wales and Victoria would each have to contribute \$38 million to the scheme. Unfortunately, he had not consulted with New South Wales or Victoria before making the announcement. This was an invitation to New South Wales and Victoria to refuse to put any money into the scheme. The New South Wales Minister has been totally consistent: whenever he has been asked his view on putting money into such a scheme he has said repeatedly and incessantly that if the Federal Government chose to build an external road New South Wales would not be able to put any money into an internal route. The

Federal Government says that it will be six years before the external road is built. Some time ago when the external road was abandoned by the Federal Minister land-holders along the route were notified by letter by the RTA that their land would no longer be needed.

Now there will be legal ramifications and there will be long delays before an external route can be built. People will claim compensation and there will be legal delays. The Federal Government wants to get on with the half internal route as soon as possible. I fear that the route will be started, partly built and constantly upgraded so that we will have the internal route but without all the benefits that a deviation of the Hume Highway would have delivered with sound barriers and other sound amelioration works. So we will get what many people in Albury feared most: an internal highway through the city. We will get it, because of a decision by the Federal Minister, without any sound barriers and without any assistance to people. In my view we have the worst of all decisions: an effort to please everyone but an effort that in fact will please no-one.

CARRAMAR TAVERN APPLICATION

Mr TRIPODI (Fairfield) [4.44 p.m.]: As the House would be aware, the Fairfield community has been involved in a campaign against an application to place a pub in the suburb of Carramar. I wish to read and bring to the attention of the House letters of support that I have received in regard to the community campaign. Carramar Public School Council wrote:

Dear Joe

On behalf of the School Council at Carramar Public School, I thank you for your ongoing support in opposing the proposed tavern development on The Horsley Drive.

Your continued efforts are very much appreciated by the school community.

Yours faithfully

Margaret Sauer

26th February, 2001

I also received a letter of support from Carramar Public School Parent and Citizens Association dated 26 February 2001, which reads:

Dear Joe

Members of the Carramar Public School Parent and Citizens Association have asked me to pass on our sincere appreciation of your continued support regarding our opposition to the proposed Carramar Tavern opposite the school on The Horsley Drive.

Please keep up the good work.

Yours faithfully

Cindy McTernan
Secretary

I have also received a letter of support from Fairfield Area 3 Neighbourhood Watch signed by the Secretary, Bill Dumbrell. It reads:

Dear Mr Tripodi

On behalf of the Fairfield Area 3 Neighbourhood Watch Program, I wish to express our support for your continued fight against the Carramar Tavern which falls within our Neighbourhood Watch Area.

You have always been a strong voice of opposition to this proposal on behalf of the community. The Carramar community is one hundred per cent behind you in your fight against the proposed tavern. The tavern is not wanted in our area and we will continue to oppose it as a community at every turn.

You have shown tremendous courage in standing up to the developer on behalf of the community. We hope that you can continue the fight unhampered by spurious allegations against you.

The Executive Officer of the Fairfield East Community Organisation, Judi Bamforth, wrote:

I write to offer this organisation's support to you in your fight against development of a Tavern on The Horsley Drive Carramar...

As you are aware, this organisation has provided community services in the eastern suburbs of the Fairfield local government area for the past 16 years. We operate the Carramar Child Care Centre which caters for up to 30 children, along with a Before & After School Care and Vacation Care service which are located in the grounds of the Carramar Public School.

The letter goes on to say:

The Carramar and Villawood areas are characterised by the social, educational and economical disadvantage so often highlighted in Cabramatta and Fairfield by the media...

Further, the Lansdowne Caravan Park is located only short distance from the proposed Tavern site. This Caravan Park accommodates 270 vans. This is not a tourist stop, rather home to people who cannot afford the cost of bonds on private rental properties due to a variety of factors such as recent release from gaols, single parents, drug and alcohol dependency. Many of these people have their names on Dept. of Housing waiting lists and others have been evicted from Dept. of Housing properties.

We have a Community Development Worker who provides a sessional service in the Lansdowne Caravan Park. Residents regularly request her assistance with health issues, drug and alcohol problems, domestic violence, financial difficulties etc.

The letter goes on to say:

In general, the community has an enormous amount of disadvantage to deal with. Many residents and parents associated with the Carramar Public School strongly object to the development of the Tavern. Therefore, as an organisation committed to supporting local residents and because we are unable to envisage any positive impact that development of the Tavern would have on the local community we are happy to support you in your objections to the development.

I have also received a letter of support from Christine Crumbley, who heads the Residents and Workers against the Carramar Tavern/Hotel. She wrote:

We offer you our support in continuing the fight against the Carramar Tavern/Hotel.

We, the Residents and Workers against the Tavern/Hotel have felt encouraged by your commitment to our cause. You have been supportive from the outset.

The area has too many hotels and gaming facilities. The suburb is "trawled" by club and casino courtesy buses.

The letter goes on to detail some of the issues that confront Carramar Public School. I also take the opportunity to draw to the attention of the House a letter I received from Dr Larkin, who is the applicant, following the public meeting I organised on 11 June. The letter, which is dated 15 June 1999, reads:

We would just like to sincerely thank you for the manner in which you conducted the public meeting at the Carramar School assembly hall last Friday, 11 June 1999...

Once again, we thank you for the opportunity of our attending the meeting and for the fair and democratic manner in which you allowed the meeting to be conducted.

Many community leaders attended the meeting that I had organised. [*Time expired.*]

NATIONAL SERVICE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY

Mr WEBB (Monaro) [4.49 p.m.]: I draw the attention of the House to an event that commemorated the fiftieth anniversary of the introduction of national service in Australia. At this time it is fitting to remember that period of Australia's history, together with the centenary of the Australian Army and commemoration of Long Tan. On this occasion tribute was paid to the national servicemen for the role they played in the defence of our nation. In many ways the "nashos", as they are known, are our unsung heroes. They certainly did not receive the recognition they deserved for serving their country. The fiftieth anniversary was celebrated throughout the nation. On Saturday 10 February a parade and service, which was attended by servicemen from Queanbeyan, Goulburn, Newcastle, Bega and beyond, was held at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra to mark the anniversary. I thank all those who turned up on the day to enjoy the parade and ceremony.

It was my pleasure, as patron of the Canberra and District Branch of the National Service and Combined Forces Association of Australia, to introduce the guests of honour and welcome visitors to the Australian War Memorial on the day. A guest of honour and keynote speaker was Major General Adrian Clunies-Ross, AO, MBE, the Chairman of the Council of the Australian War Memorial, who has a distinguished record in the Australian services. Also in attendance were Senator the Hon. Jocelyn Newman; Mr Gary Humphries, MLA, Chief Minister of the Australian Capital Territory; Admiral C. A. Barrie, AO, RAN, Chief of the Defence Force; Ms Annette Ellis, MP, member for Canberra; and the Right Reverend N. J. Chynoweth, AM, ED, Master of Ceremonies and his wife. Another guest was Mr Wal Beckhouse, President of the Canberra and District Branch of the National Services and Combined Forces Association—he is also the national president of that association—who was accompanied by his, Pam.

I do not think the day would have been as successful as it was if it were not for the effort of Wal and his officers, Ray Boyle and Ted Plunkett. Many other distinguished guests and visitors were also present. The

ceremony began with a flyover by the Snowy scheme South Care helicopter, which was partly in acknowledgement of the role it played in the armed services as well as in Vietnam and partly in appreciation of a donation from the Canberra and District Branch of the National Service and Combined Forces Association of Australia. Also in attendance were officers and soldiers of the 4/3 Battalion Royal New South Wales Regiment, who paraded on the day, the city of Queanbeyan Pipe Band and bugler Andrea Schmuck. The service was enjoyable and was a fitting celebration to mark 50 years of national service in Australia.

Major General Adrian Clunies-Ross gave a detailed account of the history of national service in Australia, the various intakes and how those people went on to honourably serve Australia—the Premier spoke about that in the House yesterday—particularly in Vietnam. Others in attendance on the day were Major Ian Hawke; Mr Derek Roylance, State President of the Australian Capital Territory branch of the Returned Services League; Major Dennis Hills, Salvation Army retired staff chaplain; Major Barry Grainger and his wife, Major Pam Grainger, from the Salvation Army; Lieutenant Commander Peter McNay, President of the Australian Capital Territory section of the Naval Association of Australia; and many other guests. The service was wrapped up in a wonderful way by the Most Reverend J. A. Morgan, AO, ED, RFD, who was Sometime Chaplain General and Bishop to the forces. This was a wonderful celebration of Australia's past.

SHOALHAVEN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Mr W. D. SMITH (South Coast) [4.54 p.m.]: Historical sites on the South Coast are many and, thanks to the considerable efforts of Shoalhaven Historical Society and interested members of our communities, the history of the area is being continually researched, documented and made the subject of publications, which benefits the professional as well as the novice historian. It is important for a community to know its history, as it gives a basis for the way the region has been shaped and reminds us how far the community has progressed over the years. Much of the broad history of the South Coast is relatively unknown outside the region in terms of specific connections to wider Australian history. However, members of the Shoalhaven Historical Society, which includes long-term residents with a keen interest in the origins of the region, have taken on the intensive task of putting together the intricate and scattered pieces of our history.

It is because of people such as these that our history can be accessed by researchers, students and history enthusiasts across the nation and around the world. Among the membership of the Shoalhaven Historical Society are several successfully published historians, including Alan Clark, Robyn Florance and Lee Mills. I mention those three because last Saturday I formally opened an exhibition of the Nowra lockup, which is the Shoalhaven Historical Museum, and the history of local police officers on behalf of patron, the Deputy Premier and Minister for Urban Affairs and Planning, Dr Andrew Refshauge. This occasion was to commemorate the centenary of the Nowra lockup and included the formal launch of history books written by Alan, Robyn and Lee.

The occasion was organised by the Shoalhaven Historical Society, with President Robyn Florance and Secretary Lee Mills doing an excellent job. It was, indeed, an honour for me to be in attendance for I have a keen interest in history myself. I was particularly proud to see at least 150 interested members of the public wandering through the exhibition, which featured a considerable amount of memorabilia relating to police and law enforcement of the past. The building, which is situated on the corner of Kinghorne and Plunkett Streets, Nowra, was built in 1900 and opened in February 1901 with the first occupants. The exhibition featured a history of the building through photographs and regional floor plans, with biographical sketches of the early lockup keepers: Constable John Gill, Constable "Mickey" Donnellan, Constable Thomas Sattler, Constable Bill Irwin, Constable Peter McPherson and Constable Jack "Hoot" Gibson.

There was also a series of photographs and newspaper articles on many police officers, with brief biographical sketches on each of the officers in charge of the Nowra police district between 1901 and 1977. The original building remains, with the only major change in the past 100 years being the disassembling of the actual lockup, that is, the cells, and the conversion of the tiny exercise area to an office. As a museum the site attracts hundreds of visitors every year, locals as well as tourists, and it is an excellent point of reference for those interested in undertaking research of the region's history.

Attending the celebrations on Saturday were 86-year-old Tom Moffett and 85-year-old Bill Hale, who are the oldest surviving former police officers to serve at the lockup. Meeting those two gentlemen was a privilege for me as they offered a view of life in Nowra that most of us can only vaguely imagine. I am sure those former officers would have more than a few stories to tell of their experiences at the time, and their contributions to the history of Nowra are, of course, invaluable. It is the stories of the ordinary folk that help to

fill in the gaps and personalise the formal history of a region. I sincerely support the work of the Shoalhaven Historical Society in bringing life to past events. There are, no doubt, a number of characters in Nowra who have their own experiences of the lockup. I spoke to one such person a few days before the event who said he had spent a night in the lockup a short time before it closed. His only complaint was that they left the light on all night. He was about 14 years of age at the time.

The three books launched on the day were Robyn Florance's *100 years—The Nowra Lock-up 1901-2001*, Lee Mills' *Cop This—Policemen of the Shoalhaven 1852-1977* and Alan Clark's *Constable Bernard Brown*. I commend those books to all honourable members. They are a fascinating read. Each book is an invaluable record of the Nowra lockup and the local police service, as well as the officers who served in the Shoalhaven district. The first policeman to serve in the district was Constable Bernard Brown, who was appointed in January 1852, and Alan Clark has presented a definitive account of his life and experiences in those early years. The opening was a highly enjoyable occasion of which all those involved, as well as the general community, can be proud. I look forward to seeing more of our region's history attracting the limelight and gaining more attention among historians around the State and Australia.

WINDSOR HIGH SCHOOL FACILITIES

Mr ROZZOLI (Hawkesbury) [4.59 p.m.]: I bring to the attention of the House the plight of Windsor High School. There have been articles in the newspapers as recently as today's edition of the *Sydney Morning Herald* which have indicated a drift of students from the public school sector. The conditions at Windsor High School would be a classic example of why parents are electing to take their children out of the State school system and perhaps transfer them to a nearby private school. Windsor High School has been the recipient of some expenditure in recent times. In fact, we are very grateful for the addition of a special unit for children with severe disabilities to enable them to be integrated into the education system, and for a multipurpose hall, which arrived after a wait of only 26 or 27 years.

We are grateful for those additional facilities, but the advantage is completely undone because much of the school is in an absolutely deplorable condition. The condition of the school affects not only the education environment but also has occupational health and safety implications. The home science blocks, science blocks, manual arts sections, art sections and many of the facilities at the school, such as the toilet facilities, are in an absolutely deplorable state and have been for some time. If it were a factory under the jurisdiction of WorkCover it would be closed down because the conditions are completely unsatisfactory for people to work in. Yet children and staff attend the school every day during the school term.

The staff are extremely dedicated in what they do and it is only through that dedication that the quality of education at Windsor High School is as high as it is. It is a good standard. Last year, I accompanied members of the parents and citizens association, representatives of the staff and the student representative council, and the District Superintendent, Mr John Bedley, on a thorough inspection of the school. It was the unanimous opinion of everyone that the conditions were deplorable and needed urgent attention. The parents and citizens association developed a very detailed submission with photographs of the offending areas. That was submitted to the Department of Education and Training last year. We received a letter in response, which was cavalier to say the least. It dismissed these matters, obviously assessing them as minor maintenance matters to be met under the normal maintenance program.

Nothing could be further from the truth. These are major structural matters. The design of Windsor High School is unusual. It was, at the time it was built, well outside any residential environment and the style of architecture makes it look more like a gaol than a school. It was built like that so that the school could be reasonably efficiently secured from break-ins and vandalism when it was not operational. The trouble is that the desire to keep the vandals out has resulted in a very prison-like environment for those who work in it during the week. The style of architecture has served the school poorly in regard to maintenance—flat roofs and the type of wall construction make it very difficult to provide ongoing maintenance.

In 27 years or so that the school has been in existence, the amenities for the children have deteriorated to an appalling standard. I use the word "appalling" advisedly and I believe I use it accurately. We subsequently protested about the cavalier nature of the reply we received from the Minister in response to our submission. I suspect the Minister has little knowledge of the file. I ask the Parliamentary Secretary assisting the Minister for Education and Training, who is at the table, to take this matter up with the Minister to ensure that he has the file in front of him and is able to assess it properly. On previous occasions I have found the Minister quite amenable to assisting in regard to matters affecting Windsor High School. I have written to the Minister for Education and

Training asking him to meet me and representatives of the parents and citizens association and the school to discuss these matters. I can only state that they are matters of the highest priority. If they were fixed tomorrow it would be too late for many of the students, but these matters need to be addressed very rapidly.

Mr STEWART (Bankstown—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.04 p.m.]: I will be pleased to take the representations of the honourable member for Hawkesbury to the Minister's office. I would point out that the matters he raised have been carefully considered. He is aware of that and the fact that there has been action taken in relation to them. It would probably be a good idea for the honourable member to have a good talk with the area superintendent. That suggestion has been passed to the school principal as well. I point out that, as the honourable member has indicated, it is the Carr Government that has delivered a school hall to Windsor High School. As he said the school has waited 26 years. Seven years of a Coalition Government did not deliver the school hall. The Carr Government delivered the school hall; it also delivered a unit for students with severe disabilities. The school has gained a lot of attention, and it has deserved that attention.

In respect of the honourable member's concerns or grievances about maintenance, there is a procedure to be followed if those concerns are not being met. I will be pleased to ensure that everything possible is done via the normal channels to assist, taking into account the priority that the school deserves. I also point out that cyclic maintenance was abandoned by the Carr Government. Cyclic maintenance meant that some schools did not get maintenance for up to 10 years—even longer on occasions. Maintenance is now done on a priority basis. That means that schools such as Windsor High School which deserve priority will get it.

STACEY STREET BANKSTOWN TRAFFIC ARRANGEMENTS

Mr STEWART (Bankstown—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.06 p.m.]: Stacey Street Bankstown is a main arterial road in Bankstown. It is with great pleasure that I thank the Minister for Roads, the Hon. Carl Scully, for recently having provided funding for the installation of traffic signals at the intersection of Stacey Street and Greenacre Road. The funds will go towards purchasing traffic signals that have been needed in that area for a long time as it is a black spot intersection. Stacey Street will now be widened to accommodate two right-hand turn lanes at the intersection, one each for northbound and southbound motorists.

The total cost of the project is expected to be close to \$1 million and will be fully funded by the State Government. Work on the installation of these much-needed traffic signals has already begun and I am grateful that the Minister recognised the importance of this issue and personally intervened to approve the special funding for this project. The signals will make it easier for motorists to turn right and travel into the heart of the Bankstown central business area. Up until now they have not been able to do that; they have had to travel almost three-quarters of a kilometre to make a turn towards Bankstown, enter under the railway bridge and then come into the central business district. That was time consuming and caused traffic bottlenecks. The traffic signals will greatly improve road safety and traffic flow along Stacey Street.

To further improve traffic flows the right-hand turn movements at Old Kent Road, Resthaven and Mimosa Road will be banned. Safety for pedestrians will be enhanced through the installation of a pedestrian crossing and the signals at the intersection. That is part of the Government's total commitment. I especially thank two local residents—one of whom, unfortunately, is recently deceased—for their support and advice on behalf of the local community about the installation of the traffic signals at that intersection. Two long-term Stacey Street residents, Mrs Madeline Grien and Mr Arthur Wood have, over the years, lobbied hard for these important traffic signals. It is largely to their credit that the signals will now be installed. Unfortunately, Mrs Grien passed away prior to Christmas, but the hard work and lobbying that both she and Mr Wood have done to help bring this project to fruition should not be forgotten.

I also draw to the attention of the House concerns relating to the other end of Stacey Street, that is the area of Stacey Street that is bounded by Stanley Street and Macauley Avenue. While a lot of work has been put into stage 1 of the Stacey Street project, which has resulted in improvements through installation of the lights and the link road through to Rookwood Road at the north end of Stacey Street, the south end of Stacey Street is in dire need of attention. In the middle of that large arterial road is a very wide, open drainway, which is quite precarious, and also causes traffic bottlenecks.

A number of local residents have fought long and hard to have those road conditions improved and I support them in their efforts. Mr Robert Woods, a long-term Stacey Street resident, has been a great advocate for the locals. He pushed various streams of government very hard to convince them of the need to improve that end of Stacey Street. I am pleased to announce that the Minister for Roads and the Minister for Western Sydney have approved that officers from their ministries attend a meeting with officers from the various departments involved to try to work out a solution to the problems that people are facing along south Stacey Street.

The stakeholders, Sydney Water, the Roads and Traffic Authority, officers from the relevant ministries, the local council and the residents will get together in an endeavour to improve conditions. That is not an easy thing to do, because we are talking about a major drain which at some stage needs to be covered and made into a laneway to improve road flow conditions and safety along Stacey Street That will also enhance the amenities for local residents. The Government is concerned and wants to start the ball rolling. I am pleased that the meeting will take place. An on-site meeting was held involving the agencies, but the authority with the responsibility for the work needs to be identified, and a commitment needs to be given as to the extent of the work that will be completed. I strongly support that approach as do the Ministers concerned.

ORANGE ELECTORATE HEALTH SERVICES

Mr R. W. TURNER (Orange) [5.11 p.m.]: On 13 February I called a public meeting in Cowra to discuss the critical shortage of obstetric specialists in the area. This crisis has arisen not only in Cowra but in other country towns and cities throughout New South Wales, including Sydney. I regret that I had to call that meeting, and I regret that more than 500 people attended. I would rather that 50, or less, turned up, because that would have indicated that the meeting was not necessary. However, the fact that more than 500 people from a population of 8,500 took the time to come to the meeting and express their fears indicates their serious concerns at the imminent loss of services.

It is all very well to say that expertise is available in Orange or Bathurst, but the people of Cowra and the surrounding district do not want a midwife to detect difficulties in their expectant mothers. They do not want to risk the life and health of mothers and babies by having to transport them to Orange or Bathurst for specialist care. That is not good enough. This is seen as another dent in the services available at Cowra hospital, which has a long and proud history. The maternity unit is no longer a specialist unit, but has been amalgamated within the general hospital. The people of Cowra are fearful that that is another downgrading of services.

Mr Martin Bowles, the Chief Executive Officer of the Mid Western Area Health Service, guaranteed that the maternity section would be left open, but he could not guarantee that there would be any staff to service the unit. That meeting resulted in a number of motions. I had invited the Minister for Health to come into the House tonight to hear those motions, but he is unable to come. I wrote to the Minister on 14 February, detailing the motions. I will read the minutes into *Hansard* and hope that the Minister acts on them, if he has not already done so. The motions stated:

- that this meeting wants the New South Wales State Government to indemnify rural procedural General Practitioners for the work they do on public patients in public hospitals
- that this meeting seeks an assurance from the Mid Western Area Health Service to do everything in its power to ensure adequate obstetric and anaesthetic services are maintained at Cowra District Hospital
- that this meeting seeks an assurance that all other services, including the operating theatre, are maintained and all endeavours made to encourage further services and doctors to Cowra
- that the meeting seeks an assurance that Mid Western Area Health Service will not close the maternity unit at the Cowra District Hospital and maintain it as an upgraded full maternity unit not shared with other sick and infirm patients within the hospital
- that this meeting seeks an assurance from the State and Federal Government that the present crisis is not having an adverse effect on a number of young doctors seeking to specialise in obstetrics
- that if doctors are available to come to Cowra, they should be able to do so without the present restrictions which would then enable operating theatres to be more fully utilised to
- that this meeting seeks assurances and acknowledges benefits of a vibrant, well equipped and adequately staffed hospital
- that if this urgent matter is not resolved within 30 days, a statewide rally be organised to march on Parliament House in Macquarie Street
- that doctors ,such as Dr Adamski, be reinstated to their former position and that the situation be reinstated as it was prior to resignations of six months ago
- that the high cost of insurance for doctors be rectified as a matter of urgency
- if the situation remains unresolved, the government supplies Cowra with a helipad to ensure the injured are able to be transported from an accident to nearest hospital in the shortest possible time.

The Minister and the Government must relieve the indemnity crisis, at least on a short-term basis, until urgent meetings are held with the medical profession, the legal profession, and the State and Federal governments. This Government owes that to the people of Cowra, who are proud of their hospital and do not want to lose any more services.

CALLAGHAN COLLEGE INAUGURATION

Mr MILLS (Wallsend) [5.16 p.m.]: On 31 January I was pleased to attend the inauguration of Callaghan College, at Jesmond Campus. I was welcomed to the school by its captains, Kathryn Duff and Greg Parish. The first speaker at the ceremony was Mr Laurie Tabart, the Newcastle District Superintendent of Schools. He said that the three schools campuses, brought together under the Callaghan College, provided opportunities and would build strengths. Jesmond Campus focuses on the senior years with 350 students in year 11. That indicates an improvement in the years 11 and 12 retention rates for the area. Mr Tabart also said that not many schools would have the vice chancellor of the University of Newcastle, the regional director of TAFE, the local member of Parliament, the district president of the parents and citizens association, the Lady Mayoress and the deputy director-general of the Department of Education and Training at such an opening.

On a day of messages to students his message was for the students to take opportunities, work hard and meet challenges. He said that Callaghan College was a special place for students in the Hunter, and in New South Wales. The Vice Chancellor, Professor Roger Holmes, said that the university was keen for students from Callaghan College and the local area to be among the leading applicants for entry into the University of Newcastle. The university responded, because it wanted to provide opportunities for local students. His message to the students was that it was up to them to take the opportunities presented by Callaghan College's links to the University of Newcastle and the Hunter Institute of TAFE.

Dr Alan Laughlin, the Deputy Director-General of the Department Education and Training praised the work of the three principals, Wilma Simmons of Wallsend, Robyn Cragg at Waratah and John McConnell at Jesmond. I join him in praising the three principals and the staff of the three schools who put in lots of work over the last six months of last year and during the holiday period. They entered the new year at the new college with great enthusiasm. John McConnell also thanked the vice chancellor and the Hunter Institute of TAFE for their commitment and work in leading to the opening of the college. He noted that the parents of the area were committed to change and were seeking progress and that the students had said, "This is something good, let's get on with it".

John McConnell also thanked the Department of Public Works for its work over the holiday period in developing the campuses of the new college. He said that the first benefit had been to widen subject choice, and that students at the new senior college have raised expectations because they can study subjects that they are really interested in. The school promotes an adult learning environment, individual development and choices for self-discipline. The welfare policy provides support for each student and assists in the development of good relationships amongst the students. The atmosphere of more adult learning is important for continuous improvement and development. His message to the students was to make a commitment to hard work.

I thank the Newcastle buses. The students and parents got relief at the beginning of the second week when buses picked up the new Year 7 and 8 students from the Shortland area and took them direct to Waratah and Wallsend high school campuses. Initial improvement works were undertaken during the school holidays at Jesmond school. This work is continuing and much of it will be completed during the school vacation at the end of first term. The improvements include a new senior study room, a new cafeteria, repainting and carpeting, landscaping, upgrading of computers in the library and new science laboratory floors. All of these improvements go towards a more adult learning environment.

Additional learning spaces were made at Wallsend and an upgrade of toilets is to be undertaken. A large covered outdoor learning area will be installed during the Easter vacation. At Waratah the improvements to the home economics section and disabled toilets are completed. Close to \$750,000 has been spent on those initial improvements. Importantly, a master plan is being developed during this year for major upgrades at Jesmond and Wallsend, for example, the upgrading of library facilities.

I noted with interest in the college magazine that Professor Peter Brown, Acting Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Science, had announced the conjoint teaching of higher school certificate Aboriginal Studies by the Department of Aboriginal Studies and Callaghan College. That course has commenced this year as a result of the start-up of Callaghan College. The orientation program was very successful in bringing together students from the various high schools and giving them a sense of belonging to the new institution. I am sure they will look forward to the Minister's visit next month.

Mr AQUILINA (Riverstone—Minister for Education and Training) [5.21 p.m.]: I also add my congratulations and commendation to all of those who have made Callaghan College a reality. I realise only too

well that many people have brought it about through substantial sacrifice and hard work and a considerable amount of commitment. I single out, first of all, the three principals of Jesmond, Waratah and Wallsend high schools for the way in which they have gone about with a single purpose of mind to provide better educational opportunities for their students. It is not easy to change a structural concept in the provision of education. One expects that it can only be brought about after a long gestation period and long deliberation

The establishment of Callaghan College has shown that major changes and educational improvement can occur in a relatively short time, providing people are willing to roll up their sleeves and commit themselves to hard work. They do so because they believe in the concept and ideals of widening educational choice and opportunities for students. Certainly in this case the educational teams from the high schools, ably led by their principals and parent bodies, have done just that. I commend them for that. I would also like to mention the leadership role played by Laurie Tabart, the Newcastle District Superintendent, who has been of one mind and very much focused on the provision of improved educational opportunities. I add my specific personal thanks to the commitment and leadership shown by the honourable member for Wallsend, who embraced this concept from the beginning. He anticipated some of the early problems, and he has seen it right through to the end with commitment and dedication.

MANLY LAGOON FISH KILL

Mr BARR (Manly) [5.23 p.m.]: Just over two weeks ago residents close to Manly lagoon heard fish splashing vigorously throughout the night. When they woke up the next morning they found that what they had heard were the death throes of the first of an estimated 10,000 fish that died in the lagoon over the next few days. The Environment Protection Authority [EPA] has described the incident as the worst fish kill in recent memory. Not only have fish died, almost all the marine life of the waterway has been devastated. Sick and dying birds, crabs and other animals continue to be found. Distressed constituents have contacted me as the casualties of this terrible incident continue to emerge.

Manly and Warringah councils and the EPA are actively investigating the cause of this disaster. A pesticide spill is suspected. I understand that a specific organophosphate pesticide has been identified as the probable poison and that the EPA and the councils are optimistic that the perpetrator or perpetrators will be caught. I trust that when they are the EPA will prosecute them to the limit of its capacity. The damage wrought by this incident is immeasurable. It seriously jeopardises the ongoing regeneration of the area and its future ecological integrity. Manly and Warringah councils have been working jointly to assess the impact of the incident on fish, on invertebrates that live in the sediment and on the sediment itself. This information is essential in understanding what can be done to help the recovery of the lagoon.

Clearly, urgent action for mitigation and rehabilitation is required. I have written to the Premier and relevant Ministers asking that funds be made available immediately to ensure that appropriate measures can be taken to reduce the damage in the future. Today I presented the Premier's office and the offices of three Ministers with this folder entitled "Manly Lagoon in Crisis". It documents the whole sorry saga. Manly and Warringah councils have already jointly committed about \$85,000 to the emergency clean-up and associated testing and monitoring. Rehabilitation will require significant further funding, which is estimated at \$770,000. That funding has been requested in this document. It is urgently needed to give the lagoon and its associated environment the best possible chance of recovery.

I understand that on a State level a number of processes are being undertaken to address the health of Manly lagoon and other coastal lakes. These processes begin from the common ground that Manly lagoon is in a desperate state. I believe that the social and environmental values of the waterway are often understated. The number and variety of fish life affected by this incident and the intense response of the local community demonstrate the environmental and social values the lagoon still holds. While the ecosystem may be damaged, until this incident it remained suitable for some forms of recreational contact, and it continues to hold an enormously high value in terms of residential amenity, environmental education and public open space. The community has an ongoing commitment to regenerating the lagoon and the goal to make it suitable for swimming again is regarded as ambitious but ultimately achievable.

A few days ago a local musician Mr Neil Ohlback approached me from Neil's Guitars and Amps on Pittwater Road near Manly. He suggested we organise a concert for the lagoon. I thought that was a terrific idea. Together we are organising a concert to be held on Sunday 18 March from 3.30 p.m. until 6.00 p.m. We are calling the event "In Tune with the Lagoon". The concert will give the community the chance to show its support. I call upon the Government to also show its support and provide emergency funding to make sure that the lagoon recovers as quickly as possible from this terrible blow.

Mr MOSS (Canterbury—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.27 p.m.]: As I represent an electorate that has one of the most vulnerable waterways in Sydney, that is, Cooks River, I understand the concerns raised by the honourable member for Manly. The great tragedy with a spill into a waterway—be it an accident or a deliberate act—is that it not only kills off all the marine life, it creates a huge public health risk as well. That has been the case with Cooks River over many years, particularly in the 1970s and 1980s. The Clean Waters Act, which was introduced many years ago by the Wran Government, has greatly assisted in the clean-up of Sydney waterways. Despite the Act, problems can still occur through deliberate acts of vandalism. That could have been the case with Manly lagoon. I sympathise with the honourable member for Manly and I commend him for bringing this important issue to the House.

UMINA BEACH POLICE AND COMMUNITY YOUTH CLUB

Ms ANDREWS (Peats) [5.28 p.m.]: It is with a great deal of pride that I inform the House that the police and community youth club [PCYC] at Umina Beach was officially opened on Saturday 3 February. The club was opened jointly by the Minister for Police, the Hon. Paul Whelan, who is in the Chamber, and the Mayor of Gosford City Council, Councillor Chris Holstein. The club is of great significance not only to the local community at large, but particularly to young people and the entire State, as it is the first club established as a result of the Callaghan report into PCYCs, which was commissioned by the Minister for Police in 1998. The PCYC Umina Beach will now be the showcase for the PCYC movement in this State. It has been a long time coming, but I am sure all the locals will agree that it was well worth the effort.

My predecessor, Tony Doyle, tried very hard when he was the local member to establish a PCYC in the area. Unfortunately, at the time a suitable building in which the club could be located could not be found. By good fortune Gosford City Council purchased the former Sydney County Council depot at Umina beach in the mid 1990s. The building was secured under its building strategies policy by a consent authority obtained from the New South Wales Treasurer, the Hon. Michael Egan. It was the intention of the council to convert the building into a facility for youth. The commitment of the council to the project has been \$1.35 million.

On 29 September 1997, the year in which the PCYC movement celebrated its sixtieth anniversary, a well-attended public meeting called by Gosford City Council gave overwhelming support to the establishment of a PCYC in the former electricity depot building. Together with the then Commander of Brisbane Waters Local Area Command, Superintendent Max Ebril and Sergeant Paul MacMillan of PCYC community relations, I had the opportunity to give support to the establishment of a PCYC in the area. With the co-operation of my colleague the Hon. Paul Whelan, the Minister for Police, the mobile PCYC was on display at the Umina Beach site to coincide with the public meeting.

A few hiccups occurred regarding access to the adjacent electricity substation by Energy Australia vehicles. When these were overcome Gosford City Council wasted no time in getting some action at the site. Gosford City Council contributed \$1.35 million towards the development of the Umina Beach club. I understand this is the first time in the 64-year history of the PCYC movement that a local council has provided the building in which to accommodate the club. Congratulations must go to the Mayor of Gosford City Council, Councillor Chris Holstein, and all the councillors, as well as a number of council officers who worked hard to overcome a number of obstacles to ensure that the PCYC came to fruition. The official opening was a very happy occasion for everyone who had anything at all to do with the establishment of the PCYC.

It was a particularly proud day, however, for the new club's manager, Tony Johnson, and Senior Constable Paul Hanna, youth program co-ordinator for club. These two young men have been working in the Woy Woy peninsula area for two years, and in that time they have built up a wonderful rapport with young people; they have won the respect of the wider community. Unfortunately, it is not commonly known that while awaiting the building of the new club Tony Johnson and Senior Constable Paul Hanna have been running programs for youth at risk with great success. They have been working in partnership with a number of State Government agencies including the New South Wales Police Service, the Department of Education and Training, the Department of Juvenile Justice, the Department of Sport and Recreation, as well as Gosford City Council and the community at large. I am sure there are many others.

Sergeant Steve Lawley, highly respected local resident and manager of the Woy Woy Police Station, is the president of the club. Steve has served on the Umina PCYC steering committee since the word go. He deserves special mention today for his unswerving support for the establishment of the club. In his address at the opening the Minister for Police, the Hon. Paul Whelan, commended the police personnel working in PCYCs throughout the State for their dedication and commitment. The Minister also paid tribute to them for their

positive contribution to crime prevention in our communities by providing safe spaces and targeted programs for youth. The Minister acknowledged that Gosford City Council had set an important benchmark for other local governments in New South Wales to follow.

The Chairman of the PCYC Board of Directors, Denis Cleary, told those in attendance at the opening that young people had been key contributors to the concept, design and planning of the new facility. He added that those young people would continue to play a major role in the management and operation of the club. It was pleasing to see a young person and well-known local resident, Gwen Watkins, carry out so well the functions of master of ceremonies. She has also served on the PCYC steering committee since the plans for the establishment of the club were announced. I congratulate all those concerned on the opening of the PCYC at Umina Beach.

Mr WHELAN (Strathfield—Minister for Police) [5.33 p.m.]: I thank the honourable member for the invitation to open the PCYC at Umina Beach. I share with her the view that it was a wonderful day and a wonderful occasion for the community. It is one of the most modern PCYCs that has ever been established: It is a Pump brand. As the honourable member may recall, I said it should really stand for the people of Umina meeting place. The message we are trying to impress on the community is that PCYCs are police and community establishments, with great emphasis on the community, which was not so much emphasised in the past.

The police at Umina have done a fantastic job. I take this opportunity to congratulate the Chairman of the PCYC, Denis Cleary, and the Chief Executive Officer, Deborah Mills, on what they have done at Umina. The honourable member referred to two very important people, Tony Johnson and Senior Constable Paul Hanna. The way they were received by the many hundreds of people at the opening of the PCYC was remarkable. When they were introduced to the crowd it was gratifying for me, as Minister, to see the acclamation they received. The report coming back about their work with young people in the community augurs well for the future.

I congratulate the club. I thank the council for its support. It is nice to know that a council is working very hard with its community to support it. Marie Andrews, the honourable member for Peats, is always very modest about her achievements, but the establishment of the PCYC Umina Beach is largely the result of her getting into the ears of those responsible to ensure that the young people of her electorate are looked after. Although she is always very modest, she deserves great praise. I said as much at the opening of the PCYC, which was widely accepted, widely received and widely acknowledged by the community on the day.

BEGA BLOOD BANK CLOSURE

Mr R. H. L. SMITH (Bega) [5.35 p.m.]: The people of my electorate have suffered a grave injustice—the closure of the Bega Blood Bank—which has caused an absolute outrage from Batemans Bay in the north to the Victorian border in the south. People are very angry and upset that they can no longer volunteer their services without having to travel at least three hours one way to either Canberra or Nowra. In the past volunteers of the Bega Blood Bank area have supplied more than 2,000 units of blood annually to the Red Cross Blood Bank Service, and they have stated publicly that they are willing to continue to do so. Every day I read in the paper and I hear on the radio that we need more donors. There is a shortage of blood in New South Wales. The health scare caused by mad cow disease will result in a further shortage of blood because 5 per cent of regular donors will be prevented from giving blood.

It is an absolutely ludicrous situation. A community of volunteers is ready and willing to donate blood, but the same people who are advertising for donors have closed our blood bank. The head office of the blood bank announced the closure last December, without any prior warning. The staff at the local blood bank were not informed of the impending closure: They found out through a leak from the local media that they were about to lose their jobs. A public meeting was called and the executive from the Red Cross Blood Bank Australia was invited to attend. When questioned about the reasons for the closure, we were told that the cost of collecting and transporting blood from Bega to Sydney was too expensive. Any suggestions to head office as to what measures could be taken to reverse the decision were rejected.

I have on file a letter from the office of the Minister for Health dated 28 June 2000, assuring me that the Bega Blood Bank was an important part of the blood collection network in New South Wales and the ACT. The intention was to link the Bega service more closely with the blood service in Canberra. What happened to this suggestion? Was this option ever investigated? I think not. Six months later we have no service at all. I am aware that a number of mobile collection points in outlying towns are managed by the Bega service. I have been

advised that during the operation of this mobile service the supervisor from the Sydney office has to travel to the area to accompany the service because of alleged staff shortages and the requirements of the Therapeutic Goods Act.

Obviously, this would create an enormous overhead for the service, but I do not accept that such supervision could not be provided far more economically. There must be a resolution to the cost of the transportation of blood, but no investigation has been undertaken. Perhaps we could accept the closure of some of the smaller services so that people will have to travel only short distances to donate blood in larger towns. Only last month one of my constituents had to travel to Victoria to have a hip replacement due to the long waiting list at the Bega District Hospital. Her surgeon asked her to bring four units of her own blood to be used during the operation. However, she was unable to do that because the blood bank had closed and she was forced to use donated blood during her hip replacement operation.

The donors and volunteers are ready and willing to assist. Qualified people and facilities are standing idle at the local hospital. What a slap in the face for so many willing volunteers in this Year of the Volunteer. I call on the Minister for Health to reconsider the closure and reopen the Bega blood bank. The small and expensive blood bank in Bega has been closed so now another town in New South Wales has the smallest and most expensive blood bank in the State. I warn people who live in country areas with small blood banks that those facilities may be next on the Government's list for closure. The service is not necessarily interested in getting the correct amount of blood when it advertises: it wants to get it at a certain price.

Private members' statements noted.

GOVERNOR OF NEW SOUTH WALES APPOINTMENT

Mr Speaker reported the receipt of the following message from Her Excellency the Governor:

MARIE BASHIR
Governor

Professor Marie Bashir has the honour to inform the Legislative Assembly that Her Majesty The Queen has been graciously pleased, by Commission under Her Royal Sign Manual and the Public Seal of the State of New South Wales, bearing date at Saint James's the seventeenth day of January 2001, to appoint her to be the Governor in and over the State of New South Wales in the Commonwealth of Australia; and that this day she took the Oath of Allegiance and the Official and Judicial Oath before the Honourable James Spigelman, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of New South Wales, and assumed the administration of the Government of the State accordingly.

Sydney 1 March 2001

House adjourned at 5.42 p.m. until Tuesday 6 March 2001 at 2.15 p.m.
