

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Tuesday 1 July 2003

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## ABSENCE OF MR SPEAKER

**The Deputy Clerk** announced the absence of Mr Speaker.

**Mr Deputy-Speaker (Mr John Charles Price)** took the chair at 2.15 p.m. as the Acting-Speaker.

**The Acting-Speaker** offered the Prayer.

## DEATH OF MRS ANNE MICHELLE AQUILINA

**The ACTING-SPEAKER:** It is my sad duty to formally notify the House of the passing of Anne, the wife of Mr Speaker, John Aquilina. I am sure that members will join with me in extending our deepest sympathy to Mr Speaker on this sad and distressing occasion.

## DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

**The ACTING-SPEAKER:** I acknowledge the presence in the gallery of a delegation from India. I welcome the Minister and her party to the Parliament of New South Wales.

## ASSENT TO BILLS

Assent to the following bills reported:

Australian Crime Commission (New South Wales) Bill  
 Cancer Institute (NSW) Bill  
 Consumer Credit Administration Amendment (Finance Brokers) Bill  
 Gaming Machines Amendment (Shutdown Periods) Bill  
 Pacific Power (Dissolution) Bill

## VARIATIONS OF PAYMENTS ESTIMATES 2002-03

**Mr Knowles** tabled a determination by the Treasurer under section 24 of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983 for variations of the payments estimates and appropriations for 2002-03 arising from the transfer of responsibilities of various agencies.

**Mr Knowles** also tabled variations of the receipts and payments estimates and appropriations for 2002-03, under section 26 of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983, arising from the provision by the Commonwealth of specific purpose payments in excess of the amounts included in the State's receipts and payments estimates.

## PETITIONS

### Mount Austin High School

Petition requesting funding for the installation of airconditioning in all learning spaces at Mount Austin High School, received from **Mr Maguire**.

### Dunoon Dam

Petition requesting the fast-tracking of plans to build a dam at Dunoon, received from **Mr George**.

### Bushfires and Hazard Reduction

Petition requesting an inquiry into the causes of bushfires and their relationship to the lack of hazard reduction, received from **Ms Hodgkinson**.

**Jingellic to Holbrook Road Upgrading**

Petition requesting funding for the upgrading of the Jingellic to Holbrook road, received from **Mr Maguire**.

**Windsor Road Traffic Arrangements**

Petition requesting a right turn bay on Windsor Road at Acres Road, received from **Mr Merton** and **Mr Richardson**.

**Spit Bridge Traffic Arrangements**

Petition opposing the proposal to add a two-lane drawbridge next to the Spit Bridge, and calling for a responsible and holistic solution to the transport, traffic, and freight needs of the area, received from **Mrs Skinner**.

**Castle Cove Bus Services**

Petition requesting a regular daily bus service between east Castle Cove and Wynyard, received from **Ms Berejikian**.

**Cudgen Creek Seaway**

Petitions requesting that the Cudgen Creek seaway at Kingscliff be cleared of silt, received from **Mr Cansdell**, **Mr Fraser** and **Mr R. W. Turner**.

**QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE**

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**STAMP DUTY**

**Mr BROGDEN:** My question without notice is directed to the Premier. How can the Premier justify increasing 1,000 different fees, fines and charges today but, at the same time, still refuse to give homebuyers of New South Wales a stamp duty cut?

**Mr CARR:** I am delighted to answer the Leader of the Opposition's question. When the Greiner Government came into power it showed its approach to how government charges should be set. We have a different approach. By and large, we link government charges to the consumer price index [CPI]. If there is an argument we ensure that the issue is referred to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal [IPART], the independent umpire, to adjudicate on price rises. Let us compare the figures when the Coalition was last in office. In its first budget electricity bills increased by 9.8 per cent, water rates increased by 12 per cent, public transport fares increased by 12.5 per cent and small freight charges increased by 150 per cent.

**The ACTING-SPEAKER:** Order! The Leader of the Opposition has asked a question. He will listen to the answer in silence.

**Mr CARR:** The list goes on. I repeat that this Government's approach has been to link government charges to the CPI and, when there is an argument, to refer an issue to the independent umpire. I refer now to stamp duty. With the luxury that is available to any irresponsible Opposition leader, the Leader of the Opposition has said that stamp duty should come down. Last Thursday he would not make a commitment in this House, as Opposition leader, to bring down stamp duty if he were ever in government. He would not make that commitment and he would not attend a press conference today in relation to that issue. All the Leader of the Opposition said was that the Government should bring down stamp duty, but he would not make a commitment to do it himself if he were ever elected to government.

**The ACTING-SPEAKER:** Order! The Leader of the Opposition will come to order.

**Mr CARR:** When the Leader of the Opposition was asked whether he would cut stamp duty on residential properties, he said, "It is too early to think about what we would do if we were in government." The fact is that the Government must allow itself a real surplus as we plan the future of this State.

**The ACTING-SPEAKER:** Order! The Leader of the Opposition will come to order.

**Mr CARR:** Surpluses are estimates; they should not be assumed to be fact and the money spent before it is realised—

**The ACTING-SPEAKER:** Order! I remind the Leader of the Opposition of the need to maintain good order in the House. He has been given the opportunity to ask a question. He should now have the good grace to listen to the answer.

**Mr CARR:** When we set a budget surplus for two or three years down the track we know that it will have to be there for the unforeseen hits that a budget takes, such as the HIH collapse, a bushfire crisis or a drought.

**The ACTING-SPEAKER:** Order! The House will come to order.

**Mr CARR:** Unless we allow for a surplus we do not have the capacity to provide for those hits that a budget might take. If the Government had not acted two years ago we would not have been able to accommodate the collapse of HIH. If we had not allowed for the surplus and had not had the money to pay for a direct hit on the budget in a form of a 6 per cent pay rise for nurses, the nurses would not have been able to receive that pay rise.

**The ACTING-SPEAKER:** Order! Members of the Opposition will come to order.

**Mr CARR:** It is good financial management that enables a government to accommodate events such as the HIH collapse or a pay rise for nurses. The Opposition is advocating the removal of the capacity in our future budgets to accommodate those eventualities.

#### **FEDERAL GOVERNMENT PUBLIC HOSPITALS FUNDING**

**Ms GADIEL:** My question is directed to the Minister for Health. What is the Government's response to the report of the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare that was released yesterday?

**Mr IEMMA:** The Commonwealth's position regarding the health care agreement is getting worse. The Federal Government is cutting funding for our public hospitals and the Federal Minister for Health and Ageing, Senator Patterson, has sought to justify this reduction in funding by claiming that our public hospitals are less busy. She will offer the latest instalment of her argument at the Health Ministers conference in Perth on 31 July—if she turns up—and tell the States that they will receive less funding for public hospitals because those hospitals are less busy. She will base her argument on the claim that there has been some massive drift to private hospital treatment in this country. Why is the Minister taking that approach? On the one hand, she is trying to boost the private health insurance industry by ensuring a massive increase in private health insurance.

However, the report of the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare entitled "Hospital Statistics 2001-02" blows the argument of the Federal health Minister out of the water by concluding that the number of people admitted to our public hospitals has increased, not decreased. The Federal health Minister has attempted to justify a cut in public hospital funding on the basis that admissions to public hospitals have decreased. However, the report reveals that such admissions have increased over the past 12 months. The five-year national health care agreement, which was signed in 1998, concludes today. The States, doctors and nurses have made a real effort to make the Commonwealth see what is obvious to everyone else: our public hospitals are busier—not less busy, as the Federal health Minister claims—and under increasing pressure. Therefore, they are worthy of more, not less, support.

Yet the Federal health Minister continues to try to justify—she did so as recently as today—the offer on the table of reduced funding by claiming that the report supports the Commonwealth's position. In fact, the Federal Government is reducing its responsibility in health care. Co-payments for general practitioner services have been introduced, bulk-billing has been abandoned and private health insurance has been supported massively to the cost of families and our public hospitals. This report provides the statistical evidence. It reveals that the number of people admitted to our public hospitals has increased by 2.6 per cent in the past 12 months. Even though it blows the argument of the Federal health Minister out of the water, that figure understates reality as it focuses only on patients who are admitted to hospital. It does not take account of the 22.6 million health services provided to people as outpatients in the past 12 months.

Preliminary figures suggest that the number of outpatient treatments in New South Wales has increased by 5.8 percent in the past 12 months alone. That means that our public hospitals are treating more people, not fewer, and that many people are being treated as outpatients. Yet New South Wales, like the other States, is being penalised by the Commonwealth because it fails to recognise that we are treating more people as outpatients: more people are being treated in the community, in their homes and as hospital outpatients. Today Senator Patterson offered yet another justification for her position, despite the fact that the report outlines increases in private hospital admissions and disproves her argument. Private hospitals have a financial incentive to admit people. Therefore, they will attempt to admit as many people as possible.

The report offers figures for chemotherapy treatment, just one of the services that it details. Most chemotherapy treatment in New South Wales is provided as an outpatient service. This is because it is more convenient, and the practice is strongly supported by patients and their families. However, the Commonwealth is rewarding private hospitals for persisting with outdated, unnecessary practices, such as admitting people to hospital for chemotherapy treatment, and penalising the States for adopting the latest approach to quality care provision. The report reveals that 24,000 people were admitted to private hospitals for chemotherapy treatment but only 5,500 were admitted to public hospitals for such treatment. On the surface, that appears to justify Senator Patterson's statement. However, the report does not point out—and the Federal Government takes no account of this fact—that in New South Wales 75,000 chemotherapy treatments were provided to outpatients.

The report takes into account the 24,000 patients admitted into private hospitals for chemotherapy, because of the financial incentive to do so, and only 5,000 admissions for chemotherapy in public hospitals. What does the Commonwealth use as a funding formula? What does it put on the table? It uses those very statistics. The report does not take into account the 75,000 chemotherapy services provided for outpatients in New South Wales, and there are many more services provided; that load is three times more than in the private hospitals. The structure and the formula that the Commonwealth uses only accounts for inpatient admissions.

If a hospital's health care policy is based on trying to keep people out of hospital, to keep them well and healthy and in the community with their families, the hospital is punished under the Commonwealth's formula. It is not rewarded with more funding for the health care system but is punished and money is taken away from it. If, on the other hand, a hospital fails to provide a health care policy or does not run programs to keep people healthy and out of hospital, and actually runs a health care system of sickness, it is rewarded with more money. That is the perversity of the Commonwealth's formula to fund health care in this country. If a hospital's health care policy is successful and keeps people healthy and out of hospital it gets less funding under the Commonwealth's formula that it put on the table to fund the next five years under the health care agreement.

The private health insurance industry is laughing all the way to the bank with this formula. It means more money for them, increased premiums and less money for our public hospitals at a time when, as this report states, there are more public hospital admissions and more pressure on our public hospitals. The Commonwealth Government is reducing, not increasing, its commitment to public hospitals and health care in this country.

### GAMING MACHINE TAX

**Mr STONER:** My question is directed to the Premier. What does the Premier say to communities, such as the Tweed, which due to his broken promise on gaming tax stands to lose up to \$0.5 million per annum in contributions from just one of its clubs, South Tweed Bowls Club Ltd, including support for junior sports, free entertainment for seniors, facilities for community groups and support for indigenous sports and culture?

**Mr CARR:** First of all, there is not a hint of a broken promise on gaming tax, and nobody has suggested there is. Under our plan, two-thirds of clubs will pay no State tax, or less State tax than they previously paid. The largest 490 clubs in the State will pay more tax but remain on average among the most lightly taxed clubs in Australia. Let us take a couple of clubs that are in the National Rugby League [NRL]. I cannot mention them by name because individual tax data is confidential.

**The ACTING-SPEAKER:** Order! The Opposition will come to order. I call the Leader of the Opposition to order.

**Mr CARR:** One club had nett gaming profits for the year ended 30 June of more than \$45 million, yet it allocated a mere \$2.5 million to its NRL team. For the same period, another club had a nett gaming profit of more than \$23 million and spent a mere \$2.8 million on its NRL team, and it is a consistent pattern with other clubs. Some of these clubs are paying their executives up to \$600,000 a year. These changed tax rates will mean

more money for public hospitals and public schools. Last week's budget provides an extra \$920 million for hospitals, including \$530 million for pay rises for nurses and other health staff.

**The ACTING-SPEAKER:** Order! The House will come to order. It is almost impossible for Hansard to hear the Premier. Those in the public gallery certainly cannot hear him. The Leader of the National Party has asked the Premier a question; the Opposition should allow him to answer it.

**Mr CARR:** Those in the Opposition who attack every revenue measure in the budget are saying they do not want nurses to receive a pay rise and they do not want this increased funding for public health.

### ETHANOL BLENDED PETROL

**Mr BROWN:** My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Fair Trading. What is the latest information on the use of ethanol in New South Wales?

**Ms MEAGHER:** I thank the honourable member for his ongoing interest in this issue. Honourable members may be aware that from today regulations under the Federal Fuel Quality Standards Act come into effect that cap the amount of ethanol that can be legally blended with fuel at a maximum of 10 per cent. This comes after lengthy delays by the Federal Government. For more than 12 months, the Carr Government has been calling for the Federal Government to use its powers to resolve the uncertainty of consumers surrounding ethanol-blended fuel.

**Mr Armstrong:** Point of order: Last Thursday in this place the Government refused to allow debate on ethanol in petrol and voted against it.

**The ACTING-SPEAKER:** Order! There is no point of order. The honourable member for Lachlan will resume his seat.

**Ms MEAGHER:** Following intense public debate, ethanol is clearly a significant issue for many consumers of New South Wales who feel uncertain about the risks and benefits of using fuel containing ethanol. All honourable members would agree that consumers should be able to make an informed choice about using ethanol-blended fuel. Consumers should be aware that there are benefits from the appropriate use of fuel blended with ethanol. New South Wales is the home to Australia's largest ethanol plant located on the South Coast. The Manildra ethanol plant employs some 200 people and generates approximately 90 million litres of ethanol each year from local wheat. This emerging renewable resource industry helps secure markets for farmers, while supporting families in rural New South Wales. That is why Country Labor has continued to support this important regional industry in New South Wales. I note that Country Labor, as well as the honourable member for Tamworth, are on the record in this Chamber as supporting this important industry.

**Mr Armstrong:** Point of order—

**The ACTING-SPEAKER:** I hope this will be a serious point of order.

**Mr Armstrong:** As a matter of assistance to the Minister, Country Labor voted against an ethanol debate last Thursday.

**The ACTING-SPEAKER:** Order! The Minister needs no assistance. The honourable member for Lachlan will resume his seat.

**Ms MEAGHER:** Now that the cap is in place, it is time to ensure consumers have confidence in ethanol-blended fuel through uniform national labelling. In a media release of 11 April this year, the Federal Minister for the Environment, the Hon. David Kemp, said:

A 10 per cent limit on ethanol blends, combined with mandatory Commonwealth labelling of ethanol blends, will restore confidence among consumers and industry.

We are now in July and the Federal environment Minister has only last week introduced proposed amendments to the Fuel Quality Standards Act. It will be several months before the Federal Parliament can consider this important bill. In the meantime, the Federal Government has failed to give any information on a national ethanol-labelling regime. This is despite the efforts by the Federal Leader of the National Party and the Deputy Prime Minister—efforts that have been to no avail. All those with an interest in this issue should make no

mistake: the future of ethanol in Australia will be guided by the response of consumers. Ethanol is a national issue that requires a national approach to ensure consistency between jurisdictions for the benefit of both consumers and the industry.

It is time to give consumers the information they need to have confidence in the use of ethanol-blended fuel, and the New South Wales Government is ready to act. Honourable members would be interested to know that I am releasing for public comment the draft regulations for the labelling of ethanol-blended fuel. I believe these regulations could serve as the national model and expedite the release of uniform labelling for the benefit of consumers. The regulations would require labelling at the bowser to provide consumers with information on the appropriate use of ethanol-blended fuel. I have written to the Federal environment Minister, and I have distributed the draft regulations to industry, consumers and my State counterparts for comment.

I will be taking the draft regulations to the meeting of the Ministerial Council for Consumer Affairs, which New South Wales is hosting on 1 August. The Ministerial Council is the appropriate venue to ensure the reaching of a workable outcome that meets the needs of industry, consumers and all government jurisdictions. The New South Wales Government's draft labelling regulations for ethanol-blended fuels strike a balance between providing consumers with information and supporting a renewable resource industry.

### **EPPING TO CHATSWOOD RAIL LINK**

**Ms BEREJIKLIAN:** My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Infrastructure and Planning. As the Chatswood to Epping rail link will not be completed until 2008, what will the Government do as an interim measure, given that there are no lifts or escalators for the disabled or elderly at Chatswood railway station?

**Mr KNOWLES:** I am sure the new member is capable of reading, so I will send her a copy of Minister Costa's press release on that subject.

### **RURAL AND REGIONAL TEACHERS INCENTIVES**

**Mr BLACK:** My question without notice is addressed to the Minister for Education and Training. What is the latest information on the Government commitment to putting teachers into country areas?

**Dr REFSHAUGE:** I thank the honourable member for his question and I commend him for his long-running battle to ensure better services in country New South Wales. In fact, the honourable member for Murray-Darling, a former teacher, was one of the leaders of a spirited campaign of some 30 years ago to improve conditions for teachers in rural New South Wales. Back then, under the Askin Government—a good government to fight against because it made so many bad decisions—schools like Broken Hill were chronically understaffed with teachers. There were very few decent incentives for teachers to stay in outback towns, and this made it even tougher for the ones that stuck it out.

**The ACTING-SPEAKER:** Order! I call the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to order.

**Dr REFSHAUGE:** In those days often teachers were not able to be attracted to schools where they were required.

**The ACTING-SPEAKER:** Order! There is far too much audible conversation in the Chamber. The Deputy Premier will be allowed to answer the question in silence.

**Dr REFSHAUGE:** The incentives for teachers to go to country New South Wales did not exist. Often it was the honourable member for Murray-Darling who was leading the fight against the Askin Government in order to get better conditions for teachers, particularly in rural New South Wales. It was not unusual for schools in country New South Wales not to have enough teachers to teach students at those schools. We have come a long way since then. The Government made substantial commitments at the last election designed to attract and retain teachers at rural and isolated government schools. This Government is delivering on those election commitments.

Today I can inform the House of a major initiative to attract teachers to those schools. Teachers who live in remote parts of the State will soon get a substantial increase in their rental subsidies. Sometimes the provision of incentives is essential to attract and retain teachers at rural and isolated schools. Currently, teachers

living in Teacher Housing Authority accommodation in remote locations receive a 20 per cent rental subsidy. From the beginning of term three, this amount will increase to 90 per cent for some schools and 70 per cent for other isolated schools. From the beginning of term three teachers in the State's 33 most isolated schools—such as Wilcannia Central School, Tibooburra Outback School of the Air, Lightning Ridge Central School and White Cliffs Public School—will pay only 10 per cent of the market value rent for their accommodation.

For teachers appointed to nearly 80 of the next most isolated and difficult-to-staff schools, the rental subsidy has been increased from the existing 20 per cent to 70 per cent. Those schools include Cobar High School, Khancoban Public School, Boggabilla Central School and Tooleybuc Central School. This represents increases of some 350 per cent for those at the 70 per cent subsidy level and 450 per cent for those at most isolated schools. If the teacher is eligible for housing and Teacher Housing Authority premises are unavailable, the same rental subsidy will apply for private rental premises. This initiative demonstrates the Government is committed to supporting teachers especially in the State's most remote and isolated schools and of course the communities that those schools serve. This means teachers in those remote areas will be able to save, on average, about \$3,000 a year. Details about the increased rental subsidies are being forwarded to relevant schools to ensure that eligible teachers have access to the information. Details are also being placed on the department's web site.

The substantial increase in rental subsidies is just one of the initiatives to recruit, retrain and retain quality teachers in rural areas outlined in "The Three Rs" plan released by the Premier on 17 February 2003. From 2004, leave provisions will be enhanced for teachers working in isolated rural districts. They will be entitled to several extra days per year so that they can attend to personal or family commitments. This acknowledges the distances teachers at those schools need to travel to attend to important personal matters. Also from next year, the \$5,000 gross annual retention benefit, which is currently being piloted in 20 difficult-to-staff remote schools, will be expanded. It will include the 20 remaining most difficult-to-staff remote schools. Teachers who remain in those schools beyond a minimum service period, usually three years, will be paid the annual retention benefit for a maximum of five years.

We also want to encourage students who are studying to be teachers to strongly consider appointments to government schools in isolated and rural areas. The Beyond the Line Program, which promotes rural teaching opportunities, is being expanded further this year. Under this program, students in the second, third and fourth years of their teacher education program visit rural districts to gain firsthand knowledge of what it is like to live and work as a teacher in rural New South Wales. Last year some 412 students from eight universities participated in visits to schools in rural and remote areas.

**Mr Black:** Like Broken Hill.

**Dr REFSHAUGE:** Like Broken Hill. Twenty of those students have since taken up work in those schools. The expansion of the program this year will see 11 universities and up to 1,000 of those students participate in the program. Later this year a program will also be piloted to provide incentives for final-year teaching students to undertake their final teaching practice in rural and isolated schools. From 2004, the number of pre-service teacher education scholarships offered each year will increase from 150 to 200. Many of those scholarship holders will be appointed to schools in difficult-to-staff areas, including regional and rural New South Wales.

These enhanced initiatives to attract and retain teachers build on our commitment to deliver quality education in rural and regional New South Wales. Just last week the Government announced a record \$8.7 billion Education budget—a budget that has many benefits for the bush. As Minister for Education and Training, I was very pleased to note that so many National Party members of Parliament welcomed the budget. The first was the honourable member for Myall Lakes. He did not wait until the others had woken up. He was on Max FM at Taree before 7 o'clock.

**Mr J. H. Turner:** I didn't go on Max FM. It was 2RE.

**Dr REFSHAUGE:** No, it was Max FM. The honourable member for Myall Lakes said that Bulahdelah school had been given the go-ahead and that he was very pleased. The Leader of the National Party—who appears to have left the Chamber, probably to again praise the Government's commitment to public schools in rural New South Wales—was also very pleased.

**Mr Stoner:** I'm here.

**Dr REFSHAUGE:** Good on you! We are committed to meeting our election promises. Our budget is doing that. We are reducing class sizes under a \$329 million program and we will employ an additional 1,500 teachers to meet this commitment.

**The ACTING-SPEAKER:** Order! The Leader of the National Party will come to order.

**Dr REFSHAUGE:** Our budget also delivers a huge boost to preschools, primary and secondary schools, and TAFEs in rural and regional New South Wales.

**The ACTING-SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member for North Shore will come to order.

**Dr REFSHAUGE:** We are spending \$10 million on airconditioning for schools in the hottest parts of the State. Rural and regional schools and TAFEs will benefit from statewide funding for major new education programs, including \$257.8 million in 2003-04 for new computers, Internet services and technology support in schools.

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

**Dr REFSHAUGE:** The Government will continue to encourage and support teachers who choose to work in rural and remote areas. We will probably get Blackie, the honourable member for Murray-Darling, to give them ideas on how to make sure they get the most out of their experience of working in country New South Wales.

#### MANLY HOSPITAL

**Mr BARR:** My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Health. Does the Government intend to honour its commitment to build a new Manly hospital?

**Mr IEMMA:** In short, yes. The Government made a commitment to build a new Manly hospital at a more accessible and suitable site in the Manly-Warringah area. I am happy to reaffirm that commitment for the honourable member for Manly. This year's budget included additional money to the amount spent last year, to continue to progress the planning for a new Manly hospital.

**Mr Brogden:** How much more?

**Mr IEMMA:** The figure is in the budget: \$200,000.

**The ACTING-SPEAKER:** Order! The Chair has been fairly tolerant today. I place all members who have been called to order on three calls. Members who continue to interject will be dealt with promptly. The Minister may conclude his answer.

**Mr IEMMA:** An additional \$200,000 on top of the money that has already been expended—

**Mr O'Farrell:** Point of order: My point of order relates to relevance under Standing Order 138. The honourable member for Manly made a commitment to his electorate that the Government had already agreed to a new hospital. But he lied. He did not know where it was going to be.

**The ACTING-SPEAKER:** Order! There is no point of order. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition will resume his seat. The Minister for Health has the call.

**Mr IEMMA:** An additional \$200,000 has been provided to continue the planning process that has commenced. The Government remains committed to a new Manly hospital at a more appropriate site. The budget continues the process that we had already started for a new Manly hospital. The honourable member for Manly has taken a very constructive approach to the debate about a new hospital for Manly. On a visit that he organised he showed me, first hand, the conditions at Manly hospital, which are far from adequate. It is right that a new Manly hospital be built at a much more appropriate and accessible site than the current one.

**The ACTING-SPEAKER:** Order! I call the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to order for the second time.



**Mr IEMMA:** The commitment has been made, and I am happy to reaffirm it. It is in addition to the \$1.5 million the Government is expending to improve conditions in the Manly emergency department—\$1 million for an emergency medical unit and \$500,000 to refit—

**Mr Hazzard:** Point of order: In accordance with Standing Order 135 the Minister is required to respond to matters relating to public affairs. The communities of Manly and the peninsula want to know when the Government is going to build Manly hospital. No more pussyfooting around with the honourable member for Manly—give us the answer! When are we going to get the hospital?

**The ACTING-SPEAKER:** Order! I place the honourable member for Wakehurst on three calls to order.

**Mr IEMMA:** The answer is that they are getting a new hospital and it will not be the Coalition that delivers it but this Labor Government. Manly hospital will be an addition to an ever-growing list of hospitals and health centres, 230 in this State, either rebuilt or refurbished by this Government. Manly hospital will be in addition to that long and impressive, and ever-expanding, list.

### WOLLEMI NATIONAL PARK ABORIGINAL ART PRESERVATION

**Ms JUDGE:** My question without notice is to the Premier. What is the Government's response to the discovery of rare Aboriginal carvings and drawings in the Wollemi National Park?

**Mr CARR:** I am proud to announce to the House the most significant finding of Aboriginal art in the State in half a century. Researchers from the Australian Museum briefed me this morning on a fantastic discovery in the Wollemi National Park, which rivals in importance the discovery of the Wollemi pine. They say that this is the most significant Aboriginal rock art discovery in the Sydney basin in half a century. The discovery was made by a team led by the Australian Museum in a research project funded by the New South Wales Government. The site is covered in 203 drawings in 12 layers built up over time and, for the most part, the illustrations are 4,000 years old. The earliest drawings and stencils were placed on the walls of this cave at a time before China was a unified empire, when civilisation in Egypt and Crete was well advanced, and when Stonehenge was being built.

I congratulate the team from the Australian Museum and the National Parks and Wildlife Service on this magnificent discovery. I acknowledge as well their sensitive handling of it with local Aboriginal communities. Just think for a moment about the reservoir of scientific and cultural treasures that our great national park system represents! Here we have a national park, the Wollemi National Park, gazetted by the Wran Government in 1979—I think Paul Landa was Minister at the time. The Wollemi pine was discovered in 1994, and now this treasure. Who knows what other treasures lie within its nearly half a million hectares. When you save wild places like this, you never know what you are saving.

It is an affirmation of our decision to seek World Heritage listing for one million hectares of precious bushland in the Blue Mountains. It was granted, of course, in 2000. It is a confirmation of our determination to expand the national park estate throughout New South Wales, creating 330 new national parks since 1995 covering nearly two million hectares. Some 7.3 per cent of the State is now covered by national park compared with 5 per cent in 1995. Rarely are sites of this importance discovered within such close range of a major city. Most have already been discovered. Many have been damaged either by the elements or by vandalism. At this site the superimposed layers are in various colours—red, yellow, white, charcoal and black. The scientists who have seen it have told me that it is pristine.

**The ACTING-SPEAKER:** Order! I call the honourable member for Baulkham Hills to order.

**Mr CARR:** There are stencils, drawings and one painting. There are ancestral beings in the form of human figures, and half human-half animal composites.

**The ACTING-SPEAKER:** Order! I call the honourable member for Baulkham Hills to order for the second time.

**Mr CARR:** There are drawings of birds, lizards and wallabies. There are stencils of hands, boomerangs and axes. There are superb naturalistic eagles and a depiction of a wombat that, I am told, is rarely found in rock art. According to Dr Tacon of the museum, it is likely that powerful spiritual beliefs were

associated with this remarkable sight. The National Parks and Wildlife Service has chosen to restrict information about the exact location of the site in order to protect it from inadvertent or wilful damage. The decision has the support of local Aboriginal people. The Chair of the Darkinjung Local Aboriginal Land Council, Mr David Pross, said after being briefed by National Parks and Wildlife Service people on the site:

It shows our traditional practice, where we were. We're just trying to get the history of it and look after it.

While many Australians would be excited about the prospect of seeing the rock art, to identify its location would risk allowing visitors to kill it with kindness. They would not mean to degrade the site but, inevitably, such a risk would arise. Nevertheless, detailed information about the site will be made available to the public on the Australian Museum's web site via scientific journals and a documentary that will be released next year. As honourable members would appreciate, this is a very exciting discovery. It demonstrates again the importance of saving these vast, wild places and preserving our rich indigenous cultural heritage. This cave—with its paintings, drawings and stencils—tells the story of the people who were here 4,000 years ago. It is a remarkable find and a tribute to the people of the museum and the parks service, who have handled this discovery with such sensitivity.

### ROAD TOLL

**Mr PAGE:** My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Roads. Given that he claimed in his 1998 document entitled "Making Our Roads the World's Safest" that his road safety policies would halve the road toll by 2010, how does he explain that the road toll in New South Wales increased from 556 deaths in 1998 to 572 deaths in 2002?

**Mr SCULLY:** We certainly intend to be in government in 2010 and I look forward to reporting to the House on the success or otherwise of achieving that commitment.

*[Interruption]*

**The ACTING-SPEAKER:** Order! The Minister will answer the question.

**Mr SCULLY:** To be asked why I have not met a target that is not due for completion until seven years hence is ridiculous. The road toll has decreased dramatically. I have given credit in the House: The credit does not go just to this Government; the previous Government made great inroads.

**Mr Page:** Point of order: Standing Order 138 requires the Minister to answer the question.

**The ACTING-SPEAKER:** Order! There is no point of order. The honourable member for Ballina will resume his seat.

**Mr SCULLY:** I will put it into perspective. In 1978 there were 1,384 fatalities on our roads. In 2001, 524 persons were killed. Let us put the following into perspective also. In 1949, when a detailed collation of statistics was commenced, approximately 500 people were killed and 400,000 vehicles were registered. Now four million vehicles are registered and about 500 people are killed each year. Yes, it is a big problem and it is a very important part of my job to do all I can—in partnership with the community, the Joint Standing Committee upon Road Safety, the Roads and Traffic Authority [RTA], NSW Police and motorists—to reduce the road toll.

Every life lost on our roads is a tragedy and we need to do more, but let us put that into perspective. There were approximately 500 road deaths when there were 400,000 vehicles on our roads; the road toll is approximately 500 now and there are four million vehicles on our roads. There have been huge reductions in the number of people killed on our roads. Fewer people have been killed on our roads this year than at the same time last year. But more work needs to be done. I deliberately set a very challenging target because I think government should aspire to those sorts of goals and set goals.

**Mr Debnam:** You will fail.

**The ACTING-SPEAKER:** Order! I place the honourable member for Vacluse on three calls to order. If he is called to order again I will ask the Serjeant-at-Arms to remove him from the Chamber.

**Mr SCULLY:** The interjection of the honourable member for Vacluse is disappointing. It is important that we do as much as possible to achieve that objective. It is not a matter for the Minister for Roads

just to set a target and hope that it is achieved. It is a partnership. In order to triumph, I need all honourable members to work with their communities and their local government road safety officers. I am disappointed because, over all the years that I have had responsibility for roads, this is the first time the Opposition has endeavoured to score political points out of road safety.

**The ACTING-SPEAKER:** Order! The Deputy Leader of the Opposition is close to being removed from the Chamber.

**Mr SCULLY:** I thought this was a bipartisan issue. I will keep trying to do all I can to develop partnerships with the community so that, by behaviour, we will improve our approach to what people do on the roads. Speeding, drink-driving and fatigue are all contributors to the road toll. I am not embarrassed and I am not apologetic about setting a very tough target. We will do all we can to meet it. But if we do not, it will not be for want of trying.

### OPERATION VIKINGS

**Mr WHAN:** My question without notice is to the Minister for Police. What is the latest information on Operation Vikings and community support for policing?

**Mr WATKINS:** Operation Vikings began in New South Wales a year ago with major blitzes in central Sydney. Twelve months later it has racked up incredible results. This high-visibility, high-impact policing strategy has been welcomed by communities across the State. It delivers scores of highly trained police into hot spots and problem areas. It hits the right places at the right times, especially at night. Operation Vikings works. An Australian Bureau of Statistics report that was released just last month has credited Vikings as one of the major factors for the decline in crime rates in this State. Today I am able to release the first full year's Vikings results. In one year Operation Vikings has put an additional 12,000 police shifts on the beat, arrested 2,271 people and laid almost 4,000 charges.

Operation Vikings has conducted 2,500 knife searches, issued 3,600 move-on directions and conducted 1,400 drug dog searches. It has enhanced the safety of public transport by patrolling 4,669 trains, 459 buses and 134 ferries. While continuing the Government's commitment to reduce alcohol-related crime and violence, last year Vikings patrolled and inspected more than 6,700 licensed premises. A record number of police are working hard across the State to reduce crime and the fear of crime in our community. They have embraced Commissioner Ken Moroney's Vikings strategy—a strategy that truly delivers the promise of local solutions for local crime problems. Vikings has been conducted with great success in metropolitan parts of this State.

**The ACTING-SPEAKER:** Order! I call the House to order. Question time has not yet concluded and there should be no noise in the Chamber except for the answer of the Minister.

**Mr WATKINS:** When I visit country communities, they ask for even more Vikings police. This year Operation Vikings has deployed additional officers to commands including Wollongong, Shoalhaven, Canobolas, Castlereagh, Coffs-Clarence, Deniliquin, Hunter Valley, Mudgee and New England. Last year Vikings was held in Byron Bay to ensure a safe and enjoyable schoolies week for locals and visitors. It was held in Tamworth during this year's Country Music Festival and in Albury, Wagga Wagga and the Barwon commands last month.

**The ACTING-SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member for Coffs Harbour will come to order.

**Mr WATKINS:** Operation Vikings was deployed to the city, Leichhardt, Ku-ring-gai and the Hunter Valley just last weekend. From today local area commanders have access to a further \$3 million in funding for Operation Vikings to complement locally run operations. That is the first stage of the Government's \$20 million long-term commitment to this high-profile, high-impact and effective strategy. Honourable members will recall that this is the strategy that the Opposition sought to abolish by dismissing the New South Wales Police Association, by dismissing the Commissioner of Police and, worst of all, by dismissing the community's desire to see Operation Vikings operate throughout New South Wales. I advised the Opposition to drop its opposition to Operation Vikings. Sadly, it has not done so.

**The ACTING-SPEAKER:** Order! I call the Leader of the Opposition to order for the second time.

**Mr WATKINS:** The community overwhelmingly supports Operation Vikings. In the same vein, I know that honourable members will join me today in welcoming some important community members who

have made supporting police a daily commitment. In the public gallery are 12 participants of Volunteers in Policing [VIPs]. They have joined me today in celebrating the program's tenth anniversary.

**The ACTING-SPEAKER:** Order! I call the honourable member for Gosford to order.

**Mr WATKINS:** Over the past 10 years more than 700 VIPs have achieved one million hours service. This vital program helps police with daily inquiries, victim support, community relations and safety audits. The VIPs are an indispensable asset, and today I put on the parliamentary record the community's support for their most valuable work. In the Chamber today are Keith New, from Blacktown; Malcolm Elmslie, from the far South Coast; Kenneth Malmgren, from Bankstown; Clement McNamara, from Bankstown; Terri Bradley, David Harper and Helen Sommerville, from Tweed-Byron Local Area Command; Stewart Thompson, who volunteers with the Mounted Police Unit; Ena Priday, from Manly-Davidson; Elizabeth Bolton, from Eastwood; Allan Leung, from City Central; and Lynne Smith, from Brisbane Water Local Area Command.

I also warmly thank Inspector Irene Jeugens for her tireless work to promote VIPs in the Police Force. Irene is also in the Chamber today. Today I presented a cheque for \$10,000 to ensure that her team's excellent record of service continues. Another important person, who is known to many in this Chamber, and who was a great supporter of Volunteers in Policing, retired from the Police Force yesterday. I know honourable members will join me in congratulating Senior Assistant Commissioner Peter Walsh on his long and distinguished career. He was dedicated to the New South Wales community and is widely known. He was an outstanding policeman and was much loved in the New South Wales Police Force. We all wish him well in his retirement.

**Questions without notice concluded.**

## **TOWNS AND VILLAGES FUTURES PROGRAM**

### **Ministerial Statement**

**Mr CAMPBELL** (Keira—Minister for Regional Development, Minister for the Illawarra, and Minister for Small Business) [3.22 p.m.]: The New South Wales Government supports the continued development of the State's small country towns. We are helping to make sure small communities of fewer than 2,500 people survive, and we are helping them thrive. Over the past four years we have helped 100 regional communities to get their towns back on track. Honourable members would be interested to hear that the next stage of that successful program has started. Currently the Government is asking small towns and villages of fewer than 2,500 people to apply for New South Wales Government funds, available through our Towns and Villages Futures Program.

**The ACTING-SPEAKER:** Order! Honourable members will resume their seats. There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber.

**Mr CAMPBELL:** The program aims to encourage economic growth in small towns and create new jobs within these regional communities. Towns that decide to apply for this funding will have until 1 October 2003 to submit their applications. Towns taking part in this program will work closely with their community to develop local plans. Under the program projects will have full community support, and local communities will have an active say in their future. Up to \$15,000 is available to projects that demonstrate the potential to create a new economic activity. Projects involve business and economic development, marketing and promotion, events and tourism. Funding is available for community and strategic planning workshops, co-ordination, and photographic and business surveys.

The Government is helping participants make positive changes to their towns. To date we have had outstanding success with this program. Milparinka is one success story. The tiny isolated hamlet of Milparinka is 300 kilometres north of Broken Hill, and only 12 people live in the town and 50 people live in surrounding areas. Its main industries are kangaroo meat processing, tourism and agriculture, but the town is rich in history. In 1845 Charles Sturt and his inland sea expedition spent six months camped near Milparinka, which, 40 years later, was a thriving gold-rush town. The Government's program has been praised by Ruth Sandow, chairperson of the Milparinka Heritage and Tourism Association, who said:

Without the assistance we have received, Milparinka might well have remained just another dusty reminder of our region's past.

**The ACTING-SPEAKER:** Order! Members will reduce the level of audible conversation.

**Mr CAMPBELL:** The program has given a small community the power to realise its potential. As a result, Milparinka is now well and truly on the map and, indeed, on the Internet. The town has a plan, it is developing its potential and it is actively targeting tourism. I congratulate the Milparinka community on their efforts. Nimmitabel, in the Cooma-Monaro region, is another success story. Thanks to this program, the town has successfully promoted its "Back to Nimitybelle" weekend festival and Centenary Nimmitabel Show. About 220 people live in the town, but these events drew 2,500 visitors—a terrific injection of money into the local economy.

Statistics indicate that visitors spend at least \$66 a day visiting events such as those I have mentioned, and up to \$113 a day if they stay overnight. This success was particularly important to the region—just a few weeks earlier hundreds of people had been affected by bushfires; even during the festival the local townsfolk were still fighting fires. They were showing the same grit and determination that they have harnessed to make a success of this Government-supported program. The Government continues to encourage small communities to create a future for their towns. Our Towns and Villages Futures Program is helping support regional towns and keeping alive regional New South Wales.

**Mr STONER** (Oxley—Leader of the National Party) [3.26 p.m.]: In general terms, the Opposition welcomes all measures to assist small towns in rural, regional and coastal New South Wales. However, many smaller country towns are struggling to cope with change and with the policies of this Government. Under the dairy deregulation policy the Government provided no assistance to dairy communities such as that at Comboyne, in the Hastings area. The Native Vegetation Conservation Act has ripped money out of small communities by devaluing properties and affecting their income-earning potential. The Government's water reforms have sought to reduce water entitlements without recognition of property rights and without any consideration of compensation. Those policies have taken money out of small towns and forced the population of those towns to move, and their young people have moved to cities and larger regional centres.

**The ACTING-SPEAKER:** Order! The House will come to order.

**Mr STONER:** Since the recent election the forests-for-preferences deal meant 1,400 people lost jobs in the timber industry on the North Coast, affecting small towns along the North Coast, and it will soon affect towns on the South Coast. The Government's policies take income out of small towns. That is why the Government is forced to provide remedies such as that mentioned by the Minister for Regional Development. The Treasurer broke his promise when he placed a gaming tax on clubs in small towns. That tax is greatly affecting the clubs which often, offer the only sporting facilities in the region—the only golf course and the only bowling green. Local clubs are under the gun as a result of this Government's policies. The Sydney-centric policies of the Government have led to troubles for small towns throughout regional New South Wales. The communities do not want hand-outs and programs; they want industry, commerce and economic development. They want a fair go and a government that will provide the right sort of economic environment to allow them to survive and prosper without the need for these bits-and-pieces programs.

Some years ago the Premier promised to call for socioeconomic impact statements if any government policy decisions had an impact on small towns. The Premier has not honoured his promise. He has failed to deliver. Decision after decision has been taken to the detriment of small country towns, but he has not called for socioeconomic impact statements. The Minister for Regional Development is now trying to convince us that the Government is doing its best for small towns. If the Government had in place policies that provided the right sort of economic environment that enabled small towns to prosper and grow, we would not need these programs in the first place.

## CONSIDERATION OF URGENT MOTIONS

### Anzac Cove World Heritage Listing

**Mr CARR** (Maroubra—Premier, Minister for the Arts, and Minister for Citizenship) [3.31 p.m.]: It is vital that we express at the earliest opportunity our support for the Turkish Government's nomination of the Gallipoli battlefield for UNESCO World Heritage listing and urge the Australian Government to give the proposal all possible co-operation. We owe this to our heritage.

### Road Cycling Events

**Mr PAGE** (Ballina—Deputy Leader of the National Party) [3.32 p.m.]: This matter is urgent because the Labor Government has moved to ban road cycling events on public roads. As we have two important urgent

motions before the House today, I seek the co-operation of the Leader of the House to allow both motions to be debated. The Government instituted this ban as a result of advice from the Crown Solicitor's office, which holds that bicycles are legal vehicles. As the racing of legal vehicles on public roads is illegal, the racing of bicycles is also illegal. Events that are now to be held on public roads must have sterile conditions, which means that roads have to be completely closed off to other road users. As a result of that ruling, 3,000 to 5,000 road cycling events that take place each year throughout the State have been deemed by this Government to be illegal. That is a massive blow to a sport that is enjoyed by more than 4,000 riders in New South Wales.

Events are already being cancelled. For example, last Saturday the Coffs Harbour Cycle Club road race was cancelled as a result of this ruling. Furthermore, triathlon events that involve cycling legs on public roads are also affected. Popular events—such as the Forster iron man triathlon—that pump millions of dollars into regional economies are in serious jeopardy as a result of this stupid ruling. Banning road cycling races will have a detrimental effect on the future of the sport of professional cycling in New South Wales. Cycling officials have said that the ban could wipe out a sport that has produced many Olympic and international champions. Road races in New South Wales, such as those now banned by this State Government, have produced professional riders such as Bradley McGee and Matt White, to name just two. This matter is urgent because this ban will put a brake on the chances of up-and-coming professional cyclists. It is putting at risk the future careers of people such as Chris Sutton, an 18-year-old Olympic hopeful who is rightly concerned that the Government's ban will hurt his chances of racing among the world's elite. He told the *Daily Telegraph*:

You get so much experience from racing—it's invaluable. My dream is to ride the Tour de France. That's going to be harder to achieve now.

Mr Sutton said that sponsors were already considering withdrawing funding because they would not receive as much exposure if the ban went ahead. The Government cannot be allowed to wipe out the training ground for up-and-coming road racing cyclists. The sport simply cannot be expected to survive under State Government imposed conditions. Tom Skulander, chief of the New South Wales Cycling Federation, said:

We are going to be the laughing stock of the rest of the [cycling] world.

This urgent matter should be debated for a number of reasons. If this ban is implemented it will impact on regional economies, in particular in country and coastal areas, which stand to lose thousands of dollars through the loss of tourism. Road cycling events such as the Grafton to Inverell cycle classic, which was due to take place in September, provide valuable income for those local economies that are now at risk. Every one of the 3,000 to 5,000 road cycling events that take place each year provides a valuable drawcard for tourists. In light of the tough times that have hit the tourism industry, event-based tourism, such as cycling races and other sporting events, should be embraced by the Government as a way of getting people into the regions. Instead, the Carr Government is forcing road cycling events over the New South Wales border and into other States. The Government is allowing that to happen.

We must debate this urgent matter so that the Government is aware of the willingness of other States to embrace road cycling events. The South Australian Government, which understands only too well the value of these events, is welcoming with open arms the Tour Down Under event. The South Australian Government is proactive in attracting these events. Mike Rann, the Labor Premier, recently secured a five-year extension to ensure that the Jacob's Creek Tour Down Under stays in South Australia until 2009. That is far cry from the attitude of the New South Wales Government. The last thing that this Government should be doing is discouraging physical activity. Children in our schools today have an obesity problem. Rather than banning road cycling events this Government should be encouraging healthy lifestyles. The Government said that the legislation it enacted had solved the public liability crisis. That crisis has not been solved. I ask honourable members to support my motion.

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

## ANZAC COVE WORLD HERITAGE LISTING

### Urgent Motion

**Mr CARR** (Maroubra—Premier, Minister for the Arts, and Minister for Citizenship) [3.37 p.m.]: I move:

That this House supports the proposed nomination by the Turkish Government of the Gallipoli battlefield for UNESCO World Heritage listing.

I am sure that all honourable members were moved and excited by the announcement at the weekend that the Turkish Government will support the nomination of Anzac Cove for inclusion on the World Heritage list. I was in New Zealand, among our Anzac partners, when I heard the news. It was good to be reminded of that special bond with New Zealand. Anzac was its glory and pain as much as it was ours. It was humbling to reflect on the magnanimity of the Turkish Government and its people. A defeated nation in the First World War, a nation that sustained terrible losses at Gallipoli, has allowed its former enemy to name part of its soil. In the words of the Turkish Ambassador to Australia, His Excellency Tansu Okandan, which were reported in the *Weekend Australian*, many nations had invaded his country in centuries past "but in only one case have we allowed a foreign power to give its name to a part of Turkey. That case is Anzac Cove."

It is right that the World Heritage list should include places of pain and bloodshed as well as places of great natural beauty. To the men at Gallipoli in 1915, Anzac Cove was a tangle of gullies and ridges, hard soil and stunted vegetation. To the north lay the Sphinx, the great eroded outcrop of yellowish rock, sheer and unclimbable, beneath which the dawn service is now held. One Australian wrote home in 1915 that the soil was too poor to feed a bandicoot. Les Carlyon, a poet among historians of those battles, when writing about its bleak and desolate beauty, said:

All that blood and bone of 1915, and still this place refuses to bloom. Farmers work the stubble with chisel ploughs, their tractors rocking and throbbing like tramp steamers in a swell.

Behind the plough you still pick up the flotsam of war.

A brown-and-beige shard from an English rum jar. A curling piece of shrapnel, splintery and rusty and leaden in your hand.

This land has been farmed and fought over for 5000 years that we know of.

It is not for its scenic beauty that we support the World Heritage listing of Anzac Cove; it is for all that it means to Australia. During that great and terrible rite of passage Australians found their true spirit, our abiding identity as a people. Our nation was a mere 14 years old at the time of the Gallipoli campaign. We had known wars but we had fought no war of independence, no civil war, no revolution. In the early days of Federation we basked in the satisfaction of nation building, the peaceful creation of a new fledgling democracy. Gallipoli, therefore, was our first experience of traumatic loss and suffering. From that experience we built, at heavy cost, the strong and sturdy image of Australian soldiers, fearless and irreverent, that still survives to inspire us. Gallipoli taught us something more—it taught us that it was possible for Australians to build a civilisation of their own, independent of Britain and independent of the traditions and certainties of the old world. That is the true and lasting significance of Anzac Cove. Before Gallipoli, in the words of Geoffrey Blainey:

Australia was emotionally and culturally tied to Britain. Her naval forces depended on Britain. She even entrusted, in most matters, her foreign policy to Britain.

After Gallipoli those things would never be the same. We think of the suffering of our people at Anzac Cove and our losses—8,709 Australians died—but we must think, too, of the Turkish losses, which were vast. Some 86,692 Turks died. With the Turkish Consul-General in the gallery today, we reflect on what those losses meant for that nation—our gallant enemy. It should never be forgotten that Australia lost 61,720 lives in World War I. Australians think of this as they visit Anzac Cove. For Turkey, too, let it never be forgotten that Gallipoli was about nation building. The campaign helped to restore Turkish pride as it helped to forge Australian pride. Perhaps that is why we feel comfortable celebrating it together.

The old Ottoman Empire was spent and decaying. Just as the war created Australia's new breed of heroes, so it brought out the best in the Turks. Gallipoli brought Mustafa Kemal to the notice of his people. Kemal Ataturk—as he later styled himself—having defended the Dardanelles so brilliantly, went on to lead his people in a war of independence. Outlawed by the occupying powers, he became a popular hero. The modern secular state of Turkey—a Turkey with strong institutions and votes for women—was his creation. I hope that the gallantry of the Allied and Turkish troops, the loss and suffering they sustained and the pain suffered by their loved ones at home will be commemorated for all time when, with Turkey's support and that of the Australian Government, Anzac Cove receives World Heritage listing. For Australia, such a move will permanently enshrine one of the sacred places and defining moments in our history. In the words of Les Carlyon:

Gallipoli ... is a tale of all that is fine and all that is foolish in the human condition. If it made more sense, it would be a lesser story.

The tale is most about frailty. This, along with the beauty of its setting, helps explain why it lingers in the imagination after larger and more important wars are forgotten.

Tragedies have more layers than epics, and Gallipoli has somehow become bigger than the sum of its parts.

If, to paraphrase Rupert Brooke, there is some corner of a foreign field that is forever Australia, that corner is surely Anzac Cove, among the flinty hillsides and rocky outcrops beside the Aegean Sea. We congratulate the Turkish Government. We thank it for this gesture and this thoughtful policy. We look forward to a time when Anzac Cove is included on the World Heritage list, just as it is already included, with all its memories of triumph and disaster, securely in our hearts.

**Mr BROGDEN** (Pittwater—Leader of the Opposition) [3.42 p.m.]: Written on the side of the Cenotaph in Sydney's Martin Place are the words "To our glorious dead." As a Parliamentary leader I have the great honour and pleasure each year of presenting a wreath on Anzac Day on behalf of the New South Wales Opposition. I have often pondered the words "To our glorious dead" and the concept of glory in death. This urgent motion, which has the full support of the Opposition and I am sure every member of the House, seeks to commemorate in a lasting manner a role that the sons of Australia and New Zealand played in World War I: their struggle and massive loss of life in the great failure at Gallipoli.

We support the Turkish Government's proposed nomination of the Gallipoli battlefield for UNESCO World Heritage listing. We view this proposal in the context of a nation honouring another nation by allowing a place on its soil to be commemorated and named after the sons of that other nation. It is, to my knowledge, unique and extremely special not only because such a naming is taking place but also because the nations were at war a little less than a century ago. On 8 May 1915 the war correspondent for the Hobart *Mercury* wrote:

The Australians rose to the occasion. They did not wait for orders, or for the boats to reach the beach, but sprang into the sea, formed a sort of rough line, and rushed at the enemy's trenches. Their magazines were not charged, so they just went in with the cold steel, and it was over in a minute for the Turks in the first trench had been either bayoneted or had run away, and the Maxim guns were captured.

Thousands and thousands of lives were lost on that site in 1915. To this day some 4,228 Australians and 708 New Zealanders have no known graves. It is hard for us in a civilised society in this day and age to grasp the reality of World War I battles, at Gallipoli and particularly on the European continent, so bloody, vicious and damaging that those who died could not be buried individually. This crucible of courage produced nine Victoria crosses—indeed, five Victoria crosses were awarded on a single day, 9 August 1915. The words of Kemal Atatürk are most significant in commemorating the sacrifice at Gallipoli. He said:

Those heroes that shed their blood and lost their lives..  
You are now lying in the soil of a friendly country.  
Therefore rest in peace.  
There is no difference between the Johnnies and the Mehmets to us  
where they lie side by side here in this country of ours ...  
You, the mothers,  
Who sent their sons from faraway countries,  
wipe away your tears; your sons are now lying in our bosom and are in peace.  
After having lost their lives on this land they have become our sons as well.

Today the Turkish Government gives life to those words spoken almost a century ago by commemorating this rugged, inhospitable and unfriendly piece of land and securing permanent United Nations recognition of its significance. It does so, in one sense, in response to what has become a fascinating pilgrimage by Australians, particularly by many young Australians, to Anzac Cove on Anzac Day.

Some years ago—and this experience is probably shared by most members in the Chamber—I listened to Sydney radio between a dawn service and breakfast on Anzac Day. The subject of the discussion was Gallipoli and the increasing numbers of people who turn out for Anzac Day commemoration ceremonies. In the course of that discussion a caller to the program said that in the early 1970s he had made a personal pilgrimage to Anzac Cove on Anzac Day and was the only person there. So in less than 30 years many young Australians have made genuine pilgrimages to that site. It is a great honour to this nation and to our young people that the Turkish Government has sought to bestow this recognition on that site.

Many great and legendary stories emanate from Gallipoli. They include the sacrifice of Edward Larkin, a former general secretary of New South Wales Rugby League and a member of the House, who left this country and died in the first wave of attacks on the shores of Gallipoli. It is right that his name be commemorated on a plaque in the House—he was a former member for Willoughby, and the sitting member for Willoughby agrees that that is appropriate. Mr Larkin made the ultimate sacrifice for his country. To this day, our young people gain much from hearing the incredible story of Simpson and his donkey.

We should also remember—I think it is significant—that the commemoration of Gallipoli and the Anzac tradition is shared by two nations: Australia and New Zealand. As the son of a New Zealand father and



an Australian mother, and grandson of a World War I veteran who served in Europe, I take this opportunity, both personally and on behalf of the Opposition, to support this motion. I also indicate to the representative of the Turkish Government, the Consul-General, who is in the gallery, that this motion has the full support of the elected representatives of the Parliament. I am sure we speak on behalf of our constituents in congratulating the Turkish Government and encouraging the United Nations to support the Turkish Government in its nomination.

*[Debate interrupted.]*

## BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

### Urgent Motion: Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders

**Mr SCULLY** (Smithfield—Minister for Roads, and Minister for Housing) [3.50 p.m.]: I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to permit six additional members (three Government and three non-Government members) to speak to the motion for urgent consideration for up to five minutes each.

**Mr TINK** (Epping) [3.50 p.m.]: I am pleased to support this motion. As the Leader of the Opposition indicated, Sergeant Larkin, together with Lieutenant Colonel Braund, are remembered on a plaque in this Chamber. I understand that Lieutenant Braund was a conservative and Sergeant Larkin was a member of the Labor Party. It was a bipartisan sacrifice of the highest order. It is appropriate that extra speakers should be allowed to speak to this motion, again on a bipartisan basis, to honour the role of the Turkish Government in the commemoration, and in particular, the sacrifice that was made on all sides.

**Motion agreed to.**

## ANZAC COVE WORLD HERITAGE LISTING

### Urgent Motion

*[Debate resumed.]*

**Mrs PERRY** (Auburn) [3.52 p.m.]: I support the urgent motion moved by the Premier that this House supports moves by the Turkish Government to secure World Heritage status for Anzac Cove, Gallipoli. I acknowledge my good friend the Turkish Consul-General, Niyazi Adali. It is often said that a collective national consciousness is borne out of either of two events: some sort of crucial victory or a decisive and terrible defeat. The landing of Australians at Gallipoli clearly falls into the latter group. Soldiers were thrust into a hopeless situation: they landed on a narrow strip of sand, and were confronted by overarching cliffs. Artillery and machine-gun fire rained down on them like a violent storm.

To put the enormity of Australia's loss into context, 8,709 Australians did not escape the confines of Anzac Cove; they lost their lives there. That is the equivalent of the present forces of the United States of America losing 520,000 men and women in a single campaign. But it was not only Australians who lost their lives. British, New Zealand and Turkish servicemen also came to finally rest in Gallipoli during the bloody campaign. For a site to be granted World Heritage listing it is required to be of outstanding universal value. I believe that is the case with Anzac Cove. Declaring it a World Heritage site is not just about commemorating a war zone and the conflict that took place there. It cuts much deeper than that. It is about commemorating all those things that have their roots in the sand and soil of Anzac Cove.

It is about the tragedy, sacrifice and heartache, but it is also about mateship, lessons learnt, and reconciliation with former enemies. It cuts to a deeper significance that continues to echo around the cliffs of Anzac Cove to this day. But while we readily acknowledge the tragedy that Australians suffered in the campaign, victories are being played out as I speak—victories not for any one side that was involved in the conflict, but victories for our common humanity. These victories also have their roots in the sand and soil of Anzac Cove, and the unique relationship that was borne out of the terrible conflict that occurred between Turkish and Allied forces. As a result of what happened, the Turkish community and the Australian community now feel a close affinity with one another. The great Turkish leader Ataturk welcomed Australians who visited Turkey to remember their lost soldiers. He stated:

Those heroes that shed their blood and lost their lives ...  
 You are now lying in the soil of a friendly country ...  
 You, the mothers,  
 Who sent their sons from faraway countries,  
 wipe away your tears; your sons are now lying in our bosom and are in peace.  
 After having lost their lives on this land they have become our sons as well.

It was the Turkish Government that initiated the move to have Anzac Cove declared a World Heritage site. It was also the Turkish Government that declared the area a national park in 1985, and, breaking from all convention and orthodoxy, allowed a foreign power to rename the area Anzac Cove. I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak about the Turkish community and the many ways in which they have involved themselves in my electorate and in the wider community. Unfortunately I do not have enough time to do them justice.

One example is the Gallipoli mosque in Auburn, whose name punctuates the community's commitment to remembering the lives that were lost in the campaign. The mosque's Harmony Day encourages people from all backgrounds, religions and nationalities to come together, celebrate and learn more about those things that we all share in common. The Turkish community has also taken steps to foster strong links with the RSL. I had the privilege of attending a function organised by the Turkish community and leaders to honour Rusty Priest after his retirement as President of the RSL. The Turkish Youth Association has established an initiative that seeks to place plaques in RSL clubs to honour all those who lost their lives, including Australian and Turkish troops. Only recently Sule College announced that it will send student representatives to Gallipoli next year. When I asked why, the principal, Sukan Alkin, simply replied:

This is about our combined history. About the friendship we share. About our shared culture.

Today I have given only a snapshot of the Turkish community's involvement in the wider community. Such communities are spearheading the creation of a stable, progressive and harmonious multicultural society. Even though I have referred primarily to the impact the Gallipoli campaign has had on nations like Turkey and Australia, its significance transcends international borders. It serves as a powerful reminder, a site of such moral significance, that it should be deemed worthy of World Heritage status. I commend the efforts of the Turkish Government to have the area listed as a World Heritage site. I also commend the efforts of the local Turkish community in fostering strong links with their adopted homeland. I commend the Premier for showing his leadership, initiative and commitment on this important issue, in not only remembering the lives that were lost in the Gallipoli campaign but also remembering the people of this State in whose hearts and minds the memories of the Anzacs continue to live on.

**Mr STONER** (Oxley—Leader of the National Party) [3.56 p.m.]: It is no surprise that the Turkish Government proposes a UNESCO World Heritage listing for the Gallipoli battlefield. Despite their long history, the Turks remember Gallipoli with a reverence similar to that of the Australian people. Gallipoli was the first mass conflagration in our history, and the way we stood by each other at that place became the mould to which generations of Australians continue to aspire. It forged on its muddled slopes and cliffs a tolerance of adversity that still permeates our society. It was the place where Australia, as part of the legendary Anzac force, established a reputation for courage, mateship and bravery in the face of almost impossible odds.

Only when we understand the rugged terrain, and the dense hedges at Gallipoli, do we realise how it ensnared our troops as they advanced, and the Turks, wherever they charged. That is why so many died so quickly on such a small peninsula. The most successful Turkish resistances were led by Colonel Mustafa Kemal, who was later known as Ataturk, the first President of the Turkish nation. Modern Turkey is a product of the tenacity it had to muster at Gallipoli to withstand the Anzac advances. The Anzacs came to develop a respect for their adversaries, as did the Turks for the Anzacs. This mutual respect is still alive today and is manifested by the World Heritage nomination of the site of their most fierce battle, a site where the incredible expressions of humanity sometimes cut above the din of war when the combatants ceased fire to bury their mutual dead, often alongside each other.

The most respected author on Gallipoli, Alan Moorehead, has recalled each battle of the campaign. Moorehead dispassionately notes the build-up of Turkish pride as its troops continued for months to resist allied advances, despite massive losses to their forces. Today, Turks are proud of their history but they selflessly share it with us on 25 April each year. Scores of our countrymen stand alongside them at dawn with the same sentiments of nationhood and sacrifice in their minds.

Increasingly, young people participate in this moment of solemn remembrance. Certainly, back here in Australia each Anzac Day, as the various sub-branches of the Returned Services League hold their remembrance services, they too recall the events of Anzac Cove. As the grandson of a member of the legendary Light Horse Brigade—Arthur Brown of Grafton, who fought for this country in World War I, though in France, not Gallipoli—I am proud to strongly support this motion. This State lost many bright young talents at Gallipoli, and we should reverently stand with Turkey in its call for UNESCO World Heritage listing for Gallipoli. The National Party is proud to support this motion.

**Ms KENEALLY** (Heffron) [4.00 p.m.]: I applaud the Premier's leadership on this issue. I support this motion for three reasons. First, the Turkish Government's move to secure World Heritage listing for Anzac Cove is one that many people in the electorate of Heffron will support; secondly, this is an appropriate way to honour the spirit of the Anzacs; and thirdly, this move by the Turkish Government will send a strong message of peace to a world that only too recently has been torn by war. On 1 June of this year I joined Maroubra, Matraville, Botany, Kensington and Mascot RSL members, along with members of the National Servicemen's Association of Australia, Eastern Suburbs Sub-branch, in a Memorial Day service honouring Australians who gave their lives in active duty in our armed services.

Reverend Dr Parker, President of the Eastern Suburbs Sub-branch, tells me that the Turkish Government's proposal is an excellent one. Dr Parker's grandfather served at Gallipoli, spending some months there on the evacuation, and then moved on to France. Dr Parker tells me that he wholeheartedly supports any move to recognise Anzac Cove as a World Heritage site, and he supports this move by the New South Wales Government to encourage that proposal. Likewise, the Secretary of the Botany RSL, Mr Les Haggert, has enthusiastically endorsed the Turkish Government's proposal to honour and memorialise all the Anzacs who died fighting at Gallipoli.

On Anzac Day I stood with members of the Botany RSL at its dawn service. Nearly 100 members of the Botany community got up early that morning and gathered together as a community—ordinary Australians, paying tribute to other ordinary Australians who performed with extraordinary courage and valour at Anzac Cove 88 years ago. The community in Botany, as well as communities across Heffron and undoubtedly across New South Wales, would welcome this gesture by the Turkish Government to honour and memorialise the young Australians who gave their lives at Gallipoli.

The proposal to accord Anzac Cove World Heritage listing is based on the moral value of the site, on the ability of former enemies to become friends. This is a most appropriate way to honour the spirit of the Anzacs. That Anzac spirit, which brings us together in parks and churches, community centres and RSL clubs across Australia every year, is not sentimental or backward-looking. It is community-building. The Anzac spirit has built up our local communities who celebrate Anzac Day every year. The Anzac spirit has built up our nation and given us a new pride in our service men and women who have served so ably in Gallipoli and in other areas of the world. And the Anzac spirit has forged special relationships across national boundaries, making friends out of former enemies, and creating a lasting bond between the people of Australia and the people of Turkey. Indeed, Anzac Cove is the only place where the Turkish Government has permitted a foreign power to give its name to a part of Turkey.

Each year in our community we see an increasing number of young people, spurred on by their studies—supported by the New South Wales Premier's History Teacher Gallipoli Scholarship—or by the ceremonies in their local communities, travelling to Anzac Cove to keep the Anzac spirit alive. Granting Anzac Cove World Heritage listing would only strengthen the bonds of friendship between Australia and Turkey, and cement them for future generations. Finally, granting World Heritage status to Anzac Cove would emphasise peace and peacemaking when so much of the world is in conflict.

Several members, including the honourable member for Auburn, today have read the inscription penned by President Ataturk in 1935—the inscription that stands at the gates of Gallipoli. That there can be such empathy between enemies, that there can be such acceptance of each other's suffering, serves as a powerful message that peace is possible, that friendship can arise out of enmity. If UNESCO granted World Heritage listing to Anzac Cove, it would send an important message about peacemaking between nations who were once at war. I can think of no greater message that UNESCO could send at this point in the global political situation. We have had far too many examples of war and aggression of late, and far too few of reconciliation and peacemaking. Granting World Heritage status sends a great signal to the world: that goodness, friendship and hope can follow even from the tragedy and sadness of war. For those three reasons, I wholeheartedly support the motion and urge the House to support the Turkish Government's proposal.

**Mr APLIN** (Albury) [4.05 p.m.]: I support the proposed nomination by the Turkish Government to UNESCO that the Gallipoli battlefield become a World Heritage listed site. Among the treasured possession in my bookcase at home is a book called *The Kangaroo Marines*. It was written by an English journalist and first published in 1916. He accompanied many of the troops to Anzac Cove. It is treasured because I bought it at a school fete at the age of 10. It recounts the recruitment, training and setting off from Sydney of many of those who were destined to fight at Anzac Cove. Of course, it traces the common theme that we retain and treasure today, that is, mateship.

Interestingly, I purchased this book overseas at a stage in my life when I knew little of the traditions of Anzac Day. But I made it my mission to read it many times. Every Anzac Day I pull out this precious old book and have a look through it. It captures the essence of what was truly the Anzac spirit then, and remains so today. We have heard before and in this debate of the courage and bravery exhibited by the Anzacs, but I want to concentrate most on the mateship aspect—the enduring side of Anzac Day, and something we celebrate here in Australia every day. Of course, I will concentrate also on the celebration of Anzac Day every year.

Mateship is a concept that I believe we should teach in our schools. As others have said, it brings us together, and it recognises a reconciliation between former enemies. Importantly, we all know of people who have travelled to the site and brought back stories about it. Every year, around Anzac Day, the newspapers tell us of the visits. It is interesting that up until some 20 years ago the site was poorly recognised in terms of facilities, signposts and roads. One friend recounted the difficulties in actually getting directions and finding the way to the pilgrimage site. I am glad that that will become easier for the many people who travel under the proposed listing.

Ataturk's words, which have been related by others who have spoken in this debate, stay with us to this day. We recall those words being spoken at Anzac Day services that we attend. Many of us attend the dawn services and speak at many services and functions throughout the day. This Anzac Day I, along with many others, attended the dawn service at the Albury War Memorial. John Stanborough, President of the Albury Sub-branch of the RSL, was the organiser of what was truly an amazing experience: as dawn breaks those gathered watch, in hushed silence, the sentinels on guard and listen as the ode is recited. It is interesting that the ode is now recited by school captains, demonstrating that the youth of today are becoming more and more involved in the history of their country. It is a poignant time. We look back at the times since 1915 and at the people who have handed down the legends and relive that legend by visiting the Anzac Cove site.

Many of us have relatives who have travelled to Gallipoli as part of that pilgrimage, because Australians and New Zealanders feel compelled to pay homage to the people who laid down their lives on that occasion, and to experience, as I said earlier, that aspect of mateship that was so common among the troops that served. I have a nephew who was a bugler at the eightieth Anzac Day commemoration service. We have friends who have made it a pilgrimage at times other than Anzac Day. I know that many Australians will do so, just as they travel to the battlefields of France. We would feel outraged if the site were considered for other purposes, just as we did when the French Government considered establishing an airport on the site of old battlefields. I support the proposed listing because it will preserve the area for all time. Many of our current generation and generations to come will feel secure in going to Gallipoli to visit the site and pay homage to the people who went before us.

**Mr TRIPODI** (Fairfield—Parliamentary Secretary) [4.10 p.m.]: I support the motion moved by the Premier to support the nomination by the Turkish Government to secure World Heritage listing of Anzac Cove on the Gallipoli battlefields. I am extremely pleased that the Turkish Government has sought to provide World Heritage listing for Anzac Cove because I know that news of the possible listing will bring great joy to many veterans in my electorate who served in the Australian military forces. Furthermore, I know that the motion will have the full support and encouragement of the many people of Turkish heritage who live in the Fairfield electorate and surrounding electorates. The heritage listing of Anzac Cove will have a huge significance to the people of both Australia and Turkey.

For the people of Turkey the Gallipoli campaign, under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, marked Turkey's casting off of its Ancien regime and embracing the new ethos of modernity, as embodied in the form of its current secular republican ideal. For Australia, the historical value of Anzac Cove is of equal if not even greater significance. Gallipoli marks the spot where Australia, as a nation State, first expressed its identity. Gallipoli enabled the Australian people to finally hurl off the yoke of our colonial past and express, through a brave struggle, Australia's place among the kin of nations. While Gallipoli and the battle to take this strategic position may at first seem like a somewhat stillborn attempt at nationhood, history, the greatest judge of time and deed, has seen to it that the struggle of the Anzacs has not been in vain.

The brave struggle of our soldiers has moved on to embody a national identity, which, among other things, seeks to strive in the face of adversity, proffers support for the needy and pursues with dedication that which is right. Although many of our national politicians have tried to use and exploit the memory of Gallipoli by promoting an unchecked form of nationalism and patriotism under the guise of protecting our borders and territorial integrity, they have failed, precisely because of the generosity of spirit that has been engendered by the Anzac tradition: a generosity that is both Turkish and Australian, a generosity begun with Ataturk's gracious remarks as quoted by the Premier:

You, the mothers, who sent their sons from faraway countries, wipe away your tears; your sons are now lying in our bosom and are in peace. After having lost their lives on this land, they have become our sons as well.

Given the enormous significance of the Gallipoli campaign on our national identity, I commend the Premier on establishing a scholarship for teachers that will enable them to travel and appreciate all Anzac Cove has to offer. Hopefully, that scholarship will ensure that the study of Australian history and the origins of our national identity become key subjects for students studying history at high school. I recommend this important motion to the Chamber for support.

**Mr PRINGLE** (Hawkesbury) [4.13 p.m.]: Some 10 years go I was fortunate enough to stand on Anzac Cove. Like many members of this place, I was deeply moved by its spirituality. It is easy to think about that time so long ago when so many Australians were leaving the boats to come ashore and so many Australians scaled the incredibly steep cliffs. It is also easy to think about the Australians who lie in the graveyard at Lone Pine. Anzac Cove and Lone Pine are almost permanent parts of Australian soil. As previous speakers have said, this motion to support the UNESCO World Heritage listing is long overdue. I, too, commend the Turkish Government on its excellent initiative. It is extremely important that we protect that part of the world for future generations.

I am reminded of the difficulty of the task the Australian soldiers faced. We are reminded by the diorama in the Australian War Memorial in Canberra of the steepness of the cliffs and the enormity of the task. When we think back to the famous Australian movie *Gallipoli*, it is hard to believe in this day and age that Australians who left their families behind were prepared to accept the over-the-top order, get out of the trenches and face almost certain death. We remember also the naval involvement in the campaign—the Australian submarine *AE2* breaking the deadlock and getting into the sea of Amara—as part of the overall strategy of the Allies to bring about peace at a fairly rapid rate.

The people of the Hawkesbury electorate are reminded of all the dawn services. We are also reminded of the impact of the Anzac campaign on each and every country town in Australia. We see the memorials and the names of those who gave the ultimate sacrifice. We are also reminded of the importance of that sacrifice and the great loss suffered by most towns throughout Australia. Like other speakers, I have a link with the event: my grandfather served in World War I. His medals from the campaign are one of our treasured family mementos. The impact on him was long and lasting, just as it was on so many other families throughout Australia.

We also think of the overall cost of World War I to Australia. Some 60,000 people were killed—a huge number. The listing is long overdue; it is important as part of our national conscience. Gallipoli is a deeply spiritual place. Its preservation is important to our national conscience, as much as it was back in 1915. It is important to the New South Wales divisions, as well as those from other States, that served in Gallipoli. I strongly support the motion. I again congratulate the Turkish Government. The listing is as important for our national heritage as it is for the Turkish national heritage. The fact that we, as former enemies, are able to do this together is extremely significant. I commend the motion to the House and I again congratulate the Turkish Government.

**Mr CRITTENDEN** (Wyang) [4.17 p.m.]: It is great to hear the unanimity of purpose in the debate on this motion for urgent consideration. I also support the listing of Anzac Cove on the World Heritage list because of what the Turkish Government is calling its moral value. However, its cultural value would undoubtedly be the criterion under the listing guidelines. Many young Australians who landed at Anzac Cove and who fought so valiantly for eight months may have realised that they were near a place called Troy, where the heroic armies written about by Homer battled to the end centuries before. It is certainly true that, following the events of April 1915 in the Dardanelles, there was a great increase in that indefinable element called the Australian national character. That was important to the new Australian nation that was formed only 14 years before on 1 January 1901, as the Premier noted.

It is also important to realise that, although an upsurge in national character resulted from that event, it was not until the seventieth anniversary in 1985 of the landing at Anzac Cove in 1915 that there was a massive lift in the significance of the military event and an increasing desire to visit Anzac Cove by Australians. The seventieth anniversary was a precursor to the wonderful event that took place in 1990 in commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the landing at Anzac Cove. I am sure that all honourable members recall that the nation was high on the emotion of the occasion. I quote from a book written by Harvey Broadbent, *The Boys Who Came Home—Recollections of Gallipoli*, which was published by ABC Books:

One veteran, Jack McCleerry from Perth, a 'first-dayer', celebrated his 103<sup>rd</sup> birthday at the Dawn Service at Anzac Cove [in 1990]. Prime Minister Bob Hawke, as expected, choked 'we will remember them' at Lone Pine and called Anzac Cove 'a little piece of Australia' in a foreign land. Since 1990, Anzac Day at Gallipoli has become a magnet for thousands rather than hundreds of Antipodeans.

That is certainly the case. Respect for the occasion is increasing. It has certainly been important in our history, but it has only been since 1990 that there has been the tremendous surge of national participation in Anzac Day services and pilgrimages to the Dardanelles. It is, therefore, totally appropriate that the Turkish Government—I hope in collaboration with the Australian Government; I notice that the Department of Foreign Affairs is yet to make a statement on this matter—will push for World Heritage listing. Only 14 sites in Australia have World Heritage listing to recognise their natural beauty.

While it is important that sites be listed for their natural beauty, it is also important to recognise that few Australian sites also have a cultural dimension. Kakadu National Park and Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park certainly fulfil the natural beauty and cultural criteria, but I believe, as Bob Hawke said, that Anzac Cove is a little piece of Australia on foreign soil and that it has become as important to Australians as it is to the Turkish people. The Premier has launched a campaign to create scholarships for history teachers in this State that will enable them to travel to Anzac Cove. It will be great for history teachers in this State to visit Anzac Cove and, as the Premier hopes, produce educational materials on their return. Certainly people such as Harvey Broadbent, who has travelled to the site 15 times, have been affected by the event. He has had this to say:

Although it is not depressing, it is a melancholy and sobering experience to make this visit. I have felt affected by the place—the strangeness of the landscape, the stark beauty and hostile undercurrent. The yellow craggy rock outcrops and ravines mixed with the soft greens, rusts and violets of the scrub and the herbs are all the stuff of landscape paintings, but try and traverse it on foot and your body is attacked by pain-injecting gorse and prickly. The heat of the day saps your strength and the dust parches your throat.

I hope that are on their return from Anzac Cove, the history teachers will recall their visits in great detail in the material they produce for dissemination in schools.

**Mr ROBERTS** (Lane Cove) [4.22 p.m.]: I support the proposed nomination by the Turkish Government of the Gallipoli battlefield for United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization World Heritage listing. I commend the Turkish Government and the Turkish people on taking this important initiative. I can think of a no more appropriate tribute to the brave spirit of Anzac by the people of Australia and the people of Turkey than the strong ties that bind us today. John Masefield, Poet Laureate, stated not long after the war in the preface in a book on Gallipoli:

England should think well of this country [Australia], whose tongue she speaks and whose sense of liberty she shares.

This seems to be a wandering from the dead in Gallipoli, in their graves among the tamarisks; but it is not so. Wherever they lie, they call, in their mute way, to all the world to think well of this country; for they were free men who gave their lives for an idea. They lie quiet, and are done with trouble. "It is very lonely there" a man writes to me; "hardly even a goatherd goes there". There are forty thousand of them: the manhood of a city, twenty-eight thousand British, eight and a half thousand Australian and three and a half thousand New Zealand soldiers.

Eight years ago they were the pick of a race that cares for freedom, coming as the freight of fifty ships, to fight things stronger than themselves. As the ships moved out to take them to their graves, even in the months when victory was no longer thought of, those soldiers cheered.

It is appropriate that I place on the record of this House the speech made by the Hon. John Howard, Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of Australia at the Dawn Service, at Gallipoli, on 25 April 2000:

To this ancient land the passing of 85 years must seem but an instant in time. A mere moment in its journey towards forever. But to us it is the distance of human life. Thus we come to this place at this hour on this day to observe not only a dawn but a dusk. For dusk has all but fallen on that great hearted generation of Australians who fought here. The shadows gather on a time and a world in which our nation's spirit was born. Soon the story of ANZAC which forever joins the people of Australia and New Zealand will pass gently from memory into history. Soon the fire struck here will be ours to tend. Soon its record once written on pages wet with tears will be ours alone to guard, ours to cherish, ours to live.

It is a remarkable legacy. Only now from the sheltered safety of our time can we comprehend what was dared and done here. Only now from the vantage point secured for us by others' lives can we see the scale and the scope of their achievement ... The inheritance we claim today is not a fallen sword, nor have we come to extol a warrior's code. The respect of gallant foes and the high regard of comrades is the praise that soldiers seek. It is not for us to give. Let them rest, far from thoughts of battle. Instead we come to claim from them, a heritage of personal courage and initiative. Of daring and determination in the face of overwhelming odds. A heritage that requires of each of us a conscious decision to do what is right regardless of the resistance we meet or the fears we hold.

We come to seek the inspiration of stories of compassion and comfort given to others in their time of need. Knowing that there are opportunities in our own lives to ease the burden of those suffering adversity and hardship. We come to draw upon their stirring example of unity and common purpose. To believe that whatever our differing circumstances, we are all companions with each of our countrymen and women, and together we travel a single path. We come to join with those that rest here in a shared love of our nation, bathed in sunlight and so blessed with bounty. We come to stand on soil rich with the lives of our kin and vow that what they began, we will finish.

For they fought to build a nation which would stand proud and respected and amongst the free people of the world. A nation where ordinary men and women would live long lives of happiness and fulfilment. A country where children would grow nourished by the land's harvest, and by the love of their parents. A country where prosperity and opportunity are derived not by birth, but by endeavour. A people made independent united and free for all time. And in the attainment of these ideals, in the keeping of a decent and responsible Australia, in every year of peace between the nations of the world, we will build for all those who have served and suffered in war, a monument upon which evening will never fall.

How appropriate is our coming together and how wonderful is the Turkish Government, our friend, to obtain World Heritage listing for this wonderful and sacred site. I will conclude with words from John Masefield:

They came from safety of their own free will  
To lay their young men's beauty, strong men's powers,  
Under the hard roots of the foreign flowers,  
Having beheld the Narrows from the Hill.

I commend the motion to the House.

**Mr WHAN (Monaro)** [4.27 p.m.]: It is a great pleasure to support the motion moved by the Premier and to endorse his remarks when thanking the Turkish Government for proposing a listing of Anzac Cove on the World Heritage Register. Anzac Cove occupies a special place in the Australian psyche. It is a wonderful initiative on the part of the Turkish Government to nominate this area of Gallipoli. World Heritage listing is reserved for sites that have global significance as natural or cultural sites. That list currently contains 730 sites, 563 of which are cultural, 144 of which are natural, and 23 of which are mixed. As I browsed through the list of sites, I did not notice any that were battlefields. The listed site that comes closest to dealing with war and the after-effects of war is the Hiroshima Peace Memorial. The memorial's web site states:

Not only is it a stark and powerful symbol of the most destructive force ever created by humankind; it also expresses the hope for world peace and the ultimate elimination of all nuclear weapons.

The listing of Anzac Cove serves as a similar reminder. If the nomination is successful, the listing will remind us not only about the sacrifices made in the battle of Anzac Cove but also about the folly and cost of war so that, hopefully, many generations for hundreds of years to come will work hard to avoid war. As I said, few of the World Heritage listings are battlefields. The proposal by the Turkish Government is a sign of how important Anzac Cove is not only to Australia but also to Turkey, a continent that has many historical battlefields. All Australians would be honoured by the listing of Anzac Cove on the World Heritage Register. Such a listing would show that the significance of Anzac Cove goes well beyond Australia and takes on a global perspective. Anzac symbolises an Australian spirit that has been summed up by many speakers today through quotations. Charles Bean, a war historian, served at Anzac Cove. He did a lot of his writing from the Tuggeranong Homestead, which is in the Australian Capital Territory but near the Monaro electorate. He wrote:

By dawn on December 20th ANZAC had faded into a dim blue line lost amid other hills on the horizon as the ships took their human freight to Imbros, Lemnos and Egypt. But ANZAC stood, and still stands, for reckless valour in a good cause, for enterprise, resourcefulness, fidelity, comradeship, and endurance that will never own defeat.

That Anzac spirit has been so strong that it has transcended 88 years of history and development in Australia. It has transcended a massive change to Australia's make-up to characterise the way Australians back up each other and work together. We saw that spirit in the Monaro region during the January bushfires when neighbours, mates and people who did not know each other supported each other and helped defend lives and property. We often see that spirit during a crisis. That spirit has been handed down through generations. We value that spirit, which has been handed down to our kids through their Anzac studies at school. In my local area, as in every area in New South Wales, our fifth-graders do projects on Anzac.

Although I am not supposed to bring props into the Chamber, I have with me an Anzac project my son did this year in fifth class. Through that project he has learnt about the work of Simpson and his donkey, the sacrifice of the people at Anzac Cove, the awarding of medals for valour, and the acts of bravery by people who were awarded the Victoria Cross medal. With the consent of the House, I lay upon the table my son's project. Honourable members can look at it if they so wish. My son and his school colleagues have learnt to understand the significance of the sacrifice, the bravery of those who fought at Gallipoli, and the spirit that those who came

back safe and sound brought with them. Importantly, they also learned about the costs of war. It is important that children learn about Anzac. That is why this motion is so important. [*Time expired.*]

**Motion agreed to.**

**REGIONAL FILM-MAKING AND TELEVISION INDUSTRY**

**Matter of Public Importance**

**Mr CAMPBELL** (Keira—Minister for Regional Development, Minister for the Illawarra, and Minister for Small Business) [4.32 p.m.]: Creating jobs and new businesses in regional New South Wales is a Carr Government priority. Increasingly, new jobs and businesses are linked to our State's growing regional film industry. Australian and international films, as well as domestic and global TV advertisements, are being made in New South Wales. In addition, film and television commercial production is increasing steadily. Since the Carr Government came to office, the New South Wales film and television industry has grown by more than 80 per cent. That is an annual growth of more than 10 per cent. Thanks to the support of the New South Wales Government, our State now dominates film production in Australia: more than 70 per cent of productions take place in this State.

Over the past five years, feature and documentary production has injected more than \$10 million into regional New South Wales. That has created more than 3,000 country jobs. Since 1995, film production has created 17,900 direct and 36,000 indirect jobs statewide. Recently, I visited the State's Far West, where there has been a great deal of excitement about visits by film and stage director Baz Luhrmann and Hollywood producer Dino De Laurentiis. Baz Luhrmann's visits to Broken Hill have raised expectations that the town may become the location for his \$225 million production of *Alexander the Great*. Locating that production in Broken Hill would be a terrific win for the local community, but it is early days yet. Broken Hill is competing with a swag of countries only too keen to secure the production. Whatever the outcome, the State Government is determined to grow our film industry.

Between 1999 and 2002, 50 per cent of employment within the Australian film industry was created in New South Wales. It is no accident that our State's industry is so healthy: the Government continues to support our film industry. An essential part of that support is encouraging the industry to understand the benefits of moving to regional locations. The film industry benefits regional communities directly. In the 2001-02 financial year, the film industry injected \$4 billion into the New South Wales economy. That included the flow-on effects of film production, distribution and cinema, hire and television. Honourable members may remember I mentioned that a film aimed at the international market was recently completed with New South Wales Government support. *Danny Deckchair* was shot in Bellingen and injected nearly \$1 million into the town's economy. With the Government's support regional areas also offer film crews a cost-effect alternative to shooting in Sydney. The Government works with the New South Wales Film and Television Office to encourage continuing growth in regional film production. As well as creating jobs, the industry creates tourism.

Recently, I visited Parkes, the home of the CSIRO radio telescope, where the New South Wales Government provided a grant to the Dish Cafe. That cafe is a new business, and was established as a result of an enormous increase in the number of tourists visiting this site. As honourable members would be aware, the radio telescope played an historic role during the Apollo 11 moonwalk. The jump in the number of visitors to the region is a direct result of tourists enjoying a great Australian film, *The Dish*. When the film was shot in the Parkes and Forbes areas in 1999, it created 60 local jobs during filming. It injected \$250,000 into the local economy and that effect is still being felt four years down the track. Parkes now has a new business helping support the 122,000 visitors a year who travel to the area to check out the impressive radio telescope. The Dish Cafe is certainly a great place to have a cup of coffee and a home-made sausage roll.

The support of the New South Wales Government for the regional film industry also includes practical assistance. To promote our regional film industry, the Government supports a number of regional film liaison officers who are based at various locations, including Film Broken Hill, Film Hunter, Film Illawarra—which I know well—Film Mid North Coast and Northern Rivers Screenworks. The Government also provides assistance through the \$2.4 million Film and Television Attraction Fund and the Regional Filming Fund. When it comes to filming New South Wales has it all. We have deserted beaches, expansive deserts, tropical jungles, vast rivers and historic villages. In fact, just about any film location in the world can be translated to New South Wales. But while we know about the terrific attributes of regional New South Wales, the film industry continually needs to be reminded about our natural attributes—and that is exactly what the Government is doing.



Film tours for industry representatives are an ideal way of promoting regional New South Wales. Recently I joined my parliamentary colleague the honourable member for Tweed on a tour of the North Coast sponsored by the New South Wales Government. The three-day event showcased this region to film and television producers and location managers. Locations around Lismore, Grafton, Murwillumbah and Port Macquarie as well as the hamlets of Tyalgum, Chillingham, Yamba, Maclean and Ulmarra were visited. Tea tree plantations, sugar cane farms, wild coastlines, sleepy pubs and unlined roads attracted much attention.

The tour also gave industry representatives the opportunity to meet local people able to help them with logistics and practical advice. Many of those on this tour were TV commercial makers producing product for the global and national market. It was no accident that that high-value end of the film market was targeted by the New South Wales Government. In addition, several members of the group were location managers for Japanese and Indian film interests. There is enormous potential for the New South Wales Government to work with the Bollywood market. That is an aspect of our industry that we will continue to encourage and support.

That visit by film industry representatives, which attracted a great deal of community and media interest, highlighted just how important this growth industry can be to towns, hamlets and regional centres. I am delighted to inform honourable members that those on the tour hailed the event as an outstanding success. I look forward to updating honourable members on the further growth of the film industry on the North Coast. Our support of the development of regional film industries also includes the Newcastle and Hunter regions. Honourable members will be interested to hear that this Government is providing extra funding for the successful Film Hunter, a regional office that was established by the New South Wales Government in June 2000. Film Hunter, which is a one-stop shop for clients with filming inquiries, provides help in obtaining permits on behalf of 13 councils. It also helps the film industry with local scouting.

Film Hunter has also developed a directory of local skilled technicians and support services. This essential document is needed to promote regional film locations and attributes. Thanks to this Government's support, Film Hunter can provide more than 2,000 images promoting locations in the region. A web site now links Film Hunter with the film and television industry worldwide. The unit has been very successful over the past three years. Film Hunter has been directly responsible for injecting more than \$3 million into the local economy. Up to March this year, it had attracted 7 feature films and 6 documentaries to the region. It also captured segments for 7 television series and resulted in 32 television commercials being shot in the area. Filming in this region includes a Coca-Cola advertisement, a Korean perfume advertisement, an Indian feature film, a Singapore Airlines commercial and Channel Nine's series *The Great Chase*—a terrific result and a great win for the Hunter community.

I congratulate Hunter councils—in particular, Newcastle City Council—for their ongoing support for this great project that will benefit the whole region. The New South Wales Government's extra funding will be used to market the Hunter region as a great place to make films and television commercials. Film Hunter and the recent North Coast tour are just two examples of how the New South Wales Government is continuing to support its commitment to creating jobs and supporting growth in regional New South Wales by using the entertainment industry and, in particular, the film and television commercial industry to drive investment, expenditure and job creation in regional locations in New South Wales.

**Mr STONER** (Oxley—Leader of the National Party) [4.42 p.m.]: Australia is fast becoming one of the most popular destinations for film-making in the world. The diversity of our locations, the skills and flexibility of our crews and creative teams, and the internationally recognised standards of our technical facilities and post-production services combine to make Australia a world-class location for film-making. We have in the Oxley electorate, which I represent, some internationally known contributors to the film industry: Baz Luhrmann, who hails from Herons Creek, and a film technician, who is based in Scotts Head and who has received internationally recognised awards for the work that he has done on films that have been shown around the globe. Recently, members of a British film crew based themselves near Johns River. That crew produced a reality-type program along the lines of *Survivor*. The film crew enjoyed the glorious location and the local community enjoyed the company of the visitors, not to mention the considerable boost to the local economy.

The New South Wales film and television industry produces feature films, documentaries, telemovies, miniseries, television series, and corporate and music videos. We also have associated business, including post-production such as audio, dubbing, special effects, subtitling and editing. The highly successful *The Matrix* movies, which were put together in Sydney, are proof positive of the capabilities of Sydney and New South Wales in the international film industry. In 1999-2000 businesses in the Australian film and television production industry earned \$1.475 billion and employed 15,195 people. Of the 1,975 businesses operating in the

industry in Australia, 1,112 are based in New South Wales—that is, 69 per cent of Australian film industry employment is based in New South Wales. That is why it is vital that the New South Wales Government gives a genuine commitment to attracting film production to New South Wales and, in particular, to regional and rural New South Wales. Those areas need a shot in the arm to boost local economies, which have declined due to struggling traditional industries combined with the effects of the drought.

This financial year the Labor Government will dedicate only \$600,000 under its so-called Film Industry Attraction Fund. The objective of that fund is to provide assistance packages to attract additional international and Australian footloose or runaway films and television productions to New South Wales. A total Labor Government contribution of \$600,000 this year for such a vital industry for regional development and employment seems inadequate. Contrast the New South Wales Government's position with the position of its counterpart in Victoria. The Victorian Government's arts policy states that, since 1999, it has provided a boost of \$31 million for industry development and investment in film, television and new media production in revitalising Victoria's film and television industry. The Victorian Government established Film Victoria to ensure that Victoria is a leading destination for film and television production, with \$40 million committed for the construction of a studio complex at Docklands. Clearly, New South Wales could do more.

The major drive in the film boom in New South Wales and other parts of Australia has been the Federal Coalition Government. The industry has received a major boost through the Federal Government's film tax offset. In addition, the federally backed Film Finance Corporation pumps \$50 million per annum into the industry and carries out development work. The Commonwealth Government has introduced a refundable tax offset for film production in Australia that provides an additional financial incentive for producers of large budget films to locate in Australia. In establishing the tax offset, the Government recognises the economic, employment and skills development opportunities that large-scale productions bring to Australia and to Australians working in the film industry. The tax offset has been designed to ensure that Australia remains competitive in attracting high budget film productions. It is aimed at providing increased opportunities for Australian casts, crew, post-production companies and other services to participate in these productions.

Australian director Baz Luhrmann and Hollywood producer Dino De Laurentiis have been investigating Broken Hill as the location for the \$225 million epic *Alexander the Great*. The Premier has been trying to gain credit for that interest, but it should be noted that the Federal Government will facilitate this film opportunity, first, through the film tax offset and, second, through making members of our defence forces available to assist with the production. I understand that the Prime Minister met with Mr Luhrmann and Mr De Laurentiis last Friday and that he is now considering the proposal. Mr Luhrmann said that, if the movie were shot in Australia, he would build his own studio at Broken Hill. That worthwhile contribution to that region and to the Broken Hill economy is something that we should all support.

It is pleasing to note that regional and rural areas, including the North Coast, are a priority of this Government in developing a regional film industry. I urge the Government to do more. It should take a leaf out of the book of the Federal and Victorian governments. This Government should not simply rest on its laurels because of the natural beauty of New South Wales and its prominence as a tourist destination. We must remain competitive with other States that are seeking to attract film industry attention and ensure that New South Wales remains the premiere film-making location and destination for film crews and associated industry people. I urge the State Government to commit real funds to this exciting industry, which has the potential to bring enormous benefits to regional economies, such as jobs and industrial diversification. I commend the motion to the House.

**Mr NEWELL** (Tweed—Parliamentary Secretary) [4.50 p.m.]: I am pleased that the Minister for Regional Development, Minister for the Illawarra, and Minister for Small Business has moved this motion as it gives us an opportunity to highlight the benefits of the film industry to the economy of New South Wales. Most importantly, it gives us a chance to detail how the New South Wales Government, particularly the Minister for Regional Development, has developed the industry in this State. Earlier this month the New South Wales Government again emphasised its commitment to supporting the Tweed and the North Coast communities by highlighting the region's potential as a terrific place to film.

As the Minister said in his speech, Sydney television commercial makers and location managers visited my region from 3 to 5 June as part of a New South Wales Government film tour. The event kicked off by highlighting the wonders of the Tweed. The group visited major centres in the region as well as many locations infrequently visited. It wound its way from the Tweed through the Northern Rivers region and ended up in the tall timbers around Port Macquarie. Film industry representatives were shown exactly what our region has to offer. I met the group aside the Tweed River at Mount Burrill, which is one of the most spectacular rock formations in the region.

This area is close to the location of the recently filmed *I'm a Celebrity, Get Me Out of Here!* production, which injected an estimated \$20 million into the local area. It gave a tremendous boost to the local economy, and several small businesses benefited enormously. Apart from that enormous injection in the Tweed and North Coast economies, the production also created 370 local jobs. We are still waiting to hear whether further productions will take place at this location. There are many spectacular locations in the area, and many television commercials have been produced utilising spectacular backdrops such as Stotts Island and Cabarita Headland. I was certainly struck by the enthusiasm and interest that the film tour group showed in the North Coast. The fact that these film industry representatives visited our region attracted much community interest.

This interest was generated partly by the fact that two location managers in the group catered to the Indian film industry. Bollywood, as it is known, is a massive industry that is showing increasing interest in Australia, which it regards as an exotic location. The Indian industry representatives were also interested in the skills of Australian production crews. Capturing the interest of this market could be important to the future development of the Tweed and the State's North Coast. I, for one, would be more than happy to see "Bollywood on the Tweed" creating many more local jobs. The region's closeness to studio facilities across the border on the Gold Coast makes the North Coast an ideal location for further growth in the film industry. Much of the equipment for the *I'm a Celebrity, Get Me Out of Here!* production was leased or contracted from companies that supply the film industry on the Gold Coast.

Honourable members will be pleased to hear that a survey of the group proved extremely positive. Participants were impressed by the overall program, including the information they received. Their responses to meetings with local film officers, including Screenworks and Film North Coast, were also extremely positive. The group endorsed its visit to the region as being of considerable value and described it as a "great exercise". Participants praised the great variety of locations and described the busy schedule as "excellent". Comments included the observation that the industry was now more aware of the number of New South Wales government agencies encouraging filming in the area. I pay tribute to Tweed Shire Council, which has worked closely with several film groups, including this one, and made sure that the appropriate development applications were issued, for example. The majority of those surveyed said that their views of filming in regional New South Wales had changed and all said that they would recommend New South Wales Government film tours to other industry members.

The Tweed and the North Coast clearly have much to offer the State, national and international film industries. I am delighted that the group was impressed by the "great attitude" in our area. The New South Wales Government's strong support of the State's film industry has generated business worth \$4 billion a year. I hope that the latest visit will result in a greater number of films being created and filmed on the North Coast. I hope that the growth in this industry will continue to create jobs and new industries in the Tweed and on the North Coast for years to come.

**Mr CAMPBELL** (Keira—Minister for Regional Development, Minister for the Illawarra, and Minister for Small Business) [4.55 p.m.], in reply: I thank the honourable member for Tweed for his contribution to the debate, for his support for the industry and for the interest he took in the recent location-scouting exercise on the far North Coast. His efforts to make the visiting film industry representatives feel welcome were very much appreciated. I also acknowledge the contribution by the Leader of the National Party to the debate. He did his best to be negative, as ever, but he was positive about the industry and its contribution to the New South Wales economy. I thought for a moment that he was going to announce that the Howard Government would provide military personnel to support Baz Luhrmann's proposed production in Broken Hill, but he did not quite get there. Nevertheless, this debate has revealed that there is bipartisan support for the film industry in New South Wales. The growth of the New South Wales film industry presents a great opportunity for regional areas of this State and a great opportunity to create new jobs in a growth industry.

On the North Coast we have seen the impact that films such as the 1996 classic *Oscar and Lucinda*, starring the fine Australian actor Cate Blanchett, can have on the local community. Much of the film was shot in the Grafton area. Not only does a project like this inject funds into the economy but it creates a variety of jobs. The impact of a film or television commercial can be felt for years to come. The same can be said of the Illawarra, where the New South Wales Government actively supports local television and film production. The local community is well aware that a new film, *A Man's Gotta Do*, was completed recently in the Illawarra. Madam Acting-Speaker, you commented to me a moment ago that you appeared on the set of that film. I am not sure whether you were an extra—if you were I am sure you made a fine contribution. As the member for Illawarra, you had the opportunity to see filmmaking at firsthand and gain an understanding of it. Your support for the industry is much appreciated.

The New South Wales Government funds Film Illawarra, which is based at the Faculty of Creative Arts at the University of Wollongong. This is a New South Wales Government-supported initiative, which also receives assistance from local councils and the University of Wollongong. The unit helps the film and television industry with location scouting and local information. It can also help the industry to liaise between filmmakers and local government. Local government in the Illawarra has been supportive of the film industry—I might add that it had some leadership in this area prior to the 1999 State election. Film Illawarra finds local crews and accommodation and can even help occasionally with casting. Film Illawarra's most recent successes include this year's recent production *Floodhouse*, an SBS feature film shot in the Shoalhaven area that injected \$150,000 into the local economy.

As I mentioned earlier, the feature film *A Man's Gotta Do* was shot recently in and around Shellharbour and Wollongong. The good news is that it injected about \$300,000 into the local economy. Other films such as *Mullet*, *My Mother Frank*, *Soft Fruit* and *Diana and Me* were shot in the Illawarra. That is good news for the Illawarra community and great news for regional New South Wales. I look forward to more film production and more television commercials being shot in the Illawarra—it is a great way to promote a great place to live. My recent visit to Broken Hill highlighted the importance of this growth industry to remote areas of the State. Films such as *Dirty Deeds*, *Mission: Impossible 2*, *The Missing* and *The Craic* injected nearly \$1.3 million into the economy of the State's Far West.

[Interjection]

I note the interjection of the honourable member for Murray-Darling, whom I met with recently in Broken Hill. He talked seriously and in an understanding way about the contribution that film makes to the Broken Hill and the Far West economy. The honourable member talked with great pride of the contribution that area has made to the film industry, and rightly so. The films I just mentioned created 460 job opportunities during production in Broken Hill, and visitors have been lured to the area to see for themselves what it is like. The Government will continue to support our growing film industry. It is providing the funds needed to grow regional film production. We have the scenery, the supportive regional community and the government funding needed to grow our film industry—and that is exactly what the Government is doing to encourage regional development in New South Wales.

**Discussion concluded.**

**Madam ACTING-SPEAKER (Ms Saliba):** Order! It being almost 5.15 p.m., business is interrupted for the taking of private members' statements.

**PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**

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**GAN GAN ARMY CAMP SITE SALE**

**Mr BARTLETT** (Port Stephens) [5.00 p.m.]: I address for the third time in three weeks the sale of the Gan Gan army camp site. Before I do so, I retract a statement I made on Tuesday 1 July when I incorrectly claimed that 23 police officers had been posted to the Raymond Terrace police station between 1999 and 2003. I apologise for my error. In relation to the sale of the Gan Gan army camp, the indications are that it is a Liberal Party closed shop on an open tender process. Last Saturday morning I met 11 bewildered residents of Port Stephens. The facts reported to me are so scandalous that I have asked for a statutory declaration and a chronology of what happened. It seems that we have had a fire sale of the Gan Gan army camp, which has been sold with absolute indecent haste. When the site went on sale tender documents were not available and were extremely difficult to acquire.

I asked the gathering of residents to provide a chronology of when and how the sale of Gan Gan army camp occurred. I was told that on 1 April the community first noticed on the site a sign which stated that tenders were closing one month later—that is, on 1 May. On 16 April one of my constituents telephoned the local real estate agent named on the sign as handling the sale and requested a copy of the tender documents, which were not available. On 28 April, three days before the close of the tender, my constituent again telephoned the same real estate agent and requested a copy of the tender documents. He was told that the tender documents still had not been received. On 1 May the sign relating to the Federal Government sale of an important site in Port Stephens changed. It said that tenders closed on 19 May. On 19 May the sign again changed to read that tenders now closed on 30 May. Meanwhile, my constituent was still trying to get the tender documents from the real estate agent.

On 23 May my constituent visited a branch in Charlestown to try to get a copy of the tender documents, but he could not get one. On 28 May my constituent telephoned the Department of Defence and was told that the real estate agent had been instructed to make copies available the next day—that is, the day before tenders closed. When my constituent got a package it did not contain all the information to allow him to make an assessment of the site. This fire sale was made in absolute haste and no-one in Port Stephens could keep up with the events as they were unfolding. The site went to tender on 1 April. For two months my constituent tried to get the tender documents, which were not available to put in a tender for the site. I have asked for a statutory declaration to confirm these points. If this information is true, it is absolutely scandalous.

### NORTH SHORE ELECTORATE RAILWAY STATIONS

**Mrs SKINNER** (North Shore) [5.05 p.m.]: I refer to trains and stations that affect my constituents of North Shore. Mrs Gabrielle Bradshaw contacted me about a matter that has been brought to my attention by other constituents, but her letter tells it all. She wrote:

Could you please ask the Minister for Transport if there really are plans to make it easier for elderly passengers to alight from the train at Wollstonecraft station. There have been several falls there and I have totally lost my confidence.

Getting on the train is no problem as I can hold on to the rail on the train as I step on ... but getting off—the gap is very wide and the train is a lot higher than the platform.

Goodness knows how a young mother with children and a buggy would manage.

It was mentioned in the local paper last year that something would be done before Christmas. Hopefully they mean Christmas 2003. I understand Mr Costa has many many more pressing problems with his trains but it would be helpful to know when, if ever, he plans to tackle this one.

This is not the first time the problem with the gap between the train and the platform has been raised with me. It makes it difficult for the elderly people who live in North Sydney and who rely on train transport. A short while ago I spoke to Mrs Bradshaw. She said that today she came to the city by train but, because of her fear of getting off the train on her return journey, she caught the bus home. On a rainy day like today, she got wet and it was not as convenient. The Government can look into this simple matter. She suggested that ramps like the ones used on ferries could be kept in the guard's carriage for passengers to alight the train at the station. Another resident of North Sydney wrote on behalf of a number of residents who live close to North Sydney station. She complained about light and noise at the station. She stated:

Light from the ceilings above the platforms and lines, specifically platforms 3 and 4, is so strong that some people, including me, can move about in their units at night without the need to turn on a light. I myself have managed to reduce this nuisance to a reasonable extent with heavy curtains. But we need to have our windows open in the summer and we need to go to sleep in the dark!

This simple matter can have a detrimental impact on people's lives. My constituent also referred to noise, especially emanating from platform four. She said that it is very loud and suggested it probably exceeds legal limits. She wrote to Dr Parry, chairman of the ministerial inquiry into public passenger transport, and stated:

... staff have offered to measure this, but have so far procrastinated.

This correspondent says that the noise is particularly caused by platform announcements being made about train arrivals and so on, and says:

What happens in my living room? I cannot hear my TV at three feet. I cannot continue a conversation in my own home. Right now, I am trying to write this letter with all my windows closed, no hearing aids—

this woman is nearly deaf—

and can still hear that dreadful voice telling us about the train on platform 4! In the summer it is quite intolerable.

I can well believe that this is a terrible nuisance. These are seemingly small matters, but they can have a huge impact on people's lives and can drive them out of their wits. In relation to access to railway stations in the North Shore electorate for people with disabilities, of course the matter that Mrs Bradshaw raised about the gap between the train and the station platform is one issue; the other is access by lifts and so on at North Sydney station. I am proud that was a Coalition government put lifts at both Waverton and Milsons Point stations. That sort of access is sorely needed at North Sydney station. The Government has procrastinated. This issue was at the top of the priority list when the Coalition lost government. It is time that the current Government provided access for these people at North Sydney station.

### THE BOULEVARDE, STRATHFIELD, PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE

**Ms JUDGE** (Strathfield) [5.10 p.m.]: I commend the Carr Government for the completion of the new pedestrian bridge over The Boulevarde in Strathfield, which I have the honour and privilege to represent. The new bridge will significantly improve safety for senior citizens and pedestrians and the students who attend the nearby Santa Sabina College and Santa Maria Del Monte, which have now become one campus. Many of our senior citizens live nearby in Margaret Street at the Marion Court hostel and villa. The bridge crosses a very busy road and is traversed by many residents on their way to and from the nearby train station and shopping centre. For many years the community has been concerned for the safety of our youth, students and residents who each day cross The Boulevarde.

I am particularly pleased that the Minister, the Hon. Carl Scully, went out of his way for about two years to make sure this project came to fruition. It had been on the drawing board of various councils for almost 15 years, and it was a real pleasure to see it built. Once the decision had been made to proceed with the bridge there was some community debate about whether it should have advertising. After a number of meetings and pretty tough negotiations, we managed to secure the fairly unique position that the bridge does not have any advertising at all. That is fantastic, for it is in a very leafy and famous heritage area of Strathfield, almost a gateway to the municipality.

The design and appearance of the bridge is also sympathetic to the surrounding environment. It is not easy to get an artistic-looking pedestrian bridge, but I think we have done pretty well with this one. It even has heritage green detail. The Boulevarde, as I have said, is a very busy road. Cars seem to travel along that section of it at a fairly fast speed. I commend also the efforts of members of our hard-working local police force, who have been active and doing a very good job. I have observed them operating radar equipment monitoring traffic speed. The new bridge also includes lifts, which will make the crossing far more convenient for mums with prams and for the mobility impaired.

**Mr George:** What about the previous member?

**Ms JUDGE:** I congratulate also the previous member for Strathfield, Mr Whelan, who did a lot of hard work to ensure that this project came to fruition. I am pleased that glass has been included in the lifts to improve security and that protective mesh has been installed over the bridge to prevent objects being thrown from it. I thank the principal of Santa Maria Del Monte junior school, all community members who contributed to the discussion on the bridge, and Strathfield and Burwood councils.

Yesterday's official opening was attended by Bruce Cosgrove, deputy head of Santa Sabina senior school, representing Sister Judith Lawson, the principal; the Mayor of Burwood, Ernest Wong—I thank David Wiley, the deputy mayor; Paul Culshaw, General Manager, Client Services of the Roads and Traffic Authority—I thank all hard-working officers of the RTA who contributed to this project; Jane Bezzina, principal of Santa Maria Del Monte; Dr Kerry Keogh, General Manager, Strathfield Council; Councillor Chris Christogeorge of Burwood council; and the first person to cross the bridge in a wheelchair, Ken Collie, who assured me that after 6 o'clock a key will be available to anyone who needs it, because at that hour it will be shut to members of the general public, who can get a key from the councils. Apparently the same key is used for all of these types of bridges.

All the students from Santa Sabina and Santa Maria Del Monte were present yesterday, as were school prefects, and it could be seen that the mums made special efforts to get their student children dressed in uniform and looking spick and span. Also there were students from HOOSH, young people who are in after-school care, as well as seniors from the Marion Court hostel and villa. I believe the bridge cost \$2.4 million. I was absolutely thrilled with the opening and I commend the great community effort.

### BEGA VALLEY MEALS ON WHEELS CO-OPERATIVE

**Mr CONSTANCE** (Bega) [5.15 p.m.]: I wish to congratulate the Bega Valley Meals on Wheels Co-operative. On 21 June I attended a function to raise funds to enable the co-operative to continue to provide services throughout the entire Bega Valley. In particular, I recognise the efforts of Sue Heffernan in co-ordinating this successful evening, which will go some way towards raising the funds necessary to deliver just some of the key projects that the co-operative is seeking to achieve over the next 12 months.

That said, I believe the State Government could provide some assistance. I call on the Government to consider this request, particularly as the service last year alone delivered 37,000 meals to either homes or centres

throughout the Bega Valley. The co-operative services about 250 clients, providing food and services, day respite centres, in-home respite, neighbour aid and social support services. It is the only community agency in the State to have a contracted service with the Department of Veterans Affairs, and provides services across four shires. The co-operative also has 450 volunteers who provide about 3,000 hours of service each year. This is an extraordinary level of community commitment and contribution by individuals from the community of Bega Valley. It is further testament to the strength and character of far south communities in the electorate of Bega.

The Meals on Wheels service has been operating since 1971, when it provided meals to 10 clients, only in Bega. Its services now extend to 250 clients in towns throughout the Bega Valley. I want to touch this evening on projects that the co-operative wishes to provide to the community in the short term. I hope the State Government can assist in this regard. The co-operative wants to purchase car refrigerators and approved food transportation eskies. It wants also to fit out new kitchen premises, including a room for a seniors social club, day care and flexible respite groups. It is also looking to fund a neighbour aid service, to help with shopping, and provide socials outings, gardening services and companionship. It would also like to purchase a delivery van.

In some ways these types of community groups have had costs shifted upon them by governments, be they local, State or Federal governments. Governments within Australia need to improve the support they provide to strong community groups, such as the Bega Valley Meals on Wheels Co-operative. I encourage the State Government to provide funding. Regional areas particularly rely heavily on community groups to provide basic services that might be provided elsewhere in the State by governments. I acknowledge the sponsors who have supported the Bega Valley Meals on Wheels Co-operative, who assisted with the fundraising project on 21 June.

The sponsors include Momsen Motors, the Fernmark Inn, Tarra Ford, Perry's Menswear, the Hair Cafe, Gull Gallery, Kerry's Beauty Spot, Merimbula Myotherapy, Jewellery for You, Magpie Music, Bega Pharmacy, Lori Green Agencies, Chemworld Chemist, the Beauty Parlour, the Goose Cafe, Bimbaya Bush Furniture Company, Bega Business Systems, Mick Cole Motorcycles, Rene Claire Fashions, Bega Valley Bread Shop, Jenny Mein, Candelo Bulk Wholefoods, Brogo River Bakery, Mythos Gallery, Marie Moffit and Daphne Sweeney, Frank and Odile Foster at Kameruka Estate, Grevillea Winery, Candelo Hotel and the Shakti-Ma Emporium. Well done to Bega Valley Meals on Wheels! I look forward to a response from the Government in relation to funding. [*Time expired.*]

#### **NARDELL COAL CORPORATION PTY LTD LIQUIDATION AND MACQUARIE BANK**

**Mr ORKOPOULOS** (Swansea) [5.21 p.m.]: If one issue is alive in the Hunter region, it is the fate of the unsecured creditors of the now defunct Nardell Coalmine and the attitude of the influential merchant bank, the Macquarie Bank. Today's *Newcastle Herald* reveals the outcome of yet another meeting of the Nardell unsecured creditors owed some \$10 million by an investment vehicle owned by the Macquarie Bank. The article, headed "Nardell: civil but no deal", reads:

Two months ago, creditors rejected Macquarie's offer to pay 17 per cent of the \$10 million and Nardell went into liquidation.

Mr Braun [a spokesman for the unsecured creditors] said yesterday: "We're bitterly disappointed but this is really only the start of our efforts for natural justice."

Creditors supplied a range of goods and services, including maintenance, capital and civil works, coalmining and coal processing and we're simply asking to be paid what we're owed.

Although I, like many other honourable members, received a donation from the Macquarie Bank prior to the last State election I have a duty to my electorate and small businesses that have been hung out to dry by this bank to speak out on its treatment of them. Increasingly, corporate morality and ethics are coming to the fore in policy development in this State, our nation and a globalised world. So it is with Macquarie Bank, whose refusal to honour the contracts of one of its investment companies to small business service providers has left many of them in dire financial straits.

McKagg Services, which operates in my electorate and which is owed \$60,000, and Peter Braun, who operates Coal Management Operations and Processing, which is owed more than \$1 million, are among the other small businesses suffering as a result of a lack of corporate ethics by the Macquarie Bank. The bank is one of the major players in the New South Wales Government's private-public partnerships [PPP] program and, as I have stated previously in the House, its shareholders would be appalled by its behaviour. I have called for a higher level of ethics from firms wishing to participate in the PPP program with the New South Wales Government.

I am extremely pleased that this principle was supported unanimously in the Labor Party caucus today to the extent that caucus called on the Government to enter into PPP agreements only when the company has developed an acceptable code of ethics for the wind-up of company activities regarding the payment of workers' entitlements and meeting its obligations to unsecured creditors. It was the unanimous adoption by caucus of this principle that may force the Macquarie Bank to come to its senses. I call on the Leader of the Opposition to commit the Opposition to a principled stand similar to that adopted by the Labor caucus. I now call on the Macquarie Bank to honour its commitment to the Nardell unsecured creditors.

**Mr O'Farrell:** I seek clarification. Mr Acting-Speaker, I draw to your attention the private member's statement made by the honourable member for Swansea and the ruling made by the Speaker of the previous Parliament in relation to the content of private members' statements. The ruling made by the former Speaker clearly indicated that they should not be related to party policy or initiatives. It is not suitable for this Chamber at this time to be used to announce caucus decisions or to attack corporations in the city. If the honourable member for Swansea wants to do so, I would like to ask what is Labor's policy in relation to taking donations from developers. I ask you to take that issue away and have a look at it so that we can avoid these issues in the future.

**The ACTING-SPEAKER:** I will certainly give that matter due consideration.

### KIDS IN COMMUNITY AWARDS

**Mr GEORGE** (Lismore) [5.20 p.m.]: I pay tribute to the recent Kids in Community awards presentation evening in Lismore. Sadly, I was unable to attend. I thank the *Northern Rivers Echo* for allowing me to use its article to pay tribute to the Kids in Community awards committee. I congratulate Lynne Carr, Nancy Casson, Yvonne Haines, Gaela Hurford, Maria Kelly, Barbara Meaney, Norma Pharoah, Sharee Pine and Cheryl Woodlands, who put these awards together each year. This year the presenters were Rhoda Roberts and Grace Knight, two famous people within the Northern Rivers and throughout the country. I congratulate them on taking part in this very special event. The Peer Support 13 to 18 years group winner was Kate Fitzsimons, the Community Support 13 to 18 years winner was Tarrant Fuller, and the Community Support 19 to 25 years winner was Daniel Hannaford.

The Indigenous Youth Support 13 to 18 years winner was Nicole Walker and the Indigenous Youth Support 19 to 25 years winner was Amelia Roberts. The Homeless Youth Support under 25 years winner was Bianca Bright, and the Homeless Youth Support over 25 years winner was Darcy Goodwin. Against All Odds 13 to 18 years winner was Krystal Byron, encouragement award to Jeremy Bryant, and the Against All Odds 19 to 25 years winner was Nicole Sten. Mentor or Role Model winner was Kim Hudson, Community Group Supporting Youth or Youth Programs winner was Roadies—a tremendous organisation—and Individual Supporting Youth or Youth Programs winner was Father Paul Pidcock, the bursar at Woodlawn College, now St John's College, Woodlawn. It was lovely to see him recognised for the tremendous amount of time he gives to our community.

Nicole Sten was the recipient of the award that celebrates what kids in the community do—young people helping other young people, doing work in their local community or achieving in their own lives. The awards are a way of saying thank you to the young people who make a difference. For Nicole, who is 23, life has not always been easy, but that has not stopped her. With a bright smile and undying enthusiasm she has worked hard to overcome many challenges and achieve her goals in life. She was named the winner of the Against All Odds 19 to 25 years category in the 2003 Kids in Community awards. She was really shocked when they announced her name. She thought "Wow! Cool." Nicole always wanted to get out into the world, work hard and make a name for herself. Being told that she was doing a good job made her feel appreciated.

Despite an extremely difficult schooling experience and an intellectual disability, Nicole finished her Higher School Certificate and went on to study art at Lismore TAFE. She has since completed Certificates I, II and III in Aboriginal Art and Cultural Practices, drawing on influences from her mother's Aboriginal heritage and her extended family from the Bundjalung Nation. She is now doing Certificate IV, the highest level of study available. When Nicole started studying at TAFE she joined RED Inc, a group working with people with disabilities. Five years later she is not only still a client with the group but she also now teaches Aboriginal art classes to other young people with disabilities. She has even acted in local short films and youth education videos. Her support worker and friend Amanda Souter cannot sing Nicole's praises enough:

She's passionate about her art and she loves to share her enthusiasm with the community and everyone she meets. Because of the hurdles she's had to overcome, and they're numerous and varied, she still maintains such a positive attitude and continues to strive for her dreams. She's just such an inspiring young woman and it was absolutely exhilarating to see her being recognised for that.



I pay tribute to the Kids in Community awards, and also to the committee. The function was handled well by the master of ceremonies, Neil Marks, who does a magnificent job for the community in being the master of ceremonies for organisations at presentations such as that to which I have referred. I compliment all the winners in the Kids in Community awards for 2003.

### **SHELLHARBOUR HOSPITAL AUXILIARY**

**Ms SALIBA** (Illawarra) [5.30 p.m.]: I acknowledge the work of the Shellharbour Hospital Auxiliary. Recently I was invited to its seventeenth Annual Presentation Luncheon, which was held on 25 June this year, but unfortunately, because Parliament was sitting, I was unable to attend. I know that it was a great day for the auxiliary and that in particular three people received badges to commemorate 10 years of service—Chris White, Terri Martin and Kath Moss. One member of the auxiliary, Ruth Hunter, has been a member for 17 years and was awarded life membership. To give the House an idea of the dedication of the members of the Shellharbour Hospital Auxiliary I wish to read the citation that accompanied Ruth's presentation:

Ruth is a foundation member of The Shellharbour hospital Auxiliary, supporting the formation and being loyal and dedicated for over 17 years. She has been on the executive committee for 15 years, holding different positions and assisting the other executive when required. She has not missed many monthly meetings in that time.

Ruth has done 'trolley' duty every second Saturday since the 'Trolley' started—only missing when she was on holidays or not well. She attends most functions, always helping in the organisation—even being a model for the fashion parades we've had.

Regular stalls never seem to be complete until Ruth arrives with her 'car load' of goodies, trays of cooking—usually cakes, biscuits, lemon butter etc. Many times over the years, the only cooking of the stalls was Ruth's. She does lots of craft, knitting, sewing and crocheting and also donates pre-loved baby and children's gear as her grand children are growing out of them.

Helping out in the Hospital when the Hospital staff were on strike were other times Ruth has helped out, as well as attending the public meetings when we looked like losing our maternity ward—and she is presently an active member of the 'Health Watch' group.

Apart from all the hard work Ruth does for our Auxiliary and Hospital, she also regularly attends Annual conference in Sydney, Regional Conferences and Zone days and is a familiar face at luncheons held by other Auxiliaries in our area.

The list goes on, but I think you'll all agree that Ruth Hunter is a very dedicated and loyal Auxiliary member, is very interested in The Shellharbour Hospital and the community and today I would like to say thank you to her for all that she's done, and for her friendship.

We would like to show our appreciation by making her the first Life Member of the Shellharbour Hospital Auxiliary.

Ruth was absolutely shocked and stunned when she was advised that she would be receiving the award. She is like many others who are members of the Shellharbour Hospital Auxiliary: The 80 financial members set up stalls at the hospital and at local shops. They run raffles, organise bus trips and have craft and market days at the Shellharbour Public School—the auxiliary's biggest fundraising days.

The auxiliary has raised money for equipment in the hospital including anaesthetic trolleys, electrocardiogram machines, pulse oximeters, two humidicribs in the obstetrics ward and numerous other pieces of equipment that are required in our hospital. Without the auxiliary, Shellharbour would not be what it is today. Members of the auxiliary work tirelessly to raise money and make sure that Shellharbour Hospital is adequately staffed to provide services that are needed by the community. There are many members of the auxiliary who are like Ruth, but I congratulate Ruth on achieving her life membership of the auxiliary and on the hard work she does as a member of the auxiliary.

I thank her for her participation and hope that it has been as pleasurable for her as it has been for those who have worked with her. I also congratulate the three people who received awards in recognition of their 10 years of service. Those awards show the dedication of people who live in the Shellharbour area. I thank and support all the members of the auxiliary, who do a lot of hard work in the Shellharbour area. I regret that I was unable to attend the presentation luncheon. I look forward to working with the auxiliary during the coming year.

### **CRONULLA ELECTORATE BEACHES EROSION**

**Mr KERR** (Cronulla) [5.35 p.m.]: Almost three years ago in this House I drew attention to the state of Bate Bay beaches. I referred to the need for urgent action to be taken, and I am sure that every member of this House supported my call. After I made that speech in this House, on 17 August 2000 the *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader* published an article drawing attention to the state of Cronulla beaches and the need for urgent action to be taken to redress erosion. The article pointed out that erosion had caused the exposure of

dangerous rocks. It is now my tragic duty to report to the House that very little has been done since that article was published and since I made my speech. More than three years ago, in early 2000, a committee was set up to examine the problem and devise a long-term solution to erosion. The task was undertaken by Councillor Spencer, who stated in the article:

It seems the Bate Bay beaches will never return to their former grandeur...

There is not much danger of that, with Councillor Spencer looking after the problem. He went on to state:

... but, on the other hand, the experts tell us that they won't get much worse either.

It is interesting to note that on the front page of today's *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader* an article shows that, as a result of recent storms, the condition of the beaches has become worse. More winter storms will cause greater erosion of the beaches. The situation is critical and this matter can no longer be ignored. As I have already said, Councillor Spencer stated, "... on the other hand, the experts tell us they won't get much worse either".

I call on Councillor Spencer to name those experts and make the reports available. I want to know how much was paid for that expert opinion. The newspaper article of 17 August 2000 also stated:

A council spokeswoman said the plan of management was being prepared in conjunction with the Department of Land and Water Conservation, surf clubs and other stakeholders.

She said the council would address any new public safety risks caused by the erosion.

I must ask, in light of the preparation of the plan, what action will be taken? What decisions will the Department of Land and Water Conservation and Sutherland Shire Council implement in relation to this matter? Ratepayers pay enormous sums in rates to this council. It is not satisfactory that years have gone by without any practical action having been taken to deal with a serious public danger. I ask Councillor Spencer whether he had anything to do with the thousands of dollars that were spent on placing balls along the Cronulla Beach promenade. That money could have been spent on practical measures to combat beach erosion. This matter requires urgent attention. The condition of the beaches is deplorable; the exposure of rocks constitutes a danger to public safety. I call upon the State Government and Sutherland Shire Council to urgently implement practical measures to eradicate the danger and to restore our beaches.

### COLOMBIA HUMAN RIGHTS

**Mr LYNCH** (Liverpool) [5.40 p.m.]: Constituents of mine have raised concerns in relation to their campaign for human rights, in particular the harassment and detention to which one has been subjected as a result of that campaign. I refer specifically to the campaign to secure human rights, justice and a fair trial for three Irishmen currently held in prison in Bogota, Colombia; they are known as the Colombia Three. Recently two of my constituents attended one stage of the trial in Colombia as human rights observers. My constituents are Shaun Kerrigan, a lawyer, and Brian Parker, the Assistant Secretary of the Construction and General Division of the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union. They are not the first Australians to journey to Colombia as human rights observers. Shaun Kerrigan has been there before, and, on a previous occasion Ian Latham, a barrister, was present.

The three Irishmen held in Bogota are Martin McCauley, originally from Lurgan; James Monaghan, originally from County Donegal; and Niall Connolly, originally from Dublin. I had the pleasure of meeting two of Niall's brothers in Dublin last year. They have been accused of helping to train the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, known as the FARC. According to material provided to me, the evidence against them is extraordinarily weak. A substantial international campaign is endeavouring to secure a fair trial for the men. One significant supporter of the campaign is Paul Hill, one of the Guildford Four. Those four Irishmen were corruptly arrested, charged and imprisoned for offences they did not commit. Their experience later formed the basis of the film *In the Name of the Father*. Recently Paul Hill visited Australia and attended functions in this building that I hosted, together with the Minister for Gaming and Racing, and the Hon. Tony Kelly, to help raise funds for the campaign. In relation to the harassment and detention that I mentioned earlier, a letter from Shaun Kerrigan to me stated:

As you are aware I have travelled to Colombia on four occasions in the last seven months for the purpose of attending a criminal trial as an observer. My attendance at the trial is at the request of the Australian Irish community and my main function is to report publicly on my observations.

It is appropriate for the purposes of this letter to advise you formally that I hold legal qualifications and that I am admitted as a legal practitioner in the State of New South Wales.

In these circumstances it has also been necessary and appropriate to advise the relevant Colombian Authorities of my presence in their country and initially to request a visa to travel. You should be aware that after some discussion and it is my understanding intervention by the trial Judge, I was advised by the office of the Consul General of Colombia in Sydney that I did not require a visa and that I was to be recognised as a visitor to that country ...

During my visits to Colombia I have met with the trial judge on at least two occasions, the fiscal (who is the Colombian prosecutor), members of the office of the Colombian equivalent of the Ombudsman, the Vice President of Colombia, the Junior Vice Minister for Justice, representatives of the International Red Cross, legal officers within the UNHCR permanently based in Colombia, defence lawyers, prison directors and the accused.

My visits and the attendance at the trial by other legal and human rights observers has been well publicised within the press inside Colombia and it has been reported generally by major media outlets worldwide.

On my two most recent visits to Colombia in April and June 2003 I have been harassed and detained by government officials both inside Colombia and in the United Kingdom.

On the first occasion while in transit from Bogota to Dublin in London's Heathrow airport I was approached by a number of plain-clothes police officers from the London Metropolitan Police. I had my passport confiscated and I believe photocopied, I was asked to complete an extraordinary exit card from the United Kingdom and was prevented from boarding my scheduled plane for a period of not less than 45 minutes. During this period I was in the company of one other observer and three witnesses in the trial.

On the second occasion when exiting Colombia via El Dorado airport in Bogota I was stopped at an established check point and asked how long I had been in Colombia, where I had stayed and what my occupation was. My hand luggage was thoroughly searched and I was then invited to be x rayed. The invitation to be x rayed was simply stated as would you have a problem with being x rayed. I advised that I would have a problem given the nature of my visit and I was in turn advised that refusal would result in imprisonment. An airport police officer then completed a consent form in Spanish, which I had to sign and seal with a print of my index finger. The consent form consisted of largely irrelevant information including details of how my ticket was purchased either by cash or credit card, the cost of my ticket, countries that I had visited prior to Colombia and the countries that I would visit after departing Colombia. Once again my passport was confiscated and I was taken to a locked office and then locked in a room with an X ray machine. The x ray was taken and after a short period I was released from the room and handed my passport. However before being allowed to continue to the aircraft I was subjected to a body search by hand.

Both of these incidents I feel relate directly to my involvement in the trial and my general observations concerning the trial ...

In the current case I would ask that you highlight to the New South Wales parliament my case and the harassment that I have suffered and I ask that the matter be raised and objection be placed on the record with both the governments of the United Kingdom and Colombia.

This will not deter the campaign to secure justice for the Colombia Three. A further delegation from Australia will go to Colombia in four weeks time.

### **MR MATTHEW ADRIAN MAKEHAM MURDER INVESTIGATION**

**Mr STONER** (Oxley—Leader of the National Party) [5.45 p.m.]: A member of the Police Force serving on the mid North Coast has raised a serious issue concerning the investigation of the murder of Matthew Adrian Makeham—attempts were made to make it look like suicide—some years ago in bushland near Nambucca Heads. The police officer has raised this matter with me because he and a colleague went to a great deal of trouble to conduct a thorough investigation. They put together a brief of evidence with a view to prosecuting two suspects. The suspects have not been prosecuted and, following a complaint by one suspect against the senior investigating officer, an internal affairs investigation of the officer was carried out. In the meantime, those who committed the murder seemingly go unchallenged and get away scot-free. I have received correspondence from the police officer, which stated:

2. Two dedicated police continued with the investigation which involved electronic surveillance and an informant. Despite the complex and protracted nature of the inquiry including numerous witnesses and suspects, absolutely no interest or assistance was afforded to local police by crime agencies.

3. It would appear the investigation—

known as Operation Rorby—

was doomed and impeded from the outset by a management decision to convey vital entomology evidence through the postal service. (A decision, culminating in the death of maggots prior to arrival and examination, causing problems with time of death, alibis, etc.) this was in contradiction to the efforts of the crime scene investigator to convey the exhibits and attend the post mortem.

4. A number of inexperienced police originally nominated to assist with his enquiry at the local level were withdrawn for general duty staffing shortages instigated by complaints of other overworked general duty police ...
6. Despite very limited resources in the murder investigation, local investigators interviewed and re-interviewed witnesses, suspects and the gathering of evidence over a period of eighteen months with numerous disruptions due to one of the investigators being returned to general duties. This was rectified on the intervention of a parliamentarian.
7. ... it should be noted that at the conclusion of the investigation and instigation of proceedings, the Crown Prosecutor ... made comment at the committal of the time frame, lack of assistance but complimented the quality of the brief of evidence.
8. During the course of the investigation many concerns of investigating police were documented and forwarded to senior police at the mid North Coast Local Area Command. On one occasion a senior officer, despite our boarding the efforts of the enquiry, implied that should any issues be taken further he stated "If I go, your coming with me".
9. The investigation proceeded with the alleged assistance of a registered informant who was not only a person of interest, but a partner of one of the major suspects. Dealings with that person, and lack of police support, ultimately led to the senior investigator being exposed and subject of serious and humiliating allegations of impropriety which has and apparently continues to be under investigation.
10. With the apparent total disregard to the efforts and welfare of the dedicated investigators, a brief of evidence was furnished and proceedings taken against the two major suspects for the offence of murder. Notwithstanding the legitimacy or credibility to the majority of police witnesses spoken to on numerous occasions, the two dedicated investigators were confronted with the burden of giving extensive and substantive evidence into the matter, a fact recognised by the Crown Prosecutor.
11. Listening device material was not properly scrutinised and attempts for transcription into what suitable material was known, was not forthcoming due to apparent cost factors...
13. Many requests for assistance and meetings have been documented throughout this investigation. All matters raised in this submission can be corroborated by such documentation which in my view, and that of others exposes the police department's mismanagement and lack of support to their regional policing colleagues.

I ask the Minister to investigate this matter concerning the murder of Matthew Adrian Makeham. I also ask him to ensure that local police get the support that they require and that this prosecution is followed through.

### COMPANION ANIMALS ACT REVIEW

**Ms MOORE** (Bligh) [5.50 p.m.]: When the Companion Animals Bill was introduced in this House in 1998 it did not meet the expectations of most people involved in the consultation process. As a defender and lover of companion animals, I was involved in trying to get extensive improvement to that legislation. However, the final Act remains an inconsistent mix of support for responsible pet ownership and excessively punitive controls that undermine responsible ownership. The current five-year review of the Act is an opportunity to better respond to contemporary needs and expectations.

Since the media reported on my call for a new charter of rights for pets and their owners, I have received an avalanche of positive responses from constituents in Bligh and people across the State. Australians feel strongly about their pets. A 1999 survey established that 85 per cent of Australian pet owners said that their pet was part of the family; 57 per cent said that their pet was their best friend; 86 per cent believed that the main role of their pet was love and companionship, rather than as a guard dog or a mouse catcher; 69 per cent said that their pet's death would be as upsetting as the death of a family member; and 60 per cent said that they would put themselves in danger to save the lives of their pets.

Australia has the highest rate of pet ownership in the world. Four out of five Australians have owned a pet at some time. Almost two-thirds of Australian households currently own pets, and there are around two million companion animals in New South Wales. Companion animals play an important role in our society in which many people live on their own and are alienated. Pets give pleasure, they teach responsibility; they love and they are loved in return. Pets also contribute to our physical and mental wellbeing. The Baker Medical Research Institute in Victoria estimated that pet ownership saves Australia up to \$2.2 billion a year in health care. Despite these proven benefits, too often an official attitude makes pet owners feel like second-class citizens. New South Wales has a more restrictive regime than many other cities, such as San Francisco, Berlin, Paris and London.

This restrictive regime provides an easy way out for lazy councils and government authorities to ban dogs rather than providing adequate off-leash areas with adequate signage and waste facilities, education, and enforcement to ensure responsible control and pick-up of waste. Most owners are responsible and most pets are well behaved. When animals become a problem it is inevitably because they are not being given the care they need. Education and support are more effective than punitive restrictions to ensure the responsible care and management of pets. It is important for dogs to have access to public open space, in particular in the inner city where backyards are very small. Veterinary evidence shows that dogs that have the opportunity to exercise and to socialise with other dogs are better behaved.

Unlike many European countries where pets can travel with their owners on public transport, New South Wales provides no such guarantee. Restrictions and inconsistent guidelines need to be changed to permit owners to travel confidently with their pets under responsible control. The Bligh electorate has the highest proportion of people living in rented properties and in apartments. Many residents want an end to the total bans on pet ownership that are routinely imposed in rented properties and apartments. The Companion Animals Act imposes significant costs on pet owners for the desexing, microchipping and impounding of animals. Practical financial assistance should be provided to people on low incomes so that they can own pets without being forced to break the law or watch their beloved pets being killed in pounds.

During parliamentary debate on the current Companion Animals Act I sought to address the serious issue of the impulse buying of pets, which leads to animals being mistreated, dumped and killed. That problem still needs to be addressed by imposing a restriction on advertising and sales. While I routinely see owners responsibly managing their pets, action by local and State authorities to meet their responsibilities is less evident. After nearly five years there have been no noticeable community education campaigns, as required under the Act. It is vital that the Companion Animals Act provides a legislative framework that supports responsible pet ownership, particularly in densely populated inner-city areas, where people who are isolated rely on their pets for support and comfort.

Responsible pet owners need responsible laws. Co-ordinated, proactive, progressive action is needed that enables responsible pet owners to access public open space, travel on public transport, and live in apartments and rental accommodation. I conclude by quoting a statement made by one correspondent who said:

Companion animals reduce stress, alleviate loneliness and, in some cases, are the only family that some people have. The value of companion animals should never be underestimated.

There is no reason why properly restrained animals should not be allowed in the majority of places ...

At the same time it should be pointed out that dogs are not only "companions" but have been invaluable assets during war (revealing land mines, etc.) saving many lives, not to mention their hard work for Customs Agencies, police, etc. also assisting people with various disabilities. The fact that animals not only adjust well in all these circumstances they are actually extremely helpful/necessary.

Can we please have a Just & True Companion Animals Act—not an "Easy Way Out Turn our Back on our Animals when it Suits us Companion Animals Act".

**Ms NORI** (Port Jackson—Minister for Tourism and Sport and Recreation, and Minister for Women) [5.55 p.m.]: I enjoyed the contribution of the honourable member for Bligh. I hope Bruno is doing well.

**Ms Moore:** And Sheba.

**Ms NORI:** I have some sympathy with what the honourable member has said. However, I am not so sure about that aspect of her contribution that related to allowing companion animals to travel on public transport. As Minister for Tourism I am aware that some companies, when marketing their products, allow travellers, visitors and guests to bring their pets. I draw to the attention of the honourable member an event that took place in Centennial Park at the weekend—a dog fair and five-kilometre walk that was sponsored by the RSPCA. Friends of mine won the bronze medal for the six best legs—and by that I do not mean a dog with six legs; I mean a four-legged dog and its two-legged owner.

I attended that extremely well-organised fair, which I thought was fun and a terrific way to use Centennial Park. The young puppy that belongs to my friends probably believes that there is a dog city in Centennial Park. Whenever my friends take the puppy for a walk in the future it will forever be looking for all the thousands of dogs that were at that fair on Sunday. Events and programs such as those conducted in Centennial Park enable pet owners to enjoy the companionship of their pets and enable pets to enjoy the companionship of other animals. I thank the honourable member for Bligh for her contribution.

#### DUBBO ELECTORATE PROPERTY MARKET

**Mr McGRANE** (Dubbo) [5.57 p.m.]: Tonight I want to share a good news story from the Dubbo electorate. Regional residential markets are enjoying a strong demand for properties from both owner-occupiers and investors. Figures released in the 2003 edition of the *Real Estate Yearbook* show that there was strong demand throughout the Dubbo electorate. Last year there were 962 house sales in Dubbo, an increase of 49.6 per cent on figures for the year 2000. That year saw the introduction of the First Home Owners Scheme and the First Home Plus Scheme, which resulted in stamp duty exemption for first home buyers. In the same period there

were 254 house sales in Parkes, an increase of 38.7 per cent on figures for the year 2000; 204 house sales in Wellington, an increase of 78.9 per cent; and 91 house sales in Narromine, an increase of 44.4 per cent.

Despite those healthy increases in the volume of house sales, the price of housing in my electorate is affordable and people have an opportunity to move from Sydney and coastal areas to take advantage of that. Median house prices are as follows: \$140,000 in Dubbo, \$102,250 in Parkes, \$55,000 in Wellington and \$85,000 in Narromine. The city of Dubbo and other towns in my electorate all have the capacity to increase their populations. Wellington gaol is an example of how government infrastructure can lead to population growth in regional areas. That is why house sales in Wellington increased by 78.9 per cent increase. A whole-of-government approach is essential in order to ensure that the populations of our inland regions grow at a faster rate than they have in the past decade. We must reverse the trend in this State of people moving from inland areas to the coast.

The huge increase in house prices in the Wollongong, Newcastle and Sydney areas has put home ownership beyond the reach of many. Regional areas such as my electorate offer people the opportunity to enjoy a country lifestyle and affordable housing. Even the regional rental market has remained extremely affordable. According to the Rental Bond Board's median rent statistics, the average rent for a two-bedroom house in Dubbo was \$125 per week in the September quarter 2002, which is an increase of only 0.02 per cent on the September quarter 1992. The average rent for a three-bedroom house was \$180 per week, only 3.4 per cent higher than in 1992, and the average rent for a four-bedroom house was \$225 per week, only 2.29 per cent higher than in 1992.

Dubbo, Parkes and Wellington are enjoying substantial growth in retail investment. A \$17 million shopping complex is under construction in Parkes and a \$5 million shopping complex has been approved for development. Development approval is being sought in Wellington for the construction of a shopping complex worth \$8 million or \$9 million. A major Dubbo retailer has planned a \$10 million expansion and many other smaller retail developments are under way in the city. There is growth in country areas, which the Government must stimulate. It is nonsense for most people to live along the Australian coast. The regions of New South Wales, and of Australia as a whole, are the engine rooms of export production and export earnings. Yet fewer than 9 per cent of Australians live in those areas. That makes it difficult for members who represent rural and regional electorates to have their voices heard by State and Federal governments. However, I commend the New South Wales State Government for its work in my electorate and for providing the infrastructure and jobs needed to attract people to the area. The crux of the issue is job creation, which must be addressed jointly by local, State and Federal governments. I commend the statistics to the House.

**Private members' statements noted.**

*[The Acting-Speaker left the Chair at 6.02 p.m. The House resumed at 7.30 p.m.]*

**HUMAN CLONING AND OTHER PROHIBITED PRACTICES BILL**

**RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN EMBRYOS (NEW SOUTH WALES) BILL**

**In Committee**

**Consideration of the Legislative Council's amendment to the Research Involving Human Embryos (New South Wales) Bill.**

*Schedule of the amendment referred to in message of 26 June*

Page 4, clause 6. Insert after line 26:

- (4) Any provision of the Commonwealth Embryo Act that is repealed by the operation of section 46 of that Act continues to apply as a law of this State after that repeal.

**Mr SARTOR** (Rockdale—Minister for Energy and Utilities, Minister for Science and Medical Research, Minister Assisting the Minister for Health (Cancer), and Minister Assisting the Premier on the Arts) [7.30 p.m.]: I move:

That the Legislative Council's amendment be disagreed to.

Under the Commonwealth Research Involving Human Embryos Act certain licence uses of excess in-vitro fertilisation [IVF] embryos will be authorised only in respect of embryos created before 5 April 2002. Under

section 46 of the Commonwealth research Act this moratorium will be lifted on 5 April 2005 or earlier if decided by the Council of Australian Governments [COAG]. The amendment to the New South Wales Research Involving Human Embryos (New South Wales) Bill by the Legislative Council has the effect of removing the application of section 46 of the Commonwealth research Act to some researchers in New South Wales. Depending on the business arrangements in a particular research institution, this could affect researchers in universities and public hospitals and those in commercial entities that are not corporations under the Commonwealth law.

The amendment prevents the lifting of the moratorium in New South Wales. This means that the prohibition on the use of excess IVF embryos created after 5 April 2002 will continue indefinitely under New South Wales law. This amendment represents a fundamental change to the purpose of the bill. The bill is designed to create a strict regime under which research involving excess IVF embryos can take place. This amendment places a severe impediment on future research by extending indefinitely the moratorium and creates a two-tier system where research conducted in New South Wales by trading corporations, covered by Commonwealth legislation, and research conducted by unincorporated individuals is governed by different Acts. The continuation of the moratorium in New South Wales after it has been lifted in the Commonwealth will cause confusion and uncertainty for those engaged in research in New South Wales.

I will now address some other matters. Several members in the other place raised concerns that once the moratorium is lifted researchers will be able to create embryos solely for the purposes of research. This is clearly incorrect. Lifting the moratorium will not create a flood of embryos available and created solely for research. The lifting of the moratorium will not impact on the provisions of the bill that deal with the conditions that need to be met to get a licence to undertake this type of research. First, the New South Wales research bill stipulates that only excess assisted reproductive technology [ART]—that is, IVF human embryos—are to be used for research purposes whether or not there is a moratorium. It is important to note that the lifting of the moratorium makes no difference to the fact that only embryos that are excess to—that is, not needed for—an IVF treatment can be used for research purposes.

Second, clause 9 of the New South Wales cloning bill specifically prohibits the creation of a human embryo for a purpose other than achieving pregnancy in a woman. This means that human embryos could not be created solely for research purposes. Their use for research purposes is an incidental use. The penalty for this offence is 10 years imprisonment. This remains in force regardless of the lifting of the moratorium of the use of human embryos. Third, embryo flushing—that is, the removal of a healthy human embryo from a woman's uterus before it implants so that it can be used for research purposes—is prohibited under clause 14 of the cloning bill. Finally, under clause 24 of the Commonwealth research Act, applied under the New South Wales research bill, consent for the use of excess IVF embryos to be used in research must be gained from all donors—the woman for whom the embryo was created, any spouse of the donor and any person who is the spouse of the woman for whom the embryo was created.

There are consequences if the amendment is allowed to stand. If the amendment is allowed to stand, excess IVF embryos currently available for research will eventually run out and research by those affected by this amendment in New South Wales will be jeopardised because they will suffer the disadvantage of having access to a smaller pool of embryos, unlike those covered by the Commonwealth law. This, therefore, creates a permanent two-tiered system between those operating under Commonwealth law and those operating under State law, and may severely disadvantage those operating under State law. It needs to be understood that there is no obligation to apply completely the Commonwealth law. There is already a safeguard in the New South Wales research bill to stop the flow-on of amendments to the Commonwealth research Act if New South Wales does not approve of them.

The New South Wales bill already has a provision that allows New South Wales to reject, through regulation, amendments to the Commonwealth research Act with which it does not agree. If the New South Wales Government considers that the regulatory framework is not tough enough or too lax it has a right to amend the legislation at any time with respect to those organisations or individuals for which it has constitutional power. To the extent that New South Wales wants, the New South Wales research bill puts in place a stringent regulatory scheme working in tandem with Commonwealth legislation. It is important to note that the New South Wales research bill also contains a clause that states that the bill will be reviewed by the responsible Minister two years from the date of assent, with a report on the outcome of the review to be tabled in Parliament within 12 months of that review.

Review clauses are included in most bills introduced in this Parliament. They provide a means to ensure that legislation is kept under review to determine whether it is successful in achieving its policy

objectives. The research and cloning laws outlined in this bill are intended to operate on a consistent national basis. The object of the New South Wales research bill clearly states that it is intended to adopt in this State a uniform Australian approach to the regulation of activities that involve the use of certain human embryos created by assisted reproductive technology. This object should be maintained through the rejection of the amendment and a confirmation of the New South Wales research bill as it originally came to this House. I urge honourable members to not support the amendment.

**Mr HAZZARD** (Wakehurst) [7.37 p.m.]: I remind the Committee that these bills were dealt with by way of a conscience vote—a free vote—at the second reading stage and the third reading stage. The Coalition will be asserting that regime in relation to the Legislative Council's amendment. During the second reading stage I was the first speaker on behalf of the Coalition, but that was not to say that my view was that of the Coalition. I will now state some personal views in relation to this amendment. I understand why the amendment was moved in the upper House and the intentions of the Hon. Peter Breen, who moved it. I think he and a number of other honourable members misunderstood the intent of this legislation and the effect of the amendment. First, the legislation is clearly part of a national framework. It has been worked through at the Council of Australian Governments [COAG] and is about setting in place a clear regime to deal with certain embryos—only those that were in existence as at 5 April 2002. The bill is very carefully constructed by implementing a moratorium. It essentially ensures that there will be no possibility for embryos to be created for the purposes of research.

**Mr Sartor:** Until the laws are in place.

**Mr HAZZARD:** The Minister interjects, "Until the laws are in place." But it is until the moratorium is reviewed. The moratorium in place is such that any new embryos created after 5 April 2002 by the use of assisted reproductive technology will be used strictly for the purpose for which they are created—that is, for assisted reproductive technology. In no circumstance will those embryos be available for use by researchers until everyone has had the opportunity over the next couple of years to review the operation of the laws and assess whether they are working. The only topic under discussion tonight relates to embryos that existed as at 5 April 2002. Even those embryos will not be available for rampant research. That is not on the agenda. Parties who contributed to the creation of those embryos but no longer have use for them—presumably having fully pursued their efforts to create an embryo and hopefully achieved pregnancy—because they have achieved what they set out to achieve with the assistance of medical research as we now know it at this stage of our scientific development, will then be consulted.

**Mr O'Farrell:** More than consulted.

**Mr HAZZARD:** I thank the Deputy Leader of the Opposition for prompting me. They will be consulted and their permission will be required. Their consent will be obtained. Only after a decision is made on whether the embryos will be disposed of—or, to use the euphemistic terminology, allowed to succumb—will we consider what happens. What we are really saying is that at that point embryos at the blastocyst stage, at that undifferentiated cell stage, which otherwise would have been left to succumb—die, or whatever term one chooses—will be available for possible use in research. I stress that nothing in the legislation, nothing said by the Council of Australian Governments, Prime Minister Howard or others in the Federal scene or in other States that have implemented this legislation contemplates these embryos being created for scientific purposes. As I said earlier, if that were contemplated, I would be voting against the legislation. But that is not contemplated by anyone.

The Hon. Peter Breen, by proposing an indefinite continuation of the moratorium, really would create a whole new set of problems. As this legislation is part of a national framework, that proposal is ridiculous. It would make any review absurd. Really, the honourable member did not propose a moratorium; rather, he rang the death knell on all research before anyone had the opportunity to consider the pros and cons. Whilst I understand what the honourable member was saying, I certainly will not support his amendment. I gather from what was said by the Minister that he will not be supporting the amendment. I encourage honourable members who voted in favour of the bill when it was previously before this Chamber to oppose the amendment and maintain the bill's integrity as part of the national framework.

**Ms JUDGE** (Strathfield) [7.44 p.m.]: I will be brief as I have not prepared comments on the amendment being discussed. However, honourable members are quite familiar with what I said in my contribution to the second reading debate. I reiterate that I am not opposed to any sort of research using adult stem cells but, for the reasons outlined in my speech on the previous occasion when the bill was before this



Chamber, I am strongly opposed to the use of human embryos for any sort of stem cell research. I am aware that the bill has been debated in this place and in the upper House, and that the amendment was proposed in the upper House, it was said, to address concern that this legislation mirrors Federal legislation and applies to research bodies that are not corporations, which are covered under the Commonwealth legislation. Be that as it may, I am still philosophically, morally and ethically opposed to the use of human embryos for any stem cell research. And, of course, I do not support cloning. As a result, as honourable members are allowed a conscience vote, I will not be supporting the position outlined by the Minister.

**Question—That the amendment be disagreed to—put.**

**The Committee divided.**

**Ayes, 53**

Mr Amery	Ms Gadiel	Mr Orkopoulos
Mr Ashton	Mrs Hancock	Mr Page
Mr Barr	Mr Gaudry	Mr Pearce
Mr Bartlett	Mr Hazzard	Mr Pringle
Ms Beamer	Mr Hickey	Dr Refshauge
Ms Berejiklian	Ms Hodgkinson	Mr Sartor
Mr Black	Mrs Hopwood	Mr Scully
Mr Brogden	Mr Humpherson	Ms Seaton
Mr Brown	Mr Hunter	Mr Shearan
Ms Burney	Mr Iemma	Mrs Skinner
Miss Burton	Mr McLeay	Mr Souris
Mr Campbell	Ms Megarrity	Mr J. H. Turner
Mr Carr	Ms Moore	Mr R. W. Turner
Mr Constance	Mr Morris	Mr Whan
Mr Corrigan	Mr Newell	Mr Yeadon
Ms D'Amore	Ms Nori	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Debnam	Mr Oakeshott	Mr Fraser
Mr Debus	Mr O'Farrell	Mr Martin

**Noes, 26**

Mr Aplin	Ms Judge	Ms Saliba
Mr Cansdell	Ms Keneally	Mr Stoner
Mr Crittenden	Mr Kerr	Mr Tink
Mr Draper	Mr McBride	Mr Torbay
Mr George	Mr McGrane	Mr Tripodi
Mr Gibson	Mr Merton	Mr West
Mr Greene	Mrs Perry	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Hartcher	Mr Richardson	Mr Maguire
Ms Hay	Mr Roberts	Mr Stewart

**Question resolved in the affirmative.**

**Legislative Council's amendment disagreed to.**

**Resolution reported from Committee and report adopted.**

**Motion by Mr Sartor 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 26 June 2003 requesting the concurrence of the Legislative Assembly with the amendment to the Research Involving Human Embryos (New South Wales) Bill, and informs the Legislative Council that the Legislative Assembly disagrees with the proposed amendment because:

Under the Commonwealth's Research Involving Human Embryos Act, certain licensed uses of excess IVF embryos will only be authorised in respect of embryos created before 5 April 2002.

Under Section 46 of the Commonwealth Research Act, this moratorium will be lifted on 5 April 2005, or earlier if decided by COAG.

The amendment has the effect of removing the application of Section 46 of the Commonwealth Research Act to some researchers in New South Wales.

Depending on the business arrangements in a particular research institution, this could affect researchers in universities and public hospitals and those in commercial entities that are not corporations under the Commonwealth law.

The amendment prevents the lifting of the moratorium in New South Wales. This means that the prohibition on the use of excess IVF embryos created after 5 April 2002 will continue indefinitely under New South Wales law.

The amendment will only have effect in respect of those researchers operating pursuant to State law. The Commonwealth law will continue to apply to corporations and others covered by that legislation.

The continuation of the moratorium in New South Wales after it has been lifted in the Commonwealth will cause confusion and uncertainty for those engaged in research in New South Wales.

The amendment would create a permanent two-tiered system between those operating under Commonwealth law and those operating under State law and may lead to researchers in New South Wales operating at a disadvantage to other States because of this confusion.

Legislative Assembly  
1 July 2003

JOHN PRICE  
Acting Speaker

## BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

### Bill: Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders

**Mr SCULLY** (Smithfield—Minister for Roads, and Minister for Housing) [8.00 p.m.]: I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to permit the passage of the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Parole) Bill through all its remaining stages at this sitting.

**Mr TINK** (Epping) [8.01 p.m.]: Yet again, this is an example of a government that is not getting its act together procedurally to run a program. The House has been sitting for some weeks but the Government is trying to rush bills through the House. There is ample opportunity to deal with bills in the ordinary way and for issues to be decided in the appropriate fashion, with appropriate notice. There is no place for cutting procedural corners.

**Mr Kerr**: Thuggery!

**Mr TINK**: Thuggery, yes. We still have a couple of days for this House to sit. The Leader of the House moves motions to enable additional speakers to debate matters that suit the Government, but seeks to truncate debate to push through other matters. The Opposition will not go along with that. There is plenty of opportunity for matters to be dealt with in the appropriate way, in the normal course, with all the usual rules applying. The Opposition does not support the motion.

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

**The House divided.**

**Ayes, 44**

Mr Amery	Mr Greene	Mr Pearce
Mr Bartlett	Ms Hay	Mrs Perry
Ms Beamer	Mr Hickey	Dr Refshauge
Mr Black	Mr Hunter	Ms Saliba
Mr Brown	Mr Iemma	Mr Sartor
Ms Burney	Ms Judge	Mr Scully
Miss Burton	Ms Keneally	Mr Shearan
Mr Campbell	Mr Lynch	Mr Stewart
Mr Corrigan	Mr McBride	Mr Tripodi
Mr Crittenden	Mr McLeay	Mr West
Ms D'Amore	Ms Megarrity	Mr Whan
Mr Debus	Mr Morris	Mr Yeadon
Ms Gadiel	Mr Newell	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Gaudry	Ms Nori	Mr Ashton
Mr Gibson	Mr Orkopoulos	Mr Martin

**Noes, 34**

Mr Aplin	Mr Humpherson	Ms Seaton
Mr Barr	Mr Kerr	Mrs Skinner
Ms Berejikian	Mr McGrane	Mr Souris
Mr Constance	Mr Merton	Mr Stoner
Mr Debnam	Ms Moore	Mr Tink
Mr Draper	Mr Oakeshott	Mr Torbay
Mr Fraser	Mr O'Farrell	Mr J. H. Turner
Mrs Hancock	Mr Page	Mr R. W. Turner
Mr Hartcher	Mr Piccoli	
Mr Hazzard	Mr Pringle	<i>Tellers,</i>
Ms Hodgkinson	Mr Richardson	Mr George
Mrs Hopwood	Mr Roberts	Mr Maguire

**Pairs**

Ms Allan	Mr Armstrong
Ms Andrews	Mr Cansdell
Mr Aquilina	Mr Brogden
Mr Mills	Mr Slack-Smith

**Question resolved in the affirmative.**

**Motion agreed to.**

**CRIMES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (PAROLE) BILL****Second Reading**

**Mr HICKEY** (Cessnock—Minister for Mineral Resources), on behalf of Mr Debus [8.11 p.m.]: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

As the second reading speech is substantially the same as the speech of the Minister who introduced the bill in the Legislative Council, I seek leave to incorporate it in *Hansard*.

**Leave granted.**

At the time of the general election held in March this year, the Government issued a document called *Targeting repeat offenders: Labor's Public Safety Plan Stage Two*. In this document the Government made a clear commitment to "expand the supervision of prisoners who are automatically paroled by court order by creating a legal presumption in favour of parole supervision". In the document the Government also made a clear commitment to "require the Parole Board to give explicit reasons explaining why it has determined to release a prisoner".

The bill which I am introducing today will implement these two commitments.

The bill will also make two other important changes to legislation. I shall come to these two other changes later in my speech.

Before explaining to the House the nature of the amendments contained in the bill, I feel that I should briefly outline the way in which the parole system works in New South Wales.

When a court sentences an offender to imprisonment the court may, if it wishes to do so, set what is called a "non-parole period". A non-parole period is the minimum period of time which an offender sentenced to imprisonment must serve in prison, in periodic detention or in home detention, as the case may be.

If a court decides not to set a non-parole period, the offender must spend all of the sentence in prison, in periodic detention or in home detention.

It is important to understand that there are two types of sentences of imprisonment in New South Wales: a sentence of 3 years or less; and a sentence of more than 3 years. If a court imposes a sentence of 3 years or less, and sets a non-parole period, the court also makes a parole order and sets the conditions of the order. At the end of the non-parole period the offender is automatically released on parole, provided the offender is not required to serve some other sentence of imprisonment.

If, however, a court imposes a sentence of more than 3 years, and sets a non-parole period, the court does *not* make a parole order. In such a case the New South Wales Parole Board is the body which decides whether or not the offender will be released on parole and, if so, what conditions the parole order will contain.

All parole orders contain what are called "standard conditions". These conditions require that the offender must be of good behaviour and must not commit any offence, and that the offender must adapt to normal lawful community life. In addition to these standard conditions, a court (or the Parole Board, as the case may be) may impose what are called "supervision conditions". These conditions require that the offender must report to the Probation and Parole Service, a division of the Department of Corrective Services. Supervision conditions also require that an offender must do other things, such as not to frequent or visit any place or district designated by the supervising probation and parole officer.

In order not to fetter the discretion of a court or the Parole Board, the relevant legislation enables a court or the Parole Board also to set what are called "additional conditions". Such conditions are those which are tailor-made to the circumstances of a particular offender.

I now wish to turn to the first of the amendments contained in the bill—namely, the introduction of a presumption in favour of parole supervision.

The Department of Corrective Services estimates that, each year, some 800-900 offenders are released on parole through court-based parole orders which do not require supervision. The Probation and Parole Service considers that parole supervision is a key factor in reducing the risk that an offender may re-offend. It is, therefore, unfortunate that so many offenders are released from prison without the benefit of parole supervision.

The *Crimes Legislation Amendment (Parole) Bill 2003* will amend section 51 of the *Crimes (Sentencing Procedure) Act 1999* to insert new section 51(1AA) into the Act. This new section will state that, if a court does not impose supervision conditions when making a parole order, the order will be taken to include such conditions, unless the court expressly states that the offender is not to be subject to supervision.

The bill makes a consequential amendment to Form 2 of the *Crimes (Sentencing Procedure) Regulation 2000*. Form 2 sets out the format of a court-based parole order *not requiring* supervision, while Form 3 sets out the format of a court-based parole order *requiring* supervision. The consequential amendment will insert a statement into Form 2 stating that, in making the parole order, the court expressly stated that the offender is not to be subject to supervision while released on parole.

The Government expects that new section 51(1AA) will result in most of those 800-900 offenders, who are currently released each year to unsupervised parole, being supervised in future. To put it another way, the Government expects that, after the commencement of new section 51(1AA), courts will make a lot more Form 3 parole orders than Form 2 parole orders.

The Government realises that a reform of this magnitude will not be cheap, and has allocated \$7.5 million over the next four years so that the Probation and Parole Service will be able to employ additional probation and parole officers to cater for the increased numbers of parolees on supervision, and the increased number of urinalysis tests which will be conducted.

The Government is confident that this investment will be worth it. While it is impossible to predict the precise effect that this reform will have on the level of re-offending, it is obvious that an offender who has the guidance of a probation and parole officer in the first few difficult months following release from prison will be less likely to return to his old ways than one who walks out of gaol with little or no assistance of this kind.

The second major reform contained in the bill is the introduction of a requirement that the Parole Board give reasons when it makes a parole order. Currently, the *Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999* requires the Parole Board to give reasons when it decides *not to make* a parole order, but the legislation is silent on what the Board should do when it decides *to make* a parole order.

The Government considers that the Parole Board should be fully accountable for the decisions it makes. One way to achieve greater accountability is to require the Board to give reasons for its decisions in all cases. I am pleased to say that the judicial members of the Board have indicated their support for this change. I would be surprised if any of the community members of the Board held a contrary view.

The bill will insert new section 131A into the *Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999*. New section 131A provides that, if the Parole Board makes a decision to release or not to release an offender on parole, the Board must cause reasons for its decision to be recorded in its minutes. New section 131A also provides that, in giving its reasons, the Board must have regard to the principle and matters listed in section 135. For the information of honourable members, section 135 states that the Parole Board may not make a parole order unless the Board has decided that the release of the offender is appropriate, having regard to the principle that the public interest is of primary importance. Section 135 goes on to list various matters to which the Board must have regard when making its decisions. These matters include: the comments of the sentencing court; the offender's antecedents; and the likely effect on any victim of the offender, and on any such victim's family, of the offender being released on parole.

New section 131A also provides that, if applicable, the Board must have regard to matters listed in section 154 of the Act, and to any other matters which the Act or Regulation requires the Board to take into account. Section 154 applies only to a serious offender whose sentence for life is the subject of a re-determination by the Supreme Court under Schedule 1 to the *Crimes (Sentencing Procedure) Act 1999*. Section 154 requires, for example, that the Board give substantial weight to any comments made by the sentencing court.

I believe that the House would appreciate hearing a short explanation of the procedure which the Board will adopt when giving reasons for making a parole order. In order to explain this procedure, I must first digress to outline some aspects of the Board's current procedures. The Board currently has two sets of procedures relevant to parole. One set of procedures relates to offenders who do not fall into the definition, contained in section 3 of the Act, of "serious offender". The other set of procedures relates to serious offenders.

When the Board holds a private meeting at which it considers whether or not to release a "non-serious offender" on parole, and the Board actually decides to release the offender, currently the Board simply makes a parole order. When, however, the Board is

considering such an offender and the Board forms an intention *not to release* the offender on parole, the Board holds a public hearing at which the offender may appear and be legally represented. At the end of the public hearing, the Board temporarily withdraws from the courtroom used for the Board's public hearings, and considers the case privately. Following the Board's consideration of the case, the presiding judicial member gives a short statement as to the reasons for the Board's decision, and then delivers the Board's decision. Public hearings held by the Board are tape-recorded and, if necessary, the Board produces a transcript of the proceedings.

The Board's procedure in regard to serious offenders is the same as that for non-serious offenders except that, in the case of a serious offender, the Board also holds a public hearing if the Board forms an intention to release the offender, and a victim of the offender wishes to make a submission.

I will now explain the procedure which the Board will adopt when giving reasons for making a parole order. Whereas, at present, private meetings of the Board are not tape-recorded, the Board will in future tape-record such meetings. When the Board has considered whether or not, in a particular case, to make a parole order, and has come to a decision to release an offender on parole, the presiding judicial member will give a short statement as to the reasons for the Board's decision, and then deliver the Board's decision. In other words, the Board will follow the same procedure at its private meetings as that which the Board currently follows at its public hearings.

The reasons which the Board will give when making a parole order—either at a private meeting or at a public hearing—will be more detailed than the reasons which the Board currently gives at a public hearing. As I mentioned earlier, new section 131A will require the Board to have regard to the principle and matters listed in sections 135 and 154 and any other such matters in the Act or Regulation. New section 131A will make it transparent that the Board takes these things into account.

I now turn to the two other important changes contained in the bill. I alluded to these two changes at the commencement of my speech.

The bill will allow for the membership of the Parole Board to be increased from the current maximum membership of 22. Section 183 of the *Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999* sets out the constitution of the Board. In accordance with section 183 the Board is to consist of: 3 judicial members; 1 police officer; 1 probation and parole officer; the Secretary of the Parole Board; and up to 16 community members. At present, the Board actually consists of: 3 judicial members; 1 police officer; 1 probation and parole officer; the Acting Secretary; and 12 community members.

Former Ministers of Corrective Services found that, when they approached a retired judge or magistrate to become a judicial member of the Parole Board, the retired judge or magistrate often expressed some interest in the position but, upon being informed of the workload, declined to accept appointment. The bill will amend section 183 to increase the number of judicial members of the Board to at least 4. This amendment should make it easier to obtain the services of suitably experienced persons to serve as judicial members of the Board. The amendment will also allow for expansion of the Board to deal with the increased workload flowing from the introduction of a presumption in favour of parole supervision and a requirement to give reasons when making a parole order.

I mention in passing that, by increasing the number of judicial members from a maximum of 3 to at least 4 such members, the Bill will implement part of recommendation 3 of the "Dalton Report". I shall refer to this report in more detail later when I explain to the House another of the important amendments contained in the bill.

The bill will lift the ceiling on the number of police officers, probation and parole officers and community members who may be appointed to the Board. By removing the current ceilings on the number of these members, the Board will have maximum flexibility in forming Divisions to deal with its workload.

Let me hasten to assure the House that this amendment will not lead to a huge number of persons sitting at meetings and at public hearings of the Board. Clause 14 of Schedule 1 to the Act already limits to 4 the number of community members who may attend a meeting or public hearing of the Board. New clause 14A will limit to 1 the number of police officers who may attend a meeting or a public hearing of the Board, and will also limit to 1 the number of probation and parole officers who may attend such meetings and public hearings. There will remain only one Secretary of the Board. The Chairperson will decide which judicial member will preside at any meeting or public hearing of the Board.

The Board will continue, however, to be able to hold up to 6 "policy meetings" each year at which all members attend. These meetings enable all members to meet together to discuss matters relating to general procedure.

The last amendment on which I wish to comment is an amendment to section 181 of the *Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999*. Section 181 currently enables a judicial member or the Secretary of the Parole Board to sign a warrant committing an offender to a correctional centre.

Honourable members will probably recall a tragic death in custody which occurred in January of this year when an Aboriginal inmate died in John Morony Correctional Centre 18 days after the day on which he should have been released. When the Minister for Justice became aware of this case he immediately established an inquiry. That inquiry was held by Mr Vern Dalton, a former Chairman of the then Corrective Services Commission. The Minister for Justice tabled the report on 6 May 2003. The report contained 9 recommendations, one of which—recommendation 3—in part proposed a legislative amendment to remove the capacity of the Secretary of the Parole Board to sign warrants of commitment.

The bill gives effect to this recommendation. In future, only a judicial member of the Parole Board will be able to sign a warrant of commitment.

The Department of Corrective Services has introduced new procedures in the calculation of a balance of sentence. These procedures mean that the Department's Sentence Administration Branch will calculate the balance of sentence and certify that the calculation is correct. Each calculation will be checked and signed off by both the officer making the calculation and the officer

checking the calculation. The procedures also require that, when a member of the staff of the Parole Board Secretariat transcribes the balance of sentence onto a warrant, the transcription is checked by an officer in the Sentence Administration Branch. I am advised that it is proposed that members of the Sentence Administration Branch will be present at the time the judicial member signs the warrant to assist them in carrying out their function.

To sum up, the *Crimes Legislation Amendment (Parole) Bill 2003* gives effect to two clear legislative undertakings made by the Government at the time of the 2003 general election. The bill also implements recommendation 3 of the "Dalton Report", the only recommendation of that report which called for legislative change.

I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr HUMPHERSON** (Davidson) [8.12 p.m.]: In general, the Opposition does not oppose the bill but will move amendments in Committee. On 22 January an inmate at the John Morony Correctional Centre, serving a six months sentence for breaching home and periodic detention orders for a sentence involving car theft, committed suicide. He apparently killed himself after being depressed at the discovery of the body of his 2½-year-old stepson, who had been missing for a month. In part, the purpose of the bill is to rectify proceedings that led to that unfortunate death. The circumstances of the death deserve some brief embellishment during this debate. If the case had been properly managed those circumstances would not have eventuated, and that inmate would not have committed suicide.

The Government not only failed to observe death in custody provisions—that inmate was depressed—but also erred in the sentencing calculation, which prevented the inmate's release on 4 January, 18 days before he killed himself on 22 January. The circumstances of the death were compounded because, although the Government was fully aware of the circumstances on or about 22 January, as admitted by the then Minister for Corrective Services, neither the public nor the family were advised of the circumstances because of the State election campaign. The Government was protecting its political interests, which it put above the interests of the family in what would have been a very embarrassing bungle in the mismanagement of the duty of care to that inmate.

The bill is part of the Labor Government's strategy to absolve itself of blame, for failing in its duty of care and putting its political interests ahead of the interests of its citizens. The intention of the bill is to reduce the possibility of sentencing and release errors by appointing an additional judicial member to the Parole Board. That member would be required to sign a warrant of commitment. Apparently new procedures have been introduced in relation to verifying the calculation of the balances of sentences. Quite frequently erroneous calculations are made and inmates are released early. On average, this happens once a month. This bill is really more about being able to read a calendar and use a calculator than about appointing an extra person to the Parole Board.

The bill also introduces a presumption in favour of parole supervision, so that all parolees would be supervised unless the court had expressly stated that the defendant is not to be the subject of supervision. This highlights the failure of the Government and the Parole Board to properly supervise parolees. The Government has always had the power and responsibility to do so, but the Minister in the other place is trying to blame the courts for not setting parole conditions. So in many respects that announcement is nonsense. The Government also claims that it has allocated money to the Probation and Parole Service over the next four years for additional officers and staff and an increase in urinalysis tests. Those resources were needed anyway with the growth in inmate population and parolees.

The bill purports to require the Parole Board to give reasons when it makes a parole order. That is in addition to the current requirement to give reasons when it decides not to make a parole order. The bill requires the board to record in its minutes the reasons for a decision to release or not release an offender on parole, but those reasons are not to be released publicly. Private meetings of the board will be tape-recorded, but those minutes will not be made public. The size of the Parole Board is to be changed from a maximum of 22 to a minimum of 17. Obviously that enables an additional judicial officer and others to be placed on the board, to exceed the current restriction. I have no great concern with that, so long as it does not become a sinecure for a range of government appointees.

The Opposition will not oppose the bill, but proposes to move amendments in Committee. The amendments seek to ensure that minutes of Parole Board decisions are more publicly available. Firstly, we ask for public release of minutes or decisions of the Parole Board where those minutes explain the reasons for approval or refusal of parole. Under our proposal that information would have to be provided within 24 hours on the Internet and to any registered victims, an offender, or the representatives of either victims or an offender. Secondly, the Opposition would require that when sentence calculations are made, the sentence calculation

details be made available to offenders and to registered victims. Thirdly, where erroneous releases occur, the details are to be published on the Internet and in the *Government Gazette* and tabled in Parliament within 48 hours of the Minister and/or the Commissioner of Corrective Services being notified of an error.

In all respects those amendments seek to add greater transparency. There is nothing wrong, in fact it is eminently sensible, for the public to have full access to and understanding of Parole Board decisions when offenders, particularly serious offenders, are released or not released. One way of avoiding calculation errors is to make sure that they are readily available to offenders and victims. Where erroneous releases occur, those areas should be publicly disclosed. That will place greater pressure on the Department of Corrective Services to get its act together, finally, and there will be great embarrassment each time it has to admit to making an error.

In summary, the Opposition will not oppose the bill, but will move amendments in Committee. In many respects this is a case of the Government trying to wash its hands of responsibility for a disgracefully managed issue involving the death of an Aboriginal inmate. The duty of care to protect that inmate, who was at risk, was not observed. The circumstances of the case were such that there was a strong probability that the inmate would self-harm, which he did. That mismanagement was compounded by the fact that the inmate should not have been in gaol at that time—he was not properly administered and released. It was further compounded because the Government covered up all the circumstances of the inmate's death for political gain and put its political interests ahead of the interests of the family and the offender.

**Mr HICKEY** (Cessnock—Minister for Mineral Resources), on behalf of Mr Debus [8.20 p.m.]: I thank the honourable member for Davidson for his contribution to the second reading debate. I think I am right in saying that Opposition members are as concerned as Government members about the level of reoffending. The bill seeks to do something about the level of reoffending by significantly expanding the number of parolees who are supervised by the Probation and Parole Service. It makes sense that a parolee who has the guidance of a supervising probation and parole officer will stand a better chance of adapting to a normal, lawful community life than a parolee who does not have such guidance. Opposition members are also concerned about the way in which the Parole Board decides whether to release a prisoner on parole.

The bill addresses that issue by requiring the Parole Board to give reasons for its parole decisions. In future it will be possible for any member of the public to obtain from the Parole Board a copy of the transcript setting out the reasons that led to the board making a parole order or refusing to make a parole order. The bill also increases the number of judicial members on the Parole Board from three to at least four and enables greater flexibility in appointing official and community members without causing a blow-out in costs. Finally, the bill will ensure that only a judicial member of the Parole Board may sign a warrant committing an offender to prison.

**Motion agreed to.**

**Bill read a second time.**

### **In Committee**

**Clauses 1 to 5 agreed to.**

**Schedule 1 agreed to.**

### **Schedule 2**

**Mr HUMPHERSON** (Davidson) [8.23 p.m.], by leave: I move Opposition amendments Nos 1 and 2 in globo:

No. 1 Page 4, schedule 2. Insert after line 25:

- (3) Within 24 hours of recording its reasons for a parole decision under this Part, the Parole Board must:
  - (a) publicly release those reasons (including making them publicly available on the website of the Department), and
  - (b) provide those reasons:
    - (i) to the offender to whom the decision relates, and
    - (ii) to any victim of the offender and any immediate family of the victim.

No. 2 Page 5, schedule 2. Insert after line 26:

**[8] Section 193A**

Insert after section 193:

**193A Sentence calculations**

- (1) The Parole Board must, in making any calculations in relation to the sentence of an offender, make the details of those calculations available:
  - (a) to the offender, and
  - (b) to any victim of the offender and any immediate family of the victim.
- (2) If the date of release of an offender is incorrect as a result of an error made by the Parole Board in calculating the offender's sentence or for any other reason, the details of the offender's release must:
  - (a) be made publicly available on the website of the Department and published in the Gazette as soon as practicable after the offender is released on parole, and
  - (b) be tabled by the Minister in a report to both Houses of Parliament within 48 hours of the Minister or the Commissioner being informed of the release.

These amendments will ensure greater transparency than that which is proposed in relation to Parole Board decisions. While I heard the contribution of the Minister for Mineral Resources in this Chamber and some of the debate in the other place, I do not accept that there is an adequate level of transparency or access to Parole Board decisions by members of the public. The Government has been relatively silent on the issue of sentencing calculations and erroneous releases. The changes proposed by the Opposition will make it clear to offenders and to victims how sentencing calculations are arrived at, resulting in additional oversight and accuracy. There should be far more scrutiny of erroneous releases.

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr Lynch):** Order! Having looked at the Opposition's amendments I am constrained to rule that Opposition amendment No. 2 is outside the leave of the bill, which has a defined scope. Among other things, it proposes amendments to require parole supervision orders to be included in parole orders made by the courts and to require the Parole Board to record its reasons for releasing offenders on parole. The bill also proposes amendments to the constitution of the Parole Board. The calculation of sentences is outside the scope of the bill. The legislation that was dealt with in the Legislative Council had nothing to do with the calculation of sentences. The amendment is an attempt to expand dramatically the scope of the legislation. It must be ruled out of order, and I do so.

**Mr HICKEY** (Cessnock—Minister for Mineral Resources) [8.25 p.m.]: The Government opposes Opposition amendment No. 1. Immediately after the Parole Board has considered whether to release an offender on parole, the presiding judicial member of the board states the decision of the board and the reasons for the decision. That statement is an ex tempore statement; it is not a written statement. The ex tempore statement is sound recorded so that it can be transcribed at a later date, if required. As the statement is an ex tempore statement it is simply not feasible to place it on the web site of the Department of Corrective Services within 24 hours of it being made.

The only way it would be possible to place an ex tempore statement on the Department of Corrective Services web site would be for the department to employ officers with the skill and experience of Hansard. The Attorney General's Department does not place ex tempore decisions of the courts on its LawLink web site: the Attorney General's Department places only written judgments on that web site. A registered victim, an offender, or any member of the public may obtain from the Parole Board a copy of the transcript of any decision. The transcript will include the reasons for the decision. The Opposition's proposal is not feasible and is unnecessary.

**Mr HUMPHERSON** (Davidson) [8.26 p.m.]: In my view the Minister's contribution was nonsense. In this day and age the technology and wherewithal are available to place information on the Internet so that it is readily accessible to people no matter where they are. If there were any desire or willingness on the part of the Government or the department to make that information available, it could be done. A number of tribunals and courts provide information on the Internet that is far more readily available than it would be from the department. The Minister did not present a compelling argument and the Government has shown no willingness to address this issue. Opposition members are committed to providing much more transparency in this matter. We believe that our amendment will achieve that end.



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

**The Committee divided.**

**Ayes, 31**

Mr Aplin	Mrs Hopwood	Ms Seaton
Ms Berejiklian	Mr Humpherson	Mrs Skinner
Mr Cansdell	Mr Kerr	Mr Souris
Mr Constance	Mr McGrane	Mr Stoner
Mr Debnam	Mr Merton	Mr Tink
Mr Draper	Mr O'Farrell	Mr Torbay
Mr Fraser	Mr Page	Mr R. W. Turner
Mrs Hancock	Mr Piccoli	
Mr Hartcher	Mr Pringle	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Hazzard	Mr Richardson	Mr George
Ms Hodgkinson	Mr Roberts	Mr Maguire

**Noes, 45**

Mr Amery	Ms Hay	Mrs Perry
Mr Barr	Mr Hickey	Dr Refshauge
Mr Bartlett	Mr Hunter	Ms Saliba
Ms Beamer	Mr Iemma	Mr Sartor
Mr Black	Ms Judge	Mr Scully
Mr Brown	Ms Keneally	Mr Shearan
Ms Burney	Mr McBride	Mr Stewart
Miss Burton	Mr McLeay	Mr Tripodi
Mr Campbell	Ms Megarrity	Mr West
Mr Corrigan	Ms Moore	Mr Whan
Mr Crittenden	Mr Morris	Mr Yeadon
Ms D'Amore	Mr Newell	
Mr Debus	Ms Nori	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Gaudry	Mr Oakeshott	Mr Ashton
Mr Gibson	Mr Orkopoulos	Mr Martin
Mr Greene	Mr Pearce	

**Pairs**

Mr Armstrong	Ms Allan
Mr Brogden	Ms Andrews
Mr Slack-Smith	Mr Aquilina
Mr J. H. Turner	Mr Mills

**Question resolved in the negative.**

**Amendment negatived.**

**Schedule 2 agreed to.**

**Schedule 3 agreed to.**

**Bill reported from Committee without amendment and passed through remaining stages.**

**SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion by Mr Scully agreed to:**

That the House at its rising this day do adjourn until Wednesday 2 July 2003 at 10.00 a.m.

## BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

### Routine of Business: Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders

#### Motion by Mr Scully agreed to:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to provide that:

- (1) no quorums or divisions be called during the following debate on the motion, That the House take note of the budget estimates and related papers 2003-04; and
- (2) at the conclusion of the debate, the House shall adjourn without motion.

## BUDGET ESTIMATES AND RELATED PAPERS

### Financial Year 2003-04

#### Debate resumed from 27 June.

**Ms HODGKINSON** (Burrinjuck) [8.38 p.m.]: This budget continues the trend established in the past eight budgets handed down by the Treasurer of largely ignoring the needs of rural New South Wales, particularly the electorate of Burrinjuck. I acknowledge that there are a few, very few, spending initiatives in this budget that will benefit mainly the Goulburn area but, beyond the 43 square kilometres that Goulburn occupies, there is little for residents in the remaining 24,806 square kilometres of the electorate to celebrate. Initial funding for the movement of 109 Department of Corrective Services jobs to Goulburn that was promised during the election campaign has been partly provided, and I certainly welcome that. However, the movement of those jobs to Goulburn tends to disguise the fact that Labor has reneged on its 1999 election promise to move the headquarters of Corrective Services to that city.

If Labor had kept its word then, even more than the present 109 jobs would have already been located to Goulburn, providing a significant boost to the economy. In the same way, increased funding for business services information technology, general education and arts and media at Goulburn TAFE hides a significant impost on local students. Starting in January next year, the Carr Labor Government will hit TAFE students with massive increases in fees. The cost of a graduate diploma will rise by more than 100 per cent to \$1,650. The cost of some certificate courses will increase almost three-fold to \$750. These fees will disproportionately fall on younger students who are trying to get qualifications. As a former TAFE teacher, I believe it is the height of arrogance for the Carr Labor Government to vehemently criticise the higher education reforms of the Federal Government while at the same time massively increasing the fee structure for younger TAFE students.

A third of Labor's spending initiatives in the Goulburn district relate to the upgrade of the Goulburn to Oberon road. That is another election promise that has been stretched out by the Carr Labor Government. In 1994 the Hon. Dr Meredith Burgmann in the other place promised that the Goulburn to Oberon road would be sealed. As the years passed, no work was started and no funds were allocated. In response to the concerns of many local people on several occasions I raised the need for funding to seal this dangerous stretch of road. Representations were also made to the honourable member for Bathurst about Labor's broken promise. Even though there are many areas in which the honourable member for Bathurst and I disagree, in Parliament last year I commended him for his honesty in telling a public meeting that he could not defend the indefensible in relation to the Goulburn to Oberon road. Because of my hard work in getting funding, I am pleased that this road is now mentioned in the budget.

Another road about which I have been extremely vocal and active is the Gundagai to Tumut road, known as the gocup road. Many times I have raised through a letter, a petition or a question the need for increased State Government funding for this road with the Minister for Roads, and even the Premier. Minister Scully's usual response to my representation was that Gundagai and Tumut councils were responsible for maintaining that road. They must have been told about the significant local anger engendered by continually ignoring these pleas because—surprise, surprise—just before the March election Labor decided to match the Coalition's promise of \$4 million for this road. I am thankful that the Government has finally seen the light. Minister Scully's conversion—not on the road to Damascus, but perhaps on the gocup road—might be called something of an epiphany. However, it has happened and I am pleased that the Carr Labor Government has finally acknowledged the need for rectification work on this dangerous but important regional road. Carter Holt Harvey and Weyerhaeuser Australia Pty Ltd are responsible for much of the busy traffic in the Tumut area with the many B-doubles and semi-trailers that use that road daily, carting the valuable woodchips in and out of Tumut.

**Mr Campbell:** A big tick for Carl Scully.

**Ms HODGKINSON:** But he was dragged kicking and screaming into doing it. Unfortunately, as far as roads are concerned, that is about it for the electorate of Burrinjuck for this budget. Where is the funding for the Bowning deviation that Labor promised would be completed by 2007?

**Mr Campbell:** Do a bit more work.

**Ms HODGKINSON:** The Minister says he needs more work.

**Mr Campbell:** No, you need to do a bit more work.

**Ms HODGKINSON:** But that was a Labor Government promise in 2000 that still has not been delivered. A lot was made of the Bowning deviation during the election campaign and this latest budget does not mention it. I raise this matter specifically because I have even been discussing it with the mayor and the general manager of Yass council. They are disgusted that there is no funding in the budget for the Bowning deviation. It was a core commitment by the Labor hopeful during the election campaign, but once again it is another broken promise. Where is the funding for the Gunning to Crookwell road, which was also promised in the March election campaign? The Treasurer made much in his Budget Speech about some 30 per cent of the State's capital works and road budgets being spent outside the Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong areas while only 26 per cent of the State's population lives outside those cities. His simplistic approach is fatally flawed.

Roads are the lifeblood of rural New South Wales. Some 60 per cent of the State's roads are located in country areas. It is along those roads that the food to feed the three major cities flows, as does the timber to build the city's houses and the wool and cotton to clothe their inhabitants. Most disappointingly, this budget has cut almost \$100 million in real terms off the roads budget. To put that in local terms, that \$100 million could have sealed and made much safer every gravel road in the electorate of Burrinjuck. What a lost opportunity! We have the highest taxing State Government in Australia, but many of the roads in Burrinjuck are little better than goat tracks. I cite again the litany of only some of the narrow and unsafe roads in my electorate: the Crookwell to Tuena to Bathurst road, Yass River Road, Oallen Ford Road, Grabine Road, Rugby Road, Collector Road, Wee Jasper Road and the Tuena Road.

The Carr Labor Government has duded Burrinjuck in relation to policing. I have raised the vexed issue of rural crime many times in this place. As a country member of Parliament I am only too aware of the significant rate of stock theft and other rural crime. Between 1999 and mid-2002 some 157 cases of stock theft were reported in the Goulburn Local Area Command alone. The total value of those losses was estimated at more than \$700,000. Last month, there was a reported theft of 550 merino weaners from a property near Yass. I place on record my appreciation for the truly great work done by Senior Constable Daryl Riches, the Goulburn Local Area Command's rural crime investigator. However, he is only one officer, and he has additional duties over and above those as a rural crime investigator. There is sufficient work to employ several more specialist rural crime investigators, yet how many has the Carr Labor Government provided for the Goulburn LAC? It has provided just one. What a joke that makes of Labor's claims to be tackling the increasing problem of stock theft.

I welcome the funding promised to upgrade educational facilities at the Goulburn Police College. I have serious safety concerns for students and staff at the driver training track at the college, which I raised on many occasions. When I visited the track last year, I was concerned to see significant numbers of native animals, such as kangaroos, grazing near the track. Fencing off the track to improve safety should be a high priority. There is certainly a need for a second driver training track at the academy.

Health remains a concern in this budget. The Batlow multipurpose service [MPS] remains nothing more than the title of a working group. That MPS was originally promised to be operating from 1 July this year. To date, a location for the MPS has not yet been decided. How much longer will the residents of Batlow have to wait before they get some action from the Government? Despite many representations on my part, a cloud continues to hang over the future of Goulburn Base Hospital. Recently, the Acting Chief Executive Officer of the Southern Area Health Service [SAHS], Mr Bill Dargaville, was quoted in the local paper as saying that Goulburn was a base hospital in name only. He subsequently issued a public apology which appeared on the front page of the *Goulburn Post*.

Doctors do not trust the Southern Area Health Service, neither do the nurses. The Labor Party went to the election stating unequivocally that there would be no downgrading of hospital services in Goulburn. Based

on Labor's track record of keeping or twisting election promises I have significant concerns about their bona fides in relation to Goulburn Base Hospital, directly as a result of concerns that are coming back to my electorate office in relation to this matter. Goulburn Base Hospital is currently looking at implementing a significant nursing restructure that is, as far as I can tell, universally opposed by all doctors and nursing staff at the hospital. There has been little consultation and what consultation there has been has been ignored by Southern Area Health Service in its quest for budget cuts.

This raises the interesting question as to why SAHS is cutting frontline nursing staff at the same time as the Government has made a commitment to opening a renal dialysis unit in Goulburn. I welcome greatly that initiative, I have been pushing for it for several years, ever since I raised the plight of renal dialysis patients in the Goulburn district. One elderly lady had to travel to Canberra for dialysis three times a week. All of her family worked and community transport was unable to provide regular transport because of funding and driver shortfalls. The Ambulance Service of New South Wales had refused her transport because it claimed she was not sick enough, even though another renal dialysis patient was transported by ambulance to Canberra at exactly the same time each week. I was able to get that decision reversed, but that case highlighted the significant need for a renal dialysis unit in Goulburn.

I am pleased that the Government has listened to me and has agreed to that funding. However, the Greater Murray Area Health Service and Southern Area Health Service have not fared well in this budget in relation to funding. In his Speech the Treasurer made much of the average increase in funding to health services of 11.1 per cent. In his reply to the Budget Speech the Leader of the National Party debunked the Treasurer's shonky figures to show that the real increase in health funding is in the order of only 5.6 per cent. I will not revisit the ground that he has already covered, but the Southern Area Health Service and the Greater Murray Area Health Service have fared infinitely worse than most through this budget. Only the Central Coast Area Health Service and the Mid North Coast Area Health Service received smaller increases. This position is simply not acceptable.

The provision of mental health services in the Goulburn area remains a significant item of concern. Put simply, there are too few staff trying to help too many patients. So often, parents, friends and patients who are unable to get help contact me. Staff turnover in the Southern Area Health Service is at an unacceptable level: a burnout rate of about 50 per cent every two years. Last year, more than 10 per cent of positions were unfilled, and in Goulburn 23 staff were struggling to help almost 450 patients. This morning my staff received a telephone call from Mr Keith Irwin, a long-term resident of Goulburn. Last night his wife was taken to the emergency department at Goulburn Base Hospital. At 11 o'clock this morning she was still waiting in the emergency department for an intensive care bed, indeed for any bed in a hospital ward. Staff told him that they would not have a bed available until late this afternoon after they had transferred several elderly patients to Crookwell Hospital. Mr Irwin told my staff:

There are no beds to admit any more patients, and the next option is to airlift my wife or any additional emergency patient to Sydney. But the current weather conditions would make the flight hazardous.

I have the greatest respect for the hard-working and dedicated medical staff at Goulburn Base Hospital. I highly value both their services and their commitment. But the Government's inadequate funding continually proves its ignorance of the needs of rural New South Wales. It treats people like Mrs Irwin as second-class citizens. When the Labor Government was first elected capital works expenditure in New South Wales was 10.4 per cent of total health spending. In this budget it is now down to 4.9 per cent. No wonder Batlow is still waiting for its multipurpose service and Mrs Irwin is lying on a trolley in Goulburn Base Hospital waiting for a bed.

Apart from a few spending initiatives in Goulburn, the rest of the electorate receives little if any specific mention in the budget papers. Yass will receive a new 330/132kV electricity substation, for which I have lobbied heavily, and which I am pleased about. It is much needed. I am pleased the Regional Economic Transition Scheme for Batlow—a scheme I co-ordinated with Minister Harry Woods before the last State election—will continue, and Tumut will receive upgraded sewerage services. The Gunning to Crookwell Small Community Service Initiative will receive an unspecified level of funding, and Crookwell will receive a new fire engine.

In his Budget Speech the Treasurer made serious allegations about employers roting the trainee scheme. Rather than acting to fix the problem and prosecute the wrongdoers, the Government would rather impose additional costs on every small and medium business in the State. That is just an excuse to cut costs and to shift an additional burden onto business. Let me give the House an example of the effect this disgraceful move will have on one business in my electorate. Ryam Pty Ltd is a family-owned business that has been

harvesting and hauling softwood timber in the Tumut area since 1981. Ryam provides timber to both the Visy pulp and paper mill and to Weyerhaeuser in Tumut. In all, each year they provide more than half a million tonnes of timber product to both these mills.

The start-up of the Visy mill in Tumut provided Ryam with an exciting opportunity, and it borrowed \$7 million to invest in new capital equipment, which allowed it to double its production shifts and almost double its number of employees. Many of those new staff had no formal qualifications, so the traineeship incentive scheme was of significant assistance. The 40 new staff that Ryam took on included truck drivers, operators and mechanics. As a first for the industry, Ryam provided traineeships for six staff to enter the logging industry and gain a qualification. Those six people are the first in Australia to complete the Forest & Forest Products (Harvesting) Certificate while working on the job. That is quite an achievement.

Currently, Ryam has 17 new entrant trainee truck drivers completing the Road Transport Certificate and 11 machine operators completing Certificate 3 in Forest and Forest Products (Harvesting). It also has 15 new entrant trainee workers doing their Certificate 2. Kirsten McLean, Ryam's accountant and a member of the owning family, rang my office this week. She was concerned about the State budget. She said:

We pride ourselves on the employment and support we provide to local people and businesses.

The only State Government funding we have received has been through the Workers Compensation and Payroll Tax incentives provided for new entrants.

Ryam is not rorting the system. It is making sure that its staff are able to gain nationally-accredited certificates and trade qualifications recognising the skills and competencies they have developed. The changes in the budget will shift onto Ryam an additional cost burden of about \$150,000 each year. Kirsten has further said that with the administration costs, TAFE fees and training time, Ryam is now only breaking even with the costs of employing new entry trainees. What incentive does this disgraceful move by the Sydney Labor Government give to businesses to employ new trainees? None. It does nothing other than to deny young people a chance at getting a good qualification and getting into the work force.

I have many other concerns about the way the budget will impact on the electorate of Burrinjuck. The funding allocated to drought relief is clearly insufficient. The residents and businesses of New South Wales remain the highest taxed in Australia. The figures have been raised in this House already, but they bear repeating. Since 1995 payroll tax has increased by 63 per cent, land tax by 145 per cent, contracts and conveyances by 209 per cent, insurance duty by 76 per cent, lease duty by 133 per cent and gaming taxes by 22 per cent.

Where are these increased taxes going? They are not going to new educational facilities in the electorate of Burrinjuck. There is not one new, major capital works program for schools in Burrinjuck in this budget. The funding for Goulburn TAFE is part of a continuing project that was announced in earlier budgets. I have been unable to find any mention of the increased funding for school administrative assistants in smaller rural schools which was promised in the lead-up to the March election. That is just another pre-election promise broken by Labor. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

Where is the school assembly hall for Yass Public School or the much-needed Aboriginal education assistant for Yass schools? The argument for a full-time Aboriginal education assistant in Yass public schools is convincing. Pam Bell, the former assistant, finished at the end of 1998. I have been raising this issue since I was elected in 1999. There is a need for a full-time Aboriginal education assistant in the Yass area to service the three schools: Yass High School, Yass Public School and Berinba Public School. Many Aboriginal children need some sort of a role model. The public has been crying out for an Aboriginal education assistant for Yass schools since the full-time position was taken away. I plead with the Government to restore this position to Yass and to base the decision on numbers, figures and bureaucracy. There is a real and unprecedented need for an Aboriginal education assistant in Yass.

Barely a day goes past when my office does not receive a complaint about public housing. The majority of these complaints centre on the Goulburn area. Again, the staff that work in the Goulburn Office of the Department of Housing are significantly overworked. They manage about 10 per cent of the New South Wales stock of public housing but are constantly faced with problems arising out of old and failing housing stock, lack of funds for maintenance, poor contractual arrangements negotiated in Sydney, and a massive shortfall in the available level of public housing. The waiting period for a three-bedroom house in Goulburn is about five years.

One disabled client, on whose behalf I have been making representations, has been waiting for more than six months for action to repair draughty windows and significant condensation problems. Rectification work has been held up because their house is too old and is not considered to be suitable for repair. My constituent's wife is susceptible to pneumonia and needs to sleep with a continuous positive airways pressure machine. Such conditions are certainly not acceptable, yet this budget cuts the funding for public housing from consolidated revenue from \$494 million last year to \$467.6 million this year. That is just one of a large number of constituents whom I deal with on a regular basis.

Overall, apart from a few spending initiatives, this budget holds little joy for many in my electorate of Burrinjuck. Small businesses are still being slugged with high rates of payroll tax, stamp duty and the fire services levy. Forecast expenditure on grants and subsidies from the Rural Assistance Authority will fall by more than \$20 million in this financial year. Staff cuts are forecast for the Department of Education and Training, the Department of Agriculture and, of course, the department responsible for land and water. Rural town water supplies is another area that is significant by its absence of any real acknowledgement in the Treasurer's Speech.

Apart from being a disappointing budget for rural New South Wales, this is also somewhat of a Clayton's budget. The restructure of many government departments means that the budget estimates for many important areas are not available. Included in these are Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources, Fair Trading, Regional Development and Small Business. When these papers are released on 26 August this year I expect to see a commitment to allow Goulburn to connect to the Sydney catchment water supply and Yass to develop an efficient and effective response to its water supply problems. I also call for more assistance programs for small business development in rural areas, not just in the Hunter and Illawarra.

One shortcoming in the budget that I highlighted specifically is the lack of any real increase in funding for the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care. Recently, I have been informed of a few cases of very deserving people who have been refused interim funding because of a review of the guidelines. I would interpret this as budget cuts. I cite as an example one lady with multiple sclerosis who is completely dependent on supported accommodation. She is confined to a wheelchair. Her body does not work, but her mind is unimpaired and she regularly corresponds with me. She has been seeking assistance under the Service Assistance Scheme since 18 October 2000, and she is still waiting for the application to be finalised.

I had been instrumental in obtaining interim funding for her, but she informed me recently that the funding has been cut because of the guideline review. The Carr Labor Government has failed to address these and many other issues of significant concern to the electorate of Burrinjuck. This is truly a budget of wasted opportunities. The Government has wasted the opportunity to invest in those in our society who are less fortunate. It has wasted the opportunity to invest in the growth of business by refusing to cut into its high taxing regime. It has wasted the opportunity to provide significant, sorely needed improvements in areas such as policing, roads, public housing health and education.

**Mr NEWELL** (Tweed—Parliamentary Secretary) [9.01 p.m.]: I join my colleagues on both sides of the House to speak to the budget. It was only one week ago today that the Treasurer, Michael Egan, delivered the Carr Government's eighth balanced budget and announced a massive total of \$29 billion of capital works over the next four years, which is a 22 per cent increase on the previous four years. In delivering the budget, Mr Egan said that this budget delivers strong spending increases in schools, hospitals, child protection and other services. He also said that we are getting on with the job in securing the future of New South Wales. The budget has been welcomed wholeheartedly along the North Coast and in regional and rural New South Wales. The budget will deliver the commitments and campaign promises made by the Government. It will deliver for the Tweed increased investment to improve government services, which will help both families and small businesses. The Carr Government is honouring its affordable pre-election commitments and working to secure the future of New South Wales.

In the financial year 2003-04 the budget result will be a \$43 million surplus, with a surplus predicted in each of the following three years. Nevertheless, it is a remarkable achievement for the Carr Government to deliver eight balanced budgets and, in so doing, reduce State debt from \$12 billion in 1995 to the current \$4 billion. Reducing debt is the result of the good work and tough, responsible decisions by the Government to ensure that the State is in a strong position if we encounter any form of recession or economic downturn. We are making hay while the sun shines, which is something previous governments did not do. The key areas of expenditure for my electorate this year total \$9.7 million for roads, and \$13 million for major works in education as well as other projects in health and emergency services. This is a socially responsible budget and, as the Treasurer indicated, every inch a Labor budget.

In question time today the Minister for Health highlighted disparities between the figures used by the Federal Government to debate its changes to health funding. He pointed out that the figures the Federal Government was using referred to the number of people who had been treated at radiotherapy and chemotherapy units. Recently, I was very happy to have both the Premier and the Minister for Health visit my electorate to open a \$600,000 day oncology unit at the Tweed Hospital. The 400 cancer sufferers from the Tweed valley who previously had to travel to either Lismore or Brisbane to receive their treatment fully appreciate that they will now be treated at their local hospital by an oncologist. The Federal Government is not counting that group to make its comparison between what the private and public hospitals are doing. One patient, whose name I will not reveal, was very courageous. She handled her treatment very well. She was extremely grateful to the Government for providing our area with an oncology unit.

Only yesterday I, with a number of officials from Murwillumbah Hospital—Ian Murray, the chief executive officer, Phil Rouge from the hospital and Dr John Moran—had the pleasure of inspecting the Murwillumbah Health Student Placement Program, which is part of the infrastructure that will enable the hospital to participate in the rural health component of medical undergraduate education. The unit will be established next to the hospital in the old nurses quarters—a solid, art deco building that was built in 1938-39. The State Government has provided \$300,000 for the first phase, and a further \$2.7 million will be provided for phases two and three of the purpose-built facility.

Undergraduates from various universities will undergo the rural health component of their training at the hospital. Modern communication methods and computers will enable the facility to offer five-star training. It is hoped that, once undergraduates complete their rural health component and realise that they can access the best training and facilities outside the major cities and metropolitan areas, more doctors and specialists will be encouraged to seek work in rural areas. I congratulate the Northern Rivers Area Health Service on its initiative and support for the program. I look forward to further funds in future budgets to complete phases two and three so that not only the Northern Rivers Area Health Service benefits from the program but the whole of the State, particularly rural and regional New South Wales.

I turn now to Education. It is most important in an area of high population growth, such as the Tweed, to build new schools and expand facilities that already exist. In this year's budget the Tweed has certainly received its share of education funding. The Banora Point High School has been allocated ongoing funding. Stage one is under way and the great thing about this year's budget is that it has committed funds for the construction of stage two, which will result in the school becoming a senior high school. In addition, a new public school on the Tweed coast, Bogangar Public School, is being built at a cost of \$5.4 million. Work has already commenced and it is hoped that the project will be completed by early next year so that students will be able to begin the new school year in a brand-new school. I am aware that the community has been waiting for the school for a very long time. For various reasons, there have been immeasurable delays. On previous occasions I have mentioned in the House the time taken to obtain development approval from the Tweed Shire Council. Nevertheless, the project is under way, and I know that the community looks forward to its completion.

Stage one of the Tweed River High School upgrade is well under way. Further funds have been released from the commitment of \$3 million for upgrading the high school. The upgrade is sorely needed because the high school has been established in the area for some time. A new gymnasium and other associated buildings will be provided, and the upgrade will lift the school to a standard that the school community thoroughly deserves. Apart from being the top high school geographically, I have to say that it is also one of the top high schools in sporting achievements. Over the years the high school has turned out a number of Australian representatives, and other students have represented their sports at various levels. They certainly got their start at that school.

Work will continue on the Murwillumbah High School and I look forward in the near future to the official opening of the school's special education unit. The extra classrooms at Banora Point Public School will replace temporary classrooms that have been on the site for a number of years. The additional educational facilities that have been afforded by this year's budget indicate clearly that this Government is well and truly behind the Tweed and the North Coast through its provision of facilities. That is great, and the community very much appreciates the attention it is receiving from the Carr Labor Government—a government that makes sure that funding required for major capital works is delivered.

In the short time that is available for my speech I refer to emergency services. An allocation of \$300,000 has been made for the purchase of a new fire engine for Murwillumbah. In the recent round of upgrades, the Tweed Heads Fire Brigade received new fire engines. The emergency service and the rural fire

brigades all along the Tweed coast and in the Cudgen area out toward the Murwillumbah and Tumbulgum areas obtained new tankers and have had their equipment upgraded to such an extent that the facilities are now second to none. The tremendous upgrades undertaken by this Government over the past four or five years have provided an unprecedented standard of equipment, and that is fantastic. The facilities were greatly appreciated because during last Thursday night's local flooding the emergency services were on deck and delivering reports to local radio stations to let concerned people know exactly what was going on. Although local flooding in the Tweed was not as high as in areas farther south—such as near the Brunswick River and Richmond River at Ballina—nevertheless, those emergency services swung into action and their upgraded equipment was put to good use. This Government deserves credit for funding necessary equipment upgrades.

In the past four years my electorate has been probably the greatest beneficiary of road funding allocations of any other electorate, to the envy of many honourable members and the chagrin of the Opposition. The Chinderah to Yelgun section of highway has been built at a cost of \$350 million. Much to the curiosity of some people, \$800,000 has been allocated for finalisation works on the highway, such as landscaping and so forth. Completion of the highway represents infrastructure that will reap rewards for the North Coast, not just the Tweed. The highway moves large numbers of people north to Brisbane to enable them to access services they require and moves people from Brisbane to the Gold Coast, particularly on Friday afternoons so that they can have a weekend off. Some of those people travel farther south to Byron Bay and even to Evans Head, and as a result of completion of the Chinderah to Yelgun section of the highway they are able to safely reach those destinations after just a couple of hours driving. I look forward to commencement of works on the Yelgun to Brunswick Heads section.

Some minor works are being carried out closer to home in places such as Sextons Hill at Banora Point. A pedestrian bridge has been constructed over the highway between east Banora and Banora. The honourable member for Vacluse is quite familiar with that because he takes holidays in my electorate and his father lives in the area. The pedestrian bridge has enabled elderly people and young children to cross the highway in safety, without having to run the gauntlet of a four-lane carriageway just to go about their normal business. In conjunction with that, \$500,000 has been allocated for associated footpath and cycleways to link south Tweed and Tweed city to Sextons Hill all the way down to Banora Point. An additional \$60,000 has been provided to extend the footpath and cycleway from Banora Point to Chinderah.

**Mr Debnam:** What about the Chinderah bikeway?

**Mr NEWELL:** This is the New South Wales budget, not the Queensland budget. Extension of the bikeway all the way through to Chinderah is absolutely commendable. I know that the Tweed Shire Council undertook quite a deal of that work, and I hope that the work has been performed thoroughly and efficiently. It will be but a short step to extend the cycleway into Kingscliff. The work that is being carried out along the coast means that a person will be able to hop on a bike and ride from Tweed Heads down to Pottsville. I commend the Minister for Regional Development, and Minister for Small Business for the good work that he has done. The regional film industry was debated earlier today. It is just one burgeoning industry in my electorate.

Great work has been done in regional development. I commend the work of the Minister for Regional Development. His officers at Tweed Heads do a fantastic job assisting businesses by presenting options and helping people get started. While business development programs are not big, the facilities and the programs are vital to any electorate. I appreciate that regional development officers are located not only in the Tweed but also in other areas throughout New South Wales. The officers do a fantastic job and provide a vital service. The relocation of businesses is a difficult undertaking, but with the right sort of advice and enthusiasm of officers such as Trevor Wilson businesspeople are able to obtain guidance and assistance. Those officers can guide businesspeople through a lot of paperwork, which tends to deter them—that is exactly the type of service government needs to provide. Businesspeople need help with paperwork so that they become established in areas where their businesses will be viable and will thrive.

Minor works programs in my electorate include \$62,000 for boat ramp upgrades at Chinderah Bay, south Tweed Heads and Tweed Heads. Although the amounts are relatively small, they mean a great deal to the local community and to others who use the waterways and beautiful lakes in the Tweed. For example, many tourists from Queensland visit the area for weekends or for longer stays. Those sorts of facilities are vital, and would attract the injection of tourist dollars. The area has natural beauty, but we have to be able to manage it. The grant of \$62,000 for the upgrade will be matched by Tweed Shire Council. Large amounts of bricks and mortar are involved, but eventually the Tweed will benefit. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]



The 2003-04 Towns and Villages Futures Program is a godsend for the small towns and villages in my electorate. In the past two weeks the villages of Moball, Crabbes Creek and Burringbar have held public meetings, financed by grants under the portfolio of the Minister for Regional Development. A couple of weeks ago I was able to attend the meeting at Crabbes Creek. After the meetings, workshops were set up. The workshop program interim co-ordinator, Lanie Loughlin, said that each village had identified its own specific needs, but several objectives were common to the three villages. Money was made available to those villages because they had been bypassed by the Chinderah to Yelgun upgrade of the Pacific Highway. Essentially, the towns were in a position to reclaim their identity because heavy transport no longer passed through them at all hours of the night. Funding from the Regional Development portfolio assisted them to determine their needs. Lanie Loughlin and Rose Wright facilitated the meetings and did a fantastic job.

Rose Wright has helped the small village of Carool obtain footpaths and cycleways to link the Burringbar and Mooball townships, as well as a network of bushwalking trails extending south from Murwillumbah and linking to those villages. Interest was also expressed in producing a community newsletter so that villagers could stay in touch with each other. The meetings also determined other areas needing attention, including a program of activities catering for the district's youth—which is understandable. Miss Loughlin stated that telecommunications were a particular worry, including frequent telephone faults. She said that the area had a poor data phone service, with no mobile or broadband service and very poor Internet service. Miss Loughlin said that the telephone exchange is very small and often clogged, and it is almost impossible to conduct business on some days. That is a salutary lesson for people who want to privatise Telstra. That snapshot is a pretty good indicator of the amount of work still to be done by Telstra. The Towns and Villages Futures Program, which is administered by the Minister for Regional Development, has called for applications to be lodged from today and they close on 1 October. Communities have time to apply for money and to tap into that program.

The budget brought many benefits to the Tweed area, including funding for roads, hospitals and schools. Other areas have benefited greatly. The Department of Community Services [DOCS] provides a vital service to people in my electorate, which, generally, is a low-income area. Unfortunately, my area has its share of referrals to the department—but we are not unique in that regard. Funding for DOCS has allowed extra caseworkers to be appointed. The caseworkers provide an essential service in assisting families and communities. Before the recent election, the Government committed \$1.2 billion to increase the number of available caseworkers in DOCS, and my area will get its fair share. It is reprehensible that the Opposition was not prepared to back that commitment. Its policy—issued two minutes to midnight on the eve of the electronic media blackout preceding the election—made no commitment to DOCS, and indicated other cuts to the DOCS budget. That made a mockery of some of the calls by candidates in my area, as if there were no resources available.

I feel sorry for some people—obviously, they would not have been aware of the Coalition's proposed budget. Letters were written to editors of newspapers and questions were asked at forums about funding for community services indicating that the Government was not up to scratch. The Opposition promised to do all sorts of good things. Idwal Richards is a good fellow: he received an award for his work in the recent Australia Day honours. However, I feel sorry for Idwal who, after asking questions and writing to newspapers, found out that the Opposition was not going to back-up the Government's proposals, let alone add anything to them. That is to be regretted. Nevertheless, I am delighted that the Minister responsible for DOCS, the Hon. Carmel Tebbutt, has been able to increase funding to that area.

In addition, \$1.2 billion has been allocated to the Ageing, Disability and Home Care, areas of the Minister's portfolio that are vital for the Tweed. As a large proportion of the population is infirm and frail, the Home and Community Care Program is absolutely vital for the continued promotion of a good quality lifestyle for people in their homes. It is a tragedy that the Federal Government was not prepared to match funding by the State Government to fund a pay rise in 2002. Nevertheless, the State Government has gone ahead with that. Had the Commonwealth Government agreed to match that funding, the Home and Community Care Program would be extended to more people. Older people and their carers certainly need that money. A short time ago the honourable member for Burrinjuck spoke about home care for one of her constituents. However, she neglected to mention that the Commonwealth Government did not come up with funds under that joint Commonwealth-State initiative. If the Howard Government were a little more careful with its money and put more money into the North Coast more money would flow through to home and community care. I have strongly supported, and will continue to support, that program.

Overall, I am delighted that through this budget we are getting on with the job. The Tweed is getting capital works and social infrastructure. We must ensure that our communities are looked after and are able to

keep working away. They should not be neglected. If the honourable member for Lismore experiences any difficulty in obtaining funding for his electorate I state, in a spirit of bipartisanship, that I will assist him in any way I can. I represent all constituents on the North Coast. I commend the budget to the House.

**Mr DEBNAM** (Vaucluse) [9.30 p.m.]: I welcome this opportunity to speak in debate on the Treasurer's 2003-04 Budget Speech. The honourable member for Tweed, who spoke earlier in debate, did not refer to the fact that this Government was going to cut 1,000 jobs from the Department of Education and Training, or to the fact that Menangle Bridge was kept open right up until the last election, even though it was unsafe for use by passenger trains. He did not refer to the fact that the Millennium trains were going to be withdrawn from service a few weeks after the election because they were unsafe, uneconomic and a disaster on wheels. He did not admit that he would vote for age of consent or shooting gallery legislation. However, I am sure that, over the past few months, he has done something productive for his electorate, even though I do not know what that is.

I agree with the honourable member for Tweed and with the Treasurer, the Hon. Michael Egan—this budget is every inch a Labor budget, an outrage that we have to endure every time the Treasurer comes into this House. The Hon. Michael Egan, a failed lower House member, was thrown out of this House in 1984. But every year he sneaks back into this House to deliver a budget of deceit for the people of New South Wales. The budget that is delivered every year by the Treasurer is a fantasy—a fairytale. I do not know how many Government members actually read the budget papers, but I am sure that the Minister for Regional Development, who is in the Chamber, probably reads only those sections of the budget papers that apply to his department. Budget documents comprise three columns—figures for next year, figures for the year that has just ended, and a revised column.

It would not take anyone reading these budget papers long to realise that this year's budget, which is a fantasy, bears no relationship to the previous budget. That is what happened this year and that is what will happen next year. Every year the Treasurer's budget is rescued as a result of record tax windfalls. The Treasurer tries to keep budget figures down to projections of expenditure and to what financial commentators think is a reasonable percentage. Everybody then forgets about them. In the past eight years the level of accountability in the New South Wales public sector has gone out the window. Treasury has become a joke in New South Wales and in other States. When the New South Wales Treasurer presents his budget on budget day he makes great play of a budget that is bought by a number of journalists for about 24 hours.

**Mr Campbell:** So it's the media's fault now?

**Mr DEBNAM:** The Minister for Regional Development can attack the media if he wishes, but this is the Government's doing. The Treasurer, who comes into this Chamber every year, makes great play of his fantasy budget. Those headlines last for 24 hours and the budget then starts to unravel. The Treasurer issues a half-yearly statement at about Christmas time and the budget then starts to fall apart. The figures in next year's revised column will bear no relationship to the figures in this year's budget. Every year the Treasurer's budget is a fantasy. As a result of the property boom in New South Wales over the past six or seven years every budget is rescued as a result of tax windfalls. That happens right across the board, whether it is as a result of a doubling of land taxes, payroll tax, or stamp duty. This Government receives record tax revenue.

Over the years there has been no shortage of cartoons in the newspapers of Treasury embarrassed by its riches. Cartoons depict the Treasurer counting the gold in the coffers that are all around him. I got a laugh from reading an article about the Premier in the *Weekend Australian* of 28 to 29 June. That interesting article, which is written by Paul Kelly, and which is headed "The Carr formula for Crean", refers to a number of different formulas that the Premier is putting on the record for Simon Crean. The Premier is doing that for two reasons: first, he is a total hypocrite and, second, he wants to get rid of, and create some sort of debate about, Simon Crean. The section of the article that caught my eye was the paragraph relating to economics in which the Premier is reported as stating:

On economics: fiscal responsibility is the foundation of everything you do.

That has nothing to do with what the Premier has done in New South Wales over the past eight years. Those honourable members who have not been in this House for long would not know that, four or five years ago, the New South Wales budget was debated internationally. The Treasurer would pretend to do the right thing by trying to hold down the budget, and the Premier, who would be in Paris on his six-monthly holiday, would say, "It does not matter." We no longer have that interesting debate as the Government sorted it all out. However, in the second half of the year departmental budgets still blow out.

I will refer later to what happens to the NSW Police budget in the last few months of financial year. It is a disaster. The budget for NSW Police is squeezed because the Treasurer has not been able to manage—and the Premier is not interested in managing—the budgets of other departments. Honourable members should remember that the core responsibilities in New South Wales are policing, health, education and a few other issues. The Premier has the hide to talk about fiscal responsibility and to lecture Simon Crean when 50 per cent of the budget is spent on other items. I think Simon Crean has more of a backbone than the Premier. Simon Crean might not be going anywhere but the Premier is getting where he wants to go simply by being a hypocrite.

Over past years the credibility of New South Wales Treasury has suffered desperately. Honourable members have to remember only one figure in the budget papers. Over the past five years the Carr Government has taken more than it budgeted for in tax revenue—an amount of \$8.4 billion. This Government could have done a number of things with that revenue. It could have replaced and repaired all the police stations across this State that are in need of replacement and repair. It could have repaired Menangle Bridge, which was left open until a few days after the election, placing the lives of people at risk.

[Interruption]

The Minister for Gaming and Racing correctly said—and I agree with his criticism—that Michael Costa is not doing a good job. This Government should enhance public transport services. I will refer later to the provision of enhanced public transport services. With that sort of money the Government could have fixed Menangle Bridge and it could have done a number of other things. It did not do those things simply because it cannot manage. I refer to policing as the Minister for Gaming and Racing appears to want to talk about policing. Last week the Minister for Police said that his only comment in relation to the budget was that there had been a 91 per cent increase in funding for Police during the time that the Carr Government had been in office. That figure is approximate.

The Minister referred to a \$2 billion increase in recurrent funding, which is not quite true. We could reach that figure if we took into account capital expenditure and we included also the \$200 million funding allocation for Parramatta police headquarters. Recurrent funding has increased by about 90 per cent—to \$1.8 billion—since the Carr Government came to office. What other figures have increased since this Government has been in office? Since 1995 the incidence of theft has increased by 24 per cent. The incidence of sexual assault has increased by 56 per cent; armed robbery has increased by 58 per cent; assault, by 111 per cent; and attempted murder by 167 per cent. Where did I get those figures? I got them from the Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS] publication *Recorded Crime—Victims, May 2002*. The number of weapons offences in New South Wales has increased by about 143 per cent since Labor came to power.

The Premier simply ignores much gun crime because he leaves his house in Maroubra, gets into a limousine, travels to Parliament House and just does not see it. Much gun crime occurs in south-west Sydney, where it is a real problem. Certain members are doing their constituents no favours by ignoring the problem. They refuse to speak up in the House about the fact that their constituents live in daily fear of drive-by shootings, armed robberies, kneecappings and car-jackings. Those members refuse to tell the Government that it is doing a lousy job combating gun crime in south-west Sydney.

According to the ABS recorded crime statistics, 6,480 sexual assaults, more than 11,000 robberies, more than 80,000 assaults, more than 141,000 incidents of unlawful entry and more than 394,000 incidents of theft were reported last year. The figures for unsolved crime in New South Wales are typical of those across Australia but we generally fare worse than the other States. According to the New South Wales Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, last year some 35 per cent of recorded assaults were unsolved, 67 per cent of rapes were unsolved, 83 per cent of robberies were unsolved, and 94 per cent of break-and-enter incidents were unsolved. That is hard to believe. Those crimes were reported to police and recorded in the computer system, but many reported crimes are not recorded. The Minister for Police has the hide to speak in the Chamber about a record Police budget when he has no idea what is happening on the ground.

A real problem across New South Wales, especially in Sydney and within many ethnic communities, is that crime is simply not reported. Probably about 20 per cent of break-and-enter incidents Australiawide are not reported. The figure for unreported attempted incidents of break and enter is much higher, at almost 70 per cent. About 60 per cent of robberies across Australia are not reported and about 70 per cent of assaults are not reported. The figures for New South Wales are very similar. Crime is not reported partly because people ask, "What's the point reporting it to police; what can they do? They don't have the resources and they can't respond in time."

Another reason that crime in New South Wales is not reported effectively is that the Carr Government has adopted the call centre approach. The Auditor-General's report, which was released last month, highlighted the fact that in one year 37,000 calls were abandoned—people simply gave up trying to get through. The report makes the point that that figure is a little higher than one would expect for a call centre, but we must remember that people call the centre not to order groceries or flowers but to report crime and ask for help. It is no wonder the reported crime percentages are not good. Crimes must be reported to send the Government the message that there is a problem on the streets.

One of the problems with the police assistance line is that there is total confusion in the community about which telephone number people should ring: Is it triple 0, the police assistance line number, the community assistance number or the number of the local police station? People do not know; it is all too difficult. Many people call the police assistance line, but 37,000 of them gave up last year. Another problem is that the police assistance line is disconnecting people from their local police. Once there is a disconnection of police from their local communities the reporting of crime will diminish further. The Government cannot defend its actions with regard to the police assistance line. What is the Government doing with the data that is supposedly fed into the system? When does it go to local police? How is it acted upon? Do local police have the resources to pursue the information they receive? Do detectives have the resources to pursue it? That is another major problem. The police assistance line is little more than a glorified filing system. In volume 5 of the Auditor-General's report for 2002, the Auditor-General says:

Generally NSW trails the national average crime benchmarks.

The New South Wales Government made some disturbing comments to the Productivity Commission this year, which had been made by an assistant deputy commissioner when giving evidence before a Federal committee on 9 October last year. The Government said that it judged how well it was performing based on comparisons within the State of New South Wales; it does not believe it is relevant to make comparisons with other States. I was horrified to read that comment by an assistant deputy commissioner and equally horrified to see it in the Government's official response to the Productivity Commission report released in March this year.

It is clear from the figures that NSW Police and the Government do not care about what is happening in policing in other States because their figures look very bad in comparison. The Auditor-General—God bless him—included a few tables in his report, and compares victimisation rates in New South Wales with those of other States. For example, New South Wales has the second highest number of assaults and we come first out of the eight States and Territories for the greatest number of armed robberies, unarmed robberies, other crimes and overall crime. The table for crime clear-up rates that appears on page 233 of volume 5 of the Auditor-General's report shows the proportion of investigations finalised within 30 days and the proportion of investigations with an alleged offender proceeded against within 30 days of being finalised.

We are at the bottom of the scale again; we are simply not performing well compared with the other States and Territories. According to that table, our figures for sexual assault, armed robbery, unarmed robbery, unlawful entry with intent involving taking property or property not taken, motor vehicle theft or other theft compare badly with those of other States. It is no wonder because the New South Wales Government is simply not interested in comparing our results with those of the other States. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

The real problem in New South Wales policing lies with the Premier's priorities. They are very simple; it does not take long to figure out what the Premier is trying to do. His first priority is to publicise police successes. I have no problem with that; it clearly must be done. The New South Wales Government applies a lot of resources to that priority and succeeds remarkably well. The Premier's second priority is to cover up police problems. The New South Wales Government is very good at that. The new Minister for Police has established a state of secrecy in New South Wales—it has taken him only about three months. He has put his stamp on policing in this State: Everything that could be politically embarrassing to the Carr Government is stamped "secret". The message has come straight from the Premier and Walt Secord—where's-the-gun Walt—to cover up all police problems regardless of their size or seriousness.

The Premier's third priority is clearly to reduce the perception of crime. A tremendous number of resources are applied to achieving that end, not only in the Premier's Department—which was known before the election as the re-elect Bob Carr department—but in the police media unit. The Premier's fourth priority is to increase the visibility of police. He achieves this aim through Operation Vikings. The Labor Government crows about that initiative but it is simply peak-hour policing that does not achieve much on the streets. The Government throws around figures about arrest rates and police visibility but if we look at the crime hot spots we can see that it is not achieving results on the ground. Operation Vikings is simply a Government attempt to

ensure that the maximum number of people in New South Wales see the maximum number of police. Keeping the Police Association happy is another major priority.

The four public priorities are a little different from those of the Premier. They are, first, to get police back on the beat. That is not happening, it has not happened for eight years and it is not likely to happen again. The second is to get faster response times. That is not happening anywhere across the State. Again, most callers are shoved off to the police assistance line and 37,000 callers hang up. In terms of response times for serious crimes, we are not seeing that on the street. The third is to solve crimes. This State has some very poor percentages compared with other States. The last is to reduce crimes. That is not happening. We have got real problems across the State, many of which have been made public in the past few weeks in the context of the Police budget.

There was a horrific story last week about a policeman and his family who were intimidated and run out of Boggabri because the offenders could not be caught and are still at large. Intimidation is a problem right across the State—intimidation of witnesses, intimidation of the community—but when it is intimidation of a police officer there is a real problem. The Carr Government does not focus on front-line policing but on protecting the Government and on media management. One must admit the Carr Government is very good on spin, media policy and media strategies, but it is not good on policing strategies. When brazen criminals can force local police to leave town it is no wonder there are problems right across the State with assaults, robberies and shootings—especially in south-west Sydney, where a number of members of the Government will not speak up on behalf of their electorates.

Another problem that could lead to an inability to solve crime is the detective drought. It appears that during the past five or six years the Carr Government has allowed the number of detectives who are doing detective work to drop from about 1,650 to below 1,000—I admit I am unsure whether it has dropped by 600, 700 or maybe 800. The Police Force fears that the Government does not know the number, but if it does, it wants to keep it a secret. One of the real problems in New South Wales is that we simply do not have the criminal investigation resources to apply to crime that is occurring right across the State, especially serious and gun crimes. It was extraordinary that last month the Government forced senior police in crime command agencies to accept untrained police to do detective jobs. Senior police fought against that decision for some time, but they lost out and were forced to take on those untrained officers. Even the homicide division was forced to accept up to 20 per cent of its staff as untrained detectives.

Across the State, who is happy with the Police budget? Perhaps John Lee in Maitland should be asked because his video shop is regularly under attack and there has been a total lack of support from the Carr Government over a number of years. He is not a happy constituent. Perhaps Margaret Beahan from Dubbo should be asked whether she is happy with the Police budget. An article in the *Daily Telegraph* of 14 June depicts her holding a baseball bat over her shoulder. I have spoken to her a number of times. Since she appeared in that article she has received a number of threats and lives in fear of further attacks on her home and herself. She has lived alone since her husband died a few years ago, but luckily her son lives next door. She lives in a state of fear under Premier Bob Carr.

Residents who live around Lexington Place in the Premier's electorate should be spoken to. The small shopping centre, which consists of approximately eight shops, has been a source of concern to the local community for many years. I was made aware of this matter a few months ago and have visited the community around Lexington Place about once a fortnight for the past six or eight weeks. The residents and shopkeepers wait for the Carr Government to deliver some protection from the teenage hoodlums who terrorise in that area. Again, those who spoke up were attacked. Two Saturdays ago, just before midnight, one woman and her husband, who had been brave enough to speak up about the problems in the Premier's electorate, were confronted by teenage hoodlums who want to run the community around Lexington Place.

There is no shortage of people who are upset with the Carr Government. The banks are upset with the Carr Government. The Taren Point branch of the National Australia Bank closed last month because it had been continually robbed and the Carr Government could not protect it. I am reminded of the newsagency at Sefton that had to move into a nearby hotel or club a few years ago because it could not be protected. The Carr Government decided that it was a far better option for the newsagency to move inside the fortress facility a few doors up the road than for it to provide law and order in the street. Two months ago I spoke about the squeeze on the Police budget, which hit youth liaison officers, who are an important part of the Police Force and who work with young people, many of whom are at risk.

What did the Carr Government do? It cancelled the annual training course as a budget-cutting measure. It is absurd. In April the *Daily Telegraph* showed extraordinary photographs of the shooting murder in the

Haymarket. It was a whistleblower who brought to the attention of the media and the public that the investigation had been stopped because of a lack of resources. In the past month I have highlighted the fact that despite the large number of ethnic communities in New South Wales—indeed, about one million people speak a language other than English at home and 200,000 find it difficult to, or cannot, speak English—there are only 33 police community liaison officers. Despite many warnings during the years, the vast pool of potential recruits—that one million people—and the glaring need for people to be able to use foreign languages, the Carr Government has simply ignored the problem. It has known for years, as have other people, that local police, and criminal investigators in particular, need languages other than English to crack the wall of silence. The writing has been on the wall for years but was double-dutch to the Carr Government.

The budget priorities for the Carr Government are not front-line policing or criminal investigations because it allowed the number of detectives doing detective work to run down from 1,650 to just under 1,000. I would love to know what the figure is. They basically said to every detective in the State, "We are really not interested in your work. You are a lesser priority. We are not going to give you resources. We are not going to give you credibility within the Police Force. We are not interested." Meanwhile, the Government has revved up the resources for the police media unit with millions of dollars for press secretaries and spin. That is largely a propaganda unit. Those resources should go to the front line.

The unit puts out a number of worthwhile releases in the pursuit of police work but it basically does the bidding of the Government because the unit is led by good Labor people who are injected into the system to do the bidding of the Carr Government and keep it out of trouble wherever they can. The media unit has substantial funding and extensive powers, and it clearly has political priorities. The Carr Government is well aware that the Opposition will continue to pursue that hotbed. On Friday the Police Integrity Commission released its second report relating to serious concerns in the audit of NSW Police internal investigations. It is evident from the report that the Carr Government has simply not been doing its job. Indeed, the Police Integrity Commission noted that the recommendations of its first report of three years ago simply have not been implemented.

The last point I make is one I mentioned before. John Watkins, in his first three months as Minister for Police, has turned New South Wales into a secret police State. He got 110 questions from members of Parliament in his first couple of months in the police portfolio. He refused to properly answer 78 of those questions, that is, his response to three-quarters of those questions was simply to thumb his nose at the Parliament and the people of New South Wales. [*Time expired.*]

**Mr HUNTER** (Lake Macquarie) [10.00 p.m.]: The Carr Government's eighth balanced budget delivered last week has resulted in Lake Macquarie winning a healthy share of the record \$7.138 billion being spent on new schools, hospitals, roads, railways, public housing and power and water networks. This budget will deliver for Lake Macquarie, with increased investment to improve government services to help families and small businesses. It can certainly be said without question that the Carr Government is honouring its affordable pre-election commitments and working to secure the future of New South Wales.

Some specific projects being supported in the Lake Macquarie area include \$850,000 on fire station renovations at Teralba, which will result in a new fire station built on the current fire station site in the centre of the Teralba township; \$334,000 on fire equipment upgrades, which includes a new fire engine for the Toronto fire station; \$1.82 million for the upgrade of a dining hall and kitchen facilities at the Myuna Bay Sport and Recreation Centre; and \$8.59 million on Hunter Water capital works and improvements. There is also \$4.8 million being provided towards the \$27 million duplication of the Five Islands Road between the Booragul roundabout and the Speers Point roundabout. That is a much-needed road improvement in the electorate of Lake Macquarie.

I can certainly say that the Carr Government is getting on with the job, approving the largest capital works program ever undertaken by a State government. This record program totals nearly \$29 billion over four years, which is an increase of almost \$5.3 billion, or 22 per cent on the previous four years. This year's record \$7,138 million capital works program is \$788 million higher than last year's \$6,350 million program, an increase of more than 12 per cent. Since 1995 the Carr Government has cut general government net debt by \$8 billion. That means savings of around \$1 billion in interest payments compared to 1995—vital funds that can now be spent on local hospitals, schools, police and roads. The Government's sound financial management meant it could reduce State debt year after year and increase spending on vital services for our community. Despite the uncertain global economic outlook, our State finances have never been stronger.

I move on to look at the budget in detail and how it affects Lake Macquarie. It is certainly welcome news that the Government will provide a new fire engine for the Toronto fire station. The Toronto fire station

was opened only a few years ago with the expenditure of about \$1.2 million on the building of the new station. Just a few months after that, for the first time on the western side of Lake Macquarie, permanent firefighters were appointed to that station. It now has a permanent fire crew Monday to Friday on day work, supplemented and supported by the retained firefighters working very well together and looking after the Toronto area on the western side of the lake.

The new fire engine that will be able to be purchased with the money allocated by this budget will be a class one vehicle fully equipped with the latest technology and ready to respond to any emergency. That is a major investment in fire safety for families in the Toronto area. This new engine will mean that our local firefighters can respond to emergencies faster. The new fire engine is part of the Carr Government's \$72 million four-year program to upgrade the New South Wales Fire Brigade's engine fleet. Our firefighters work tirelessly and are dedicated to protecting local homes and businesses. They certainly deserve the best equipment that the Government can provide.

I am pleased that the Government has allocated this funding to support Toronto firefighters with the resources they need to get their jobs done fast and effectively. The new fire engine will be a great boost to fire safety in Toronto. Local firefighters will receive extensive driver and familiarisation training before they receive the new engine. Once again I congratulate all firefighters in the Lake Macquarie electorate, including those working out of the Toronto station. Earlier I mentioned that the Teralba fire station will be replaced with an \$850,000 new facility. I am hoping work will start on that before the end of this current calendar year and be completed early next year, giving the retained firefighters at Teralba a modern and up-to-date facility.

In Housing, the Government has demonstrated its commitment to the future of public housing by spending \$2.35 million on capital works to assist people with housing need in Lake Macquarie through the 2003-04 financial year. The Government's public housing budget will result in \$642.9 million being spent across New South Wales, with \$396 million going towards upgrading and maintaining public, community and Aboriginal housing. An innovative program that will continue to operate in the Lake Macquarie electorate is the successful intensive tenancy management [ITM] program. Funding of \$154,377 has been allocated to continue the work of the Bolton Point ITM project, which has improved life for local people by improving access to services and community life since it opened in 2000-01.

The ITM project has been established in areas that experience high levels of client housing need. The Department of Housing staff are located on site, and it is their job locally to build up relationships with tenants, to encourage them to become involved in community development activities, and to assist them to access health and other local services. Yesterday I was pleased to chair the regular meeting of the planning team for the Booragul-Bolton Point-Fennell Bay area. Attending that meeting were representatives from the local community, particularly from Department of Housing areas, and Department of Housing representatives. The local community are very pleased with the Department of Housing staff, who are working closely with them on a number of innovative projects to encourage the people to participate more in community activity and community life.

The statewide, three-year \$170 million boost to improve assets and provide new housing assistance was announced in 2002, and the \$56.9 million second instalment of that has now been delivered through the recent State budget. In Lake Macquarie some \$1,308,000 has been allocated to build 10 new dwellings in the Toronto area. Last year an amount of money was allocated for 11 new dwellings, and I am pleased to see in this budget that is being followed up with another 10 new dwellings. That is 21 new dwellings being funded in the Toronto area in the last two budgets. Just over \$1 million is going towards asset management in the Lake Macquarie electorate. The budget certainly reflects the New South Wales Government's commitment to securing the future of public housing and helping people in need. The people of the Lake Macquarie electorate are certainly benefiting from this allocation of funding.

In Transport, funding for some 14 new Hunter Valley railcars and more state-of-the-art buses for Newcastle has continued in this budget, in line with the Government's commitment to improve public transport services for the Hunter region. The Transport portfolio has received in this budget an increase of more than \$220 million, lifting the budget spending to \$2.6 billion. Of that, \$10.3 million will be spent in the coming financial year on the continuation of works on 14 Hunter Valley railcars, providing modern rolling-stock equipped with easy access, airconditioning and enhanced security features, including closed-circuit television cameras, toilet facilities and onboard information displays. The first Hunter Valley railcars—built by local workers at Broadmeadow—are due for delivery in 2005 at an estimated total project cost of \$102 million.

The Rail Infrastructure Corporation will spend \$44 million in the coming financial year on major periodic and routine maintenance in the Hunter, including \$5 million for re-sleepering of the Woodville Junction to Maitland section of the track. Some \$2 million will be spent on the installation of long-line digital voice announcement systems at 84 locations, including 28 in the Hunter region. I note that in excess of \$16 million has been allocated to rail maintenance in the Lake Macquarie electorate. The State Transit Authority will spend \$3.5 million to complete delivery of 30 new low-floor airconditioned buses for Newcastle, which will also serve the northern areas of the Lake Macquarie electorate. It is certainly a boost for public transport in the Newcastle region.

The State Transit Authority will also spend some \$5 million for maintenance on Newcastle bus and ferry infrastructure. Spending on other measures across the network includes \$7.8 million on state-of-the-art train driver training facilities, \$12.9 million on fire hazard and safety measures, an additional 200 transit officers to bring the total number of transit officers on the network to 500 by December 2004, and \$5.6 million on the delivery of a train visibility monitoring system. The budget includes a \$115,000 allocation for the installation and maintenance of bike lockers at bus and railway stations. The Lake Macquarie electorate has benefited in the past from the installation of these facilities at the Fassifern railway station. I note that in the next budget year \$11.4 million will be spent on the development of the integrated ticketing system, which will provide a single smart card for travel on rail, light rail, monorail, and bus and ferry services in metropolitan New South Wales.

Some \$443.9 million has been allocated in the budget for payments to private transport operators and community groups, including half-fare pensioner concessions and other transport subsidies. That figure is an increase of some \$11 million on last year. In the Lake Macquarie electorate I am pleased that \$226,695 has been allocated to fund community transport services for people who do not have easy access to other transport options. Community transport in my local area does a fantastic job. Those people should be highly commended for their efforts. Also to be noted is amount of nearly \$447 million for school students travel under the School Student Transport Scheme, a massive allocation of State funds to assist students getting to and from school. When we look closely at the budget for the Hunter region, we see that some \$565.5 million has been allocated for Health, which is the largest Health budget the region has ever received. The 2003-04 Health budget for the Hunter has been increased by \$56.4 million on last year, an increase of 11.1 per cent.

The Government has increased funding for Health in the Hunter by 83.5 per cent since it first came to office in 1995. That \$257.3 million in recurrent funding has enabled enormous development and growth of services in the Hunter. Since the Government was first elected, election commitments that have been fulfilled include the \$5 million expended on the construction of the Toronto polyclinic and an amount of almost \$500,000 to assist Lake Macquarie City Council in building a multipurpose community and health centre at Morisset. Morisset Hospital, a mental health facility, continues to operate in the electorate. Recently, I was pleased, after lobbying by all Hunter members, to secure an increase in funding to the Kaiyu clubhouse, which runs programs for people who are recovering from mental illness. The people involved do an excellent job. The highlights of the Health budget in the Hunter include \$16.2 million for the ongoing roll-out of the \$236 million Newcastle strategy and the plan to develop acute health facilities in Newcastle and Lake Macquarie.

The strategy's highlights include the upgrade of Belmont Hospital, the relocation of the Royal Newcastle Hospital's services to a new inner-city polyclinic and to a new centre for orthopaedic and ambulatory care on the John Hunter Hospital campus, and redevelopment of the Newcastle Mater Hospital. There is also ongoing funding for emergency medicine units and rapid emergency assessment teams at John Hunter Hospital, pending the success of the current six-month trial. Some \$745,000 has been allocated to improve access to cardiac catheterisation services at John Hunter Hospital, and \$742,000 has been allocated for improvements to emergency department services at both Belmont and Maitland hospitals. Funding of \$1 million has been allocated for stroke services, including the establishment of stroke units at Belmont, John Hunter and Newcastle Mater hospitals. Some \$360,000 has been allocated for a major trauma unit at the John Hunter Hospital. I thank the Minister, Morris Iemma, for continuing the funding to improve and upgrade health services in the Hunter region.

Some \$100 million will be spent on road improvements in the Hunter region over the next financial year. The budget funds a range of major road projects designed to improve safety and job conditions. The highlight of the budget is the allocation of more than \$700,000 for planning work on the next stages of the Newcastle inner-city bypass from Shortland to Sandgate, and from Rankin Park to Jesmond. The inner-city bypass is one of the most important projects in the Hunter. When complete it will significantly boost the region's economy for years to come and provide increased employment opportunities.



The most recent stage, the West Charlestown Bypass, was opened to traffic earlier this year. I was pleased not only to attend the official opening by the Minister for Roads, Carl Scully, shortly before the election but also to attend an earlier open day when many thousands of local Lake Macquarie residents were able to walk the length of the Charlestown bypass and inspect the great work. I congratulate all who were involved in the project. Other projects that have been funded in the Roads budget for the Lake Macquarie and Hunter area include \$5.2 million for the next stage of the \$23 million reconstruction of the Beresfield-Cessnock Road in Cessnock, \$3.2 million to complete upgrading of the Golden Highway at Devils Elbow in the Upper Hunter, \$2.5 million for the continuing upgrade of Nelson Bay Road, Port Stephens, and, \$500,000 to commence planning for the third Hunter River crossing at Maitland. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

The budget includes an allocation of \$4.8 million towards the duplication of Five Islands Road in Lake Macquarie. That is an important project that is estimated to cost \$27 million. The allocation will allow construction work to start during the next financial year. The Five Islands Road, which is between the Booragul and Speers Point roundabouts, will be duplicated. It is a section of road about 1.7 kilometres long, which, when the road has been widened on either side of the existing route, will provide four traffic lanes. There will be new bridges over Cockle Creek, a right-turn bay into Anzac Parade, a pedestrian cyclist underpass at Tulkaba Park and a cycleway from Teralba to Five Islands Road will also be constructed. That has been partially constructed, with \$150,000 already being expended on the preliminary section of the cycleway.

Some \$2.7 million has been allocated to improving and maintaining roads into the Lake Macquarie electorate. Other major initiatives in the budget for Lake Macquarie include \$19,950 towards the employment of the Lake Macquarie City Council road safety officer, who works closely with local members of Parliament. I congratulate Lake Macquarie City Council and its road safety officer on a fine job of improving road safety in the city. The sum of \$2.1 million has been allocated to important maintenance work on State and regional roads. The Lake Macquarie City Council will receive an additional \$1.2 million of State funding to help to maintain State and regional roads.

Also included in the budget for Education is \$14 million for new school and TAFE building projects in the Hunter region. The new projects include \$5 million for the Callaghan College, with \$200,000 for upgrading of the Jesmond campus, and \$4.9 million for the Hunter Performing High School to upgrade facilities, including a new performance base, of which \$200,000 has been allocated this financial year. The Belmont TAFE is allocated \$4 million for a new child studies facility and \$400,000 of that has been allocated for this financial year. Six major projects are continuing in the region, including \$3 million for the Anna Bay Public School, \$5 million for the Callaghan College project, \$3.9 million for the Clarence Town Public School, a \$3.8 million project at the Soldiers Point Public School, and a \$1.3 million project at Glendale TAFE to upgrade its kitchen, with \$1.1 million of that amount allocated for this financial year. Glendale TAFE is on the border between the Lake Macquarie electorate and the Wallsend electorate. The sum of \$7.1 million has been allocated to the Kurri Kurri TAFE for horticultural and environmental protection, and \$1 million of that funding will come through in the next financial year.

A number of projects are being undertaken in the Lake Macquarie electorate. Last week I was pleased to announce the calling of tenders for a new \$600,000 library at the Biddabah Public School. I expect the construction of that project will begin in the forthcoming financial year. I ask the Minister for Education and Training to look closely at the needs of Booragul Public School. On a number of occasions previously I have mentioned that the school needs a new library and a staff car park to improve road safety outside the school. If the car park could be built at the same time as the library, road safety would certainly be improved. A large sum has been allocated in the budget for the demountable classrooms replacement program. I hope that the Minister will find some funds within that allocation for a new library for Booragul Public School.

The same need exists at Arcadia Vale Public School, the school I attended for many years in the town in which I grew up. The school needs a new administration building. I have made a number of visits to the school accompanied by officers of the Department of Education and Training to meet with a delegation of concerned school community representatives. The previous Minister for Education and Training, the Hon. John Watkins, also visited the school to ascertain its needs. I ask the current Minister to examine whether funds are available in the demountable classrooms replacement program to assist Arcadia Vale Public School. Funds are being expended currently at Dora Creek Public School. Tenders have been called for upgrading of facilities and the rearrangement of numerous demountable classrooms on the site has occurred. Down the track the school will need a great deal of money allocated for the provision of new buildings.

Just a few weeks ago I was pleased to attend the Bonnells Bay Public School to open stage two of its upgraded playground equipment. The school community asked me to approach the Government about funding to improve road safety standards at the front of the school through the construction of bus bays and for the extension of the sporting field to provide improved sporting facilities for both the school and the growing Morisset peninsula area. I have also been working with the Cooranbong Public School's community to obtain upgraded facilities for the school. An allocation of funds to improve facilities has been made for a number of classrooms but I am once again seeking assistance to improve access to the school. Matthews Valley Road is a problem and soon I will organise an on-site inspection with Lake Macquarie City Council officers and officers of the Department of Education and Training to discuss whether upgrading of access to the school can be brought forward.

Overall in the State budget \$257.8 million has been allocated for new computers in schools, for Internet services and technology support. That project will run to \$965.2 million over four years. The budget also has provided \$500,000 to establish 20 new suspension centres by 2007 to assist students who have behavioural problems. In December last year I was pleased to represent the Minister for Education and Training when I officially opened the \$400,000 Wakefield school, a school which deals with students in the Lake Macquarie electorate who have behavioural problems. The school is located on the site of a former school and we were able to have the facilities upgraded to create a new centre. I thank the Government for assistance in that area. In the forthcoming financial year a total of \$126 million will be allocated for literacy and numeracy programs, including Reading Recovery and Count Me in Too. In addition, \$139 million will be allocated over the next four financial years to enhance the quality of teaching in my electorate. TAFE colleges will continue to support students in the Hunter region. In 2002, 167,000 students took part in courses that are offered through non-metropolitan colleges and the Open Training and Education Network, including 57,312 students from the Hunter.

Through technology, TAFE continues to provide support for people in rural communities, including an Internet home page that links information, learning resources and a message board so that students can interact and exchange information. The Government is certainly committed to ensuring that students in the Hunter have the opportunity to reach their full potential. The budget also provides a massive allocation of \$803.2 million for community services in the Hunter, and that amount represents a 25 per cent increase over last year's allocation—the largest ever overhaul of an annual budget increase to community services. The allocation this year is the first full year of funding related to last year's announcement of a \$1.2 billion funding boost over five years. I am pleased to see that additional funding is coming through in the community services area of government.

I take this opportunity to mention particular areas that have received a funding gain in the Lake Macquarie electorate. In the ninth budget handed down by this Government, a number of important projects have been funded. The State budget has allocated \$4.8 million to commence construction works on the \$27 million duplication of the Five Islands Road between the Booragul and Speers Point roundabout. Teralba gained \$850,000 for a new fire station and \$1.825 million was allocated to commence construction of the new \$2.5 million dining hall and kitchen at the Myuna Bay Sport and Recreation Centre. Some \$16 million has been allocated for railway line maintenance and \$226,000 has been allocated to community transport. Ten new dwellings are to be built at Toronto, which represents around \$1.3 million coming from the Housing budget. Hunter Water will be allocated \$100,000 for a new rail crossing trunk main at Boolaroo. Between Warners Bay and Valentine, \$7.5 million is being spent on the water system amplification.

It is also important for the whole community, particularly members of the boating community of Lake Macquarie, that an allocation of \$1.3 million has been made to continue the lake clean-up program and that \$1 million has been provided to continue to control the noxious weed *caulerpa taxifolia*, which is infesting New South Wales waterways, including Lake Macquarie. I congratulate everyone who is involved in the work of trying to control that noxious weed. NSW Fisheries has been bombarding the weed with salt. The trials that have been undertaken over the past 12 months or so have resulted in a successful kill rate of the weed of in excess of 90 per cent, so it looks as though the weed is under control. NSW Fisheries will monitor the situation and will continue to bombard any outbreaks of the weed with salt. Another \$1 million has been allocated to that program to cover not only Lake Macquarie but other waterways in this State.

Overall, this is a good budget for the Lake Macquarie electorate. Funding has come through to deliver on a number of commitments that were made during the recent State election. I did not highlight particular areas in which those commitments were made, but constituents of the Lake Macquarie electorate know that the Government made commitments in key areas that I have outlined. The Government is honouring its election commitments to the people of Lake Macquarie. In this budget, funding has come forward to fund those

commitments. I congratulate the Treasurer, the Premier and the Ministers concerned on fulfilling those commitments to the Lake Macquarie electorate. I commend the budget to the House.

**Mr PAGE** (Ballina—Deputy Leader of the National Party) [10.30 p.m.]: The Carr Labor Government's ninth budget confirms that this is a Government with skewed priorities. The budget reveals a Government that is more concerned with the delivery of carefully crafted rhetoric than with the delivery of measures to genuinely assist the growth and prosperity of country and coastal communities. It reveals a Government strong on spin but weak on substance. It also reveals a Government that is happy to tax the people of New South Wales to the absolute hilt, while taking no action to eliminate its own inefficiencies, cost blow-outs and mismanagement. The sound management of the Australian economy by the Federal Coalition Government has enabled this State Labor Government to operate in prosperous economic conditions.

Despite that, the Government has only just managed to keep this budget in the black, with the tiniest of budget surpluses. The Government was saved by a tax grab from the booming property market. Thanks to skyrocketing property values, particularly in the city and on the coast, the average homebuyer is now paying significantly more stamp duty than he or she would have paid in 1995. Yet the Carr Government has failed to provide stamp duty relief for home buyers, including country and coastal home buyers, and will not contemplate land tax relief. Despite collecting \$830 million more in transfer stamp duties than forecast, taking total stamp duty revenue to \$3.5 billion, Labor will not return one cent of that windfall. Home buyers throughout the State would agree that this is a Government with deep pockets but very short arms.

Overall, this budget served to clearly highlight Labor's insatiable appetite for taxation dollars. Since 1995 payroll tax has increased by 63 per cent, land tax by 145 per cent, contracts and conveyancing duties by 209 per cent, insurance duty by 76 per cent, and lease duty by 133 per cent. We are left to ponder: If there is so much money flowing into government coffers, what are we getting in return? This is a budget of missed opportunities. The Government is silent on initiatives to generate employment, or foster regional development opportunities in country and coastal areas. Indeed, the introduction of measures forcing employers to pay workers compensation premiums for their trainees from 1 January next year will hurt small business jobs in non-metropolitan New South Wales. This regressive Labor policy will result in higher overheads for businesses throughout the State. Additionally, it will put a brake on the already scarce job opportunities for young people in country and coastal New South Wales.

Opportunities for tourism growth have also been dealt a savage blow by this Government. For rural and regional communities and businesses, increasing tourism can deliver substantial economic, employment and social benefits. Yet now, at a time when the industry has been rocked by international uncertainty—including the severe acute respiratory syndrome outbreak, the fear of terrorism, as well as events at home including a public liability crisis, drought, and bushfires—Labor has reacted by slashing funding to Tourism. Expenditure is down by 8 per cent on last year to just over \$52 million. With the right support and proactive industry leadership, New South Wales would go ahead in leaps and bounds, but, instead, a golden opportunity has been missed.

Young people fare particularly badly in this budget. In addition to its anti-trainee workers compensation payment policy, Labor has introduced measures that will provide a stumbling block for many people trying to further their education. From next January the cost of a TAFE graduate diploma course will increase from \$700 to \$1,650 a year, while a top-level TAFE certificate course will rise from \$260 to \$750 a year. A hike in TAFE charges does not send a good message to those wanting to further their education. As the shadow Minister for Roads I note that this is a disappointing budget. Once again the budget was delivered by a Government that is strong on spin but weak on substance. Labor crows about its commitment to making our roads the world's safest, but despite a glossy brochure, what have we got? We are bombarded with rhetoric about Labor's commitment to cutting the death toll on our roads, but when the time comes to deliver solutions this Government is left wanting.

In 1998 the Minister for Roads, the Hon. Carl Scully, launched a document entitled "Road Safety 2010: A Framework for Saving 2,000 Lives by the Year 2010 in New South Wales". It was a plan to halve the road toll and, as the name suggests, to save 2,000 lives by the year 2010. All honourable members would like to support that objective. Yet, five years later the Government has still failed to make inroads into the problem. The road toll was actually higher last year than in 1998 and still more than 500 people die on our roads each year. That is despite the Minister's promise in 1998 to halve the road toll. Since 1998, every year except one the road toll has risen from that of the previous year; it has not gone down.

These outcomes reflect badly on Minister Scully's credibility. Yet despite the rising road toll, Labor has slashed total Roads funding in this year's budget. When inflation is taken into account, this cut is close to

\$100 million in real terms. Cuts to Roads funding come in the face of such reports as the "National Road Safety Strategy" issued by the Australian Transport Council and, ironically, endorsed by the New South Wales Minister for Roads. The report clearly states:

... further investment in safer roads is highly justified on both social and economic grounds. Road investment improves road safety through general road improvements—typically new roads are safer than old roads.

Indeed, evidence abounds to suggest that road safety and road quality are inextricably linked. The NRMA has found that the physical road environment contributes to 28 per cent of road crashes, and according to the Australian Transport Safety Bureau "improving the safety of roads is the single most achievable factor in reducing road trauma." Similarly, a report by the Auditor-General into the performance of the Roads and Traffic Authority emphasised that better road maintenance investment contributed to safety and lower levels of deaths, injuries and related costs. Yet what do we get from Labor? A budget cut! In light of that evidence, the fact that Labor chose to institute such a budget cut is truly shameful.

The Minister for Roads will not be able to use his favourite scapegoat, the Federal Government, to blame for this cut. Federal Government contributions in the form of Commonwealth road funds, Federation funds, and untied Commonwealth road funds are all set to increase over the coming year. New South Wales motorists are also paying their way; indeed the Government is set to collect an additional \$51 million through motor vehicle taxation this year, starting today. Four months ago, when the Minister was spruiking his wares in the lead-up to the State election, he gave no hint of his intended budget cut of \$100 million in real terms. His crafty rhetoric gave an altogether different impression. Indeed, the Minister's spin machine was in overdrive and the Minister was promising to complete, improve, renew. But those words now ring hollow.

Put simply, we are facing the harsh reality that over the coming year Labor will spend \$100 million less, in real terms, on road maintenance, long overdue bridge and bypass projects, and the upgrade of roads that have been left to slide into a state of disrepair during eight years of Labor neglect. A \$100 million budget cut will only exacerbate the already enormous backlog of maintenance needed on the roads network, which is estimated by the NRMA to be in excess of \$1.5 billion. Particularly disappointing is the Labor Government's failure to give the life-saving black spots program the attention it deserves. Labor has been scaling back the program over recent years.

In 2000-01 Labor treated 185 dangerous locations on New South Wales roads; this year the number has fallen to 127. That is particularly worrying in light of strong evidence to suggest that the poor quality of black spot locations is a major contributor to serious road accidents and deaths. Labor has ignored the success of programs that fund black spot upgrade works. Those programs have an average benefit-cost ratio of four, which is very high, and they have been estimated to contribute overall to a more than one-third reduction in fatalities. In doing that, the Government missed an opportunity to make significant improvements to safety across the New South Wales roads network.

I am also disappointed in the Government's inadequate \$133 million allocation to councils to fund their roads network. It is hard to believe that the Minister for Roads crowed about an allocation by the State Government of \$133 million to help councils manage their roads networks. Councils are responsible for the upkeep of 18,400 kilometres of regional roads in New South Wales, so this Government has allocated only \$722 per kilometre for regional roads across this State. Many roads are more than 60 years old, so they are well and truly in need of major repair. While country and coastal communities are being taxed to the hilt they are getting little in return. The budget reveals a Minister for Roads who is still captivated by glamorous multimillion-dollar city road projects. That comes at the expense of vital funding for country roads.

Unlike in metropolitan areas where public transport is always a possibility, in most country and coastal regions roads are the only option. They are the most basic infrastructure for regions in country and coastal Australia. Most goods and services are transported by road into and out of country areas. The poor management of major infrastructure projects is another major concern. Last year the Coalition revealed that Pacific Highway upgrade projects managed by the Roads and Traffic Authority suffered cost overruns totalling in excess of \$660 million. If the Minister had not overseen a cost blow-out of over \$100 million on the Liverpool to Parramatta transitway, we would not have been left with a budget cut at all.

Treasurer Michael Egan bragged that the State Government had delivered a Labor budget every inch of the way. Members of the New South Wales National Party and the rural, regional and coastal communities that they represent could not agree more. It seems that a further deterioration of our roads network, in particular in the rural, regional and coastal areas of this State, is inevitable under Labor. Turning to the Housing portfolio, Labor's budget is bad news for low-income earners, especially if they are looking for housing.

As Gary Cross, chief of the Council of Social Service of New South Wales, put it, "affordable housing has received a setback in this budget". A combination of cuts to the Housing budget and record State Government property taxes—in particular, stamp duty and land tax—have the potential to create an affordable housing crisis in New South Wales. The public housing system is under enormous strain. It is a system characterised by maintenance backlogs, mile-long waiting lists and waiting times that extend past a decade. Desperate housing tenants cannot access public housing, with some women and children even having to live in their cars for months at a time. Labor has reacted with a budget that will address none of these issues. The Treasurer has taken a knife to the Housing budget and no program and no funding allocation has been spared.

A total of \$37.4 million in real terms has been slashed from the Housing budget this year. Labor will commence 186 fewer general public and community accommodation units in 2003-04 than it did last year—a cut of one-third, which follows consecutive cuts before that. Labor will also commence fewer dwellings under the Crisis Accommodation Program. Labor has cut the number of new dwellings commenced under the Crisis Accommodation Program by 49 per cent since 2000. With over 92,000 households currently on the public housing waiting list these program cuts could not have come at a worse time. Labor's across-the-board funding and program cuts will also result in worsening conditions for existing public housing stock. Labor has cut funds for the maintenance of public and community housing by over \$25 million in real terms.

The New South Wales Auditor-General, in his performance audit report on the maintenance of public housing, identified the \$750 million maintenance backlog and estimated a \$117 million per annum shortfall each year in maintenance funding. That maintenance backlog mountain looks set to grow. Overall, Labor's Housing budget has been an exercise in slash and burn at the expense of the State's most needy. Labor's penchant for property taxes will place an even greater stress on the public housing system by reducing affordable private rental options for low-income families. Invariably, costs borne by property owners, such as skyrocketing land tax premiums, are passed on to tenants, where possible, in the form of higher rents. The net result is a reduction in the affordability of rental properties and even more pressure on the already stressed public housing system. On top of this, ballooning property taxes, such as land tax, are encouraging investors to look away from property, thus reducing the availability of affordable private rental options.

I refer now to matters relating to my electorate of Ballina. This budget is characterised by questionable priorities and missed opportunities for communities located in coastal and regional areas. Given the stamp duty revenues reaped by this Government, the 2003-04 budget was an opportunity to give back to the community by implementing tax cuts or by investing strongly in infrastructure and services. Instead, this Government chose, for example, to raise \$28 million in revenue from TAFE students, a sector of the community that should be supported and not pillaged. That measure will impact, in particular, on non-metropolitan communities, such as those in Ballina, where university education is hard to access and TAFE is a popular pathway to future employment. TAFE students who have made sacrifices and who have committed themselves to improving their future, and in turn the future of the State, through education are rewarded by the Carr Government with fee hikes.

The Minister for Education and Training claims to be a supporter of students, yet he supports a budget that will be a disincentive to local students contemplating entrance to TAFE study, particularly in electorates like mine. Whilst the State Government has reaped the benefits of the property boom and its associated rise in stamp duties, coastal and regional areas have had only a steady injection of funds for local capital works projects. In my electorate the desperately needed Alstonville and Ballina bypasses have received moderate funding of \$2.2 million and \$12 million respectively in the 2003-04 State budget. The Ballina bypass has a total projected cost of \$245 million; therefore, it is imperative that the State Government remains committed to this project and provides more significant funding for it in the next budget. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

During question time in this House I obtained a commitment from the Premier that the Alstonville bypass would be completed by mid-2006. While this year's funding will assist with land acquisition and planning, the project requires further serious funding to ensure that it is completed as planned. There are still too many accidents in the region. Those two projects will provide essential alternative routes for traffic passing through Alstonville and Ballina, leaving local roads for the rapidly growing residential population and visitors to the region. Those projects will also greatly improve the safety and amenity of both Alstonville and Ballina residents. Anyone who has visited the region would know that the Northern Rivers area is a dynamic area, with the population increasing by almost 8 per cent between 1996 and 2001. That growth should have been matched in this budget and in previous budgets by increased commitments to essential local capital works projects. With a few exceptions that has not been the case.

On the brighter side, in the 2003-04 budget \$5.9 million has been committed to stage one and stage two of the Mullumbimby High School upgrade; \$1 million for an indoor recreation hall and seawall at Lake Ainsworth; and \$1.198 million for Wollongbar TAFE hospitality facilities. However, other local projects deserve consideration in this budget, such as the construction of school halls at Ballina and Lennox Head primary schools. As no funding for those projects has been forthcoming this year, students at Ballina and Lennox Head will be left waiting once again.

I refer briefly to another aspect of this year's budget that will impact heavily on electorates like Ballina. The reforms to the way in which clubs will be taxed will have a detrimental effect on employment in the region. Ballina RSL club alone employs 150 local residents. Clubs across my electorate provide recreational and entertainment facilities for members of the community and, in particular, for seniors. Clubs also contribute to charitable causes in the local community and support many local sporting organisations. The Carr Government's taxation position on clubs takes taxation rates from 17 per cent to up to 40 per cent for larger clubs and from 17 per cent to up to 25 per cent for smaller clubs.

On a broader scale, the Government's taxation regime must be questioned. While other Australian governments are giving tax relief to individuals, this Government continues to impose taxes on New South Wales residents at rates higher than those in any other State. I have been a vocal opponent of the current land tax regime, and I continue to support land tax relief for those members of the community who have worked hard to provide for their retirement and bought property to ensure that they are not dependent on the taxpayer in the future. Those individuals should not be sluggish by an undue land tax burden. Their ability to pay land tax has generally not increased in line with the increase in land values. The State Government has been the beneficiary of the State's property boom and it should have taken the opportunity in this budget to give back to the community.

I welcome the State Government's acquisition of the Detala land in Patterson Street, Byron Bay, which was announced at Parliament House late last week. I attended the land transfer signing ceremony at which the Minister Assisting the Minister for Infrastructure and Planning (Planning Administration) confirmed the State Government's acquisition of the land. I have a longstanding interest in achieving public ownership and preservation of this land, and I welcome this decision. The acquisition of the Detala land is right for the ecology of the land, which has a high conservation value. It is right for the former owner—although the land was zoned 2A for residential development, he could not develop it mainly because of its high conservation value—and it is right for the community. It brings to an end 10 years of debate about the land's future.

In summary, this is a budget of lost opportunities for real tax reform and infrastructure building. The Government is not interested in reform for taxpayers and it is not getting the best value for our tax dollars in infrastructure expenditure. There are regular cost blow-outs, there is project mismanagement and there is a general lack of accountability. The Carr Government may have won the last election but its culture of cover-up has been revealed since then. Ministers have exposed themselves as being masters of the art of cover-up. As a result, the Government has lost the confidence of the people of New South Wales, who feel it has betrayed them.

**Debate adjourned on motion by Mr Maguire.**

**The House adjourned at 10.53 p.m. until Wednesday 2 July 2003 at 10.00 a.m.**

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