

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Tuesday 29 August 2006

Mr Speaker (The Hon. John Joseph Aquilina) took the chair at 2.15 p.m.

Mr Speaker offered the Prayer.

Mr SPEAKER: I acknowledge the Gadigal clan of the Eora nation and its elders, and thank them for their custodianship of this land.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE GOVERNMENT

Mr SPEAKER: I report the receipt of the following message from His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor:

J. J. SPIGELMAN
LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR

Office of the Governor
Sydney 2000

The Honourable James Jacob Spigelman, Chief Justice of New South Wales, Lieutenant-Governor of the State of New South Wales, has the honour to inform the Legislative Assembly that, consequent on the Governor of New South Wales, Professor Marie Bashir, having assumed the administration of the Government of the Commonwealth of Australia, he has this day assumed the administration of the Government of the State.

13 June 2006

ADMINISTRATION OF THE GOVERNMENT

Mr SPEAKER: I report the receipt of the following message from Her Excellency the Governor:

MARIE BASHIR
GOVERNOR

Office of the Governor
Sydney 2000

Professor Marie Bashir, Governor of New South Wales, has the honour to inform the Legislative Assembly that she re-assumed the administration of the Government of the State on 19 June 2006.

19 June 2006

ASSENT TO BILLS

Assent to the following bills reported:

State Property Authority Bill
Children (Detention Centres) Amendment Bill
Coal and Oil Shale Mine Workers (Superannuation) Amendment Bill
Interpretation Amendment Bill
Liquor Amendment (2006 FIFA World Cup Hotel Trading) Bill
Snowy Hydro Corporatisation Amendment (Parliamentary Scrutiny of Sale) Bill
Appropriation Bill
Appropriation (Parliament) Bill
Appropriation (Special Offices) Bill
Duties Amendment (Abolition of State Taxes) Bill
State Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment (Budget Measures) Bill
State Revenue Legislation Amendment Bill
Local Government Amendment (Waste Removal Orders) Bill
Superannuation Legislation Amendment Bill
Sydney Cricket and Sports Ground Amendment Bill
Civil Liability Amendment Bill
Courts Legislation Further Amendment Bill
Drug Misuse and Trafficking Amendment (Hydroponic Cultivation) Bill
Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Mr CARL SCULLY (Smithfield—Minister for Police) [2.19 p.m.]: I move:

That leave of absence be granted to Cherie Ann Burton, Minister for Housing, and Minister Assisting the Minister for Health (Mental Health), until Sunday 12 November 2006 on account of maternity.

I have been asked by the Premier to inform the House that during the absence of the Minister for Housing, the Minister for Fair Trading will be Acting Minister for Housing.

Motion agreed to.

RESIGNATION OF CABINET OFFICE DIRECTOR GENERAL MR ROGER WILKINS**Ministerial Statement**

Mr MORRIS IEMMA (Lakemba—Premier, Minister for State Development, and Minister for Citizenship) [2.20 p.m.]: I pay tribute to one of the State's most distinguished public servants, Mr Roger Wilkins, who has today announced his resignation as Director General of the Cabinet Office to seek new challenges and opportunities in the private sector. I know I speak for my predecessors, for the Government and for the public sector as a whole when I thank Roger for his outstanding leadership through a period of continuous reform and change. Over his 14 years as director general, Roger Wilkins has served governments from both sides of politics with objectivity, dedication and insight. Under his leadership the Cabinet Office has managed some of the biggest policy changes of our time—microeconomic reform, the forestry settlements of the mid-1990s, the Drug Summit, tort law reform, greenhouse and counter-terrorism, to name just some of the highlights. But perhaps the most important and unsung success has been Roger's unstinting leadership in the long, tedious, thankless job of regulatory reform, competition policy and improving the operation of our dysfunctional Federal system.

[Interruption]

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Premier, though somewhat provocative, has the call.

Mr MORRIS IEMMA: Roger has been one of the guiding lights of the Council of Australian Governments since its inception, and the fact that the Commonwealth and the States are co-operating like never before is due to his persistence and hard work over many years. Pianist, philosopher, linguist and bon vivant, Roger Wilkins has never been your average public servant but beyond the elegant facade and the inevitable bow tie, lies a sharp, shrewd mind and keen intelligence that has shaped public policy in New South Wales and Australia for practically a generation. As the Government's most senior policy adviser, Roger Wilkins has helped three Premiers bring their better ideas to fruition and has usually dissuaded us from our worst excesses.

As Cabinet Secretary Roger has been the model of discretion and he will take countless stories of our foibles and conflicts to his grave. Admired and occasionally feared, respected by his interstate peers, internationally acknowledged as an expert on federalism, Roger Wilkins leaves the New South Wales public sector with the sincere regard and esteem of all who have had the privilege of working with him. Perhaps the best measure of Roger's contribution lies in the fact that public policy in New South Wales has been fundamentally transformed over the past 20 years. There is very little in that transformation that does not in some way bear his imprint. I salute Roger Wilkins for his outstanding contribution to the public good. I thank him and wish him well.

Mr PETER DEBNAM (Vaucluse—Leader of the Opposition) [2.24 p.m.]: I join with the Premier in acknowledging Roger Wilkins' service and in thanking him for his service to the people of New South Wales. As the Premier said, we will all miss the bow tie around the CBD. Roger achieved a great deal since he was appointed by John Fahey. It is a shame that the Government has not fully utilised him in the past 12 years and harnessed his talents, his skills and his energy to undertake more reform in New South Wales. Roger Wilkins has had to work with other States and with the Federal Government. He has done a good job. However, it is a shame that in the past 12 years successive Labor Premiers did not let him off the leash to make a greater contribution.

MINISTRY

Mr MORRIS IEMMA: I inform the House that during the absence of the Minister for Housing, and Minister Assisting the Minister for Health (Mental Health), the Minister for Planning, Minister for Redfern Waterloo, Minister for Science and Medical Research, and Minister Assisting the Minister for Health (Cancer) will take questions relating to mental health on her behalf.

PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARIES

Mr MORRIS IEMMA: I advise the House that with effect from 13 July 2006, Mr Graham West was appointed as the Parliamentary Secretary Assisting the Premier on Community and Veterans Affairs, Assisting the Treasurer and Assisting the Minister for Finance.

VARIATIONS OF PAYMENTS ESTIMATES AND APPROPRIATIONS 2005-06

Mr John Watkins tabled:

Variations of the payments estimates and appropriations for 2005-06 under section 24 of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983 relating to the transfer of funds to the Department of the Arts, Sport and Recreation.

Variations of the payments estimates and appropriations for 2005-06 under section 24 of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983 relating to the transfer of funds to the Cabinet Office.

Variations of the payments estimates and appropriations for 2005-06 under section 24 of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983 relating to the transfer of funds to the Department of State and Regional Development.

Variations of the payments estimates and appropriations for 2005-06 under section 24 of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983 relating to the Office of the Children's Guardian, Commission for Children and Young People and the Office for Children.

Variations of the payments estimates and appropriations for 2005-06 under section 24 of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983 relating to the Cabinet Office and the Department of Health.

Variations of the payments estimates and appropriations for 2005-06 under section 24 of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983 relating to the Premier's Department and the Department of Health.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

Government Response to Report

Mr Bob Debus, on behalf of the Hon. Tony Kelly, tabled the Government's response to report No. 13/53 (No. 156) entitled "Value for Money from NSW Corrective Services", tabled on 21 September 2005.

NSW OMBUDSMAN

Reports

Mr Speaker announced the receipt, pursuant to section 31AA of the Ombudsman Act 1974, of the following reports:

DADHC: Monitoring Standards in Boarding Houses, dated June 2006
Misconduct at the NSW Police College, dated August 2006.

Ordered to be printed.

AUDIT OFFICE

Reports

The Clerk tabled the following performance audit reports of the Auditor-General:

Agency Use of Performance Information to Manage Services, dated June 2006
Managing Sick Leave in NSW Police and the Department of Corrective Services—Follow-up of 2002 Performance Audit, dated June 2006
Regulating the Clearing of Native Vegetation—Follow-up of 2002 Performance Audit, dated July 2006
Condition of State Roads—Roads and Traffic Authority of NSW, dated August 2006

JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON TOBACCO SMOKING**Report**

The Clerk tabled the report entitled "Tobacco Smoking in New South Wales", dated June 2006.

JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE CROSS CITY TUNNEL**Report**

The Clerk tabled the report entitled "The Lane Cove Tunnel—Third Report", dated August 2006.

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ROAD SAFETY**Reports**

The Clerk tabled the following reports, dated June 2006:

Report No. 10/53, entitled "Driver Distraction—Proceedings of an International Conference on Distracted Driving, Sydney, Australia, 2-3 June 2005."

Report No. 11/53, entitled "Regarding Road Safety Administration and Related Road Safety and Transport Matters—Report of a Visit of Inspection by a Delegation of the Staysafe Committee, 24 October 2005-8 November 2005."

Report No. 12/53, entitled "Improving the Health of the Motor Vehicle Insurance and Smash Repair Industries—A Review of Progress in Implementing the Findings and Recommendations of an Inquiry into Motor Vehicle Smash Repairs under the Insurance Australia Group (NRMA Insurance) Preferred Repairer Scheme and its Implications for Roadworthiness, Crashworthiness, and Road Safety."

Report No. 13/53, entitled "Brief Comments on Organ and Tissue Donations."

LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE**Report**

The Clerk announced the receipt, pursuant to section 10 of the Legislation Review Act 1987, of the report entitled "Legislation Review Digest No. 9 of 2006", dated 25 August 2006.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE**Report**

The Clerk announced the receipt, pursuant to section 63C of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983, of report No. 17/53 (160), entitled "Review of the Audit Office under Section 48A, Public Finance and Audit Act 1983", dated August 2006.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

Mr SPEAKER: I acknowledge the presence in the Speaker's Gallery of a United Kingdom parliamentary delegation led by Mr Michael Clapham. I acknowledge the presence of Mrs Clapham, Mr Andrew Mackinlay, Mr Eric Pickles, Mr Mark Pritchard, Lord Tomlinson of Walsall and Mr Anthony Wright. I also welcome Mr Rex Jackson, a former member for Heathcote and Bulli and former Minister.

PETITIONS**Pensioner Travel Voucher Booking Fee**

Petitions requesting the removal of the \$10 booking fee on pensioner travel vouchers, received from **Mrs Shelley Hancock** and **Mr Robert Oakeshott**.

South Coast Rail Services

Petition opposing any reduction in rail services on the South Coast, received from **Mrs Shelley Hancock**.

Hornsby and Berowra Train Station Parking Facilities

Petition requesting adequate commuter parking facilities at Hornsby and Berowra train stations, received from **Mrs Judy Hopwood**.

CountryLink Rail Services

Petitions opposing the abolition of CountryLink rail services and their replacement with bus services in rural and regional New South Wales, received from **Mrs Judy Hopwood** and **Mr Andrew Stoner**.

Bus Service 311

Petition praying that the Government urgently improve bus service 311 to make it more frequent and more reliable, received from **Ms Clover Moore**.

Bus Services 326 and 327

Petition asking that the Government urgently reinstate the former timetables of bus services 326 and 327, received from **Ms Clover Moore**.

Inner Sydney Light Rail

Petition requesting the development of an integrated light rail network through inner Sydney, received from **Ms Clover Moore**.

Shoalhaven River Water Extraction

Petition opposing the extraction of water from the Shoalhaven River to support Sydney's water supply, received from **Mrs Shelley Hancock**.

Currarong Sewerage Scheme

Petition requesting the release of funding for the Currarong sewerage scheme, received from **Mrs Shelley Hancock**.

Snowy Hydro Limited Sale

Petitions opposing any future sale of Snowy Hydro Limited, received from **Mrs Shelley Hancock** and **Mr Daryl Maguire**.

Whale Protection in Australian Waters

Petition calling for protection of whales in Australian waters, received from **Mrs Judy Hopwood**.

Newnes and Ben Bullen State Forests Trail Bike Activities

Petition requesting trail bike activities be moved from Newnes and Ben Bullen State Forests to Sunny Corner pine plantation, received from **Ms Clover Moore**.

Gardens of Stone Reserve

Petition requesting the reservation of the Gardens of Stone stage two park proposal to preserve the area's outstanding scenic, historic, scientific and recreational value, received **Ms Clover Moore**.

Uniting Church Congregation Rights

Petition supporting amendments to the Uniting Church in Australia Act (1977) NSW to ensure that the moral and legal rights of a congregation, disaffiliated from the Uniting Church, are protected, received from **Mr George Souris**.

Rural and Regional Police Resources

Petitions calling upon the Iemma Government to allocate more police resources to rural and regional communities throughout New South Wales, received from **Mr Ian Armstrong, Mr Steve Cansdell** and **Mr Andrew Stoner**.

Shoalhaven Local Area Command

Petition requesting additional resources for the Shoalhaven Local Area Command, received from **Mrs Shelley Hancock**.

Nambucca Policing

Petition requesting a permanent 24-hour police station at Nambucca, received from **Mr Andrew Stoner**.

National Art School

Petition opposing proposed changes to the National Art School, received from **Ms Clover Moore**.

Breast Screening Funding

Petitions requesting funding for BreastScreen NSW, received from **Mr Steve Cansdell, Mrs Shelley Hancock** and **Mrs Judy Hopwood**.

Parkinson's Disease Funding

Petition requesting funding for Parkinson's-specific support services for people living with Parkinson's disease, received from **Mr Steve Cansdell**.

Shoalhaven Mental Health Services

Petition requesting funding for the establishment of a dedicated mental health service in the Shoalhaven, received from **Mrs Shelley Hancock**.

Sutherland Hospital Management

Petition requesting the retention of a full-time general manager and the re-establishment of a local community based hospital board of management, received from **Mr Malcolm Kerr**.

Singleton Hospital Land Sale

Petition opposing the proposed sale of Singleton Hospital land, received from **Mr George Souris**.

Ulladulla DCP 56

Petition opposing changes to the current height code restrictions and the Ulladulla DCP 56, received from **Mrs Shelley Hancock**.

Urban Planning

Petition requesting that urban planning designs be decided by local communities, received from **Mrs Judy Hopwood**.

CSR Quarry, Hornsby

Petition requesting a public inquiry into Hornsby Shire Council's acquisition of CSR Quarry in Hornsby, received from **Mrs Judy Hopwood**.

Private Native Forestry

Petitions requesting a review of the draft code of practice for private native forestry, received from **Mr Steve Cansdell** and **Mr Adrian Piccoli**.

Pet Shops

Petition opposing the sale of animals in pet shops, received from **Ms Clover Moore**.

Recreational Fishing and Diving

Petition requesting the preservation of fishing rights and opposing any ban or surcharge on recreational fishing or diving, received from **Mr Andrew Stoner**.

Shoalhaven City Council Rate Structure

Petition opposing a 27 per cent rate increase proposed by Shoalhaven City Council, received from **Mrs Shelley Hancock**.

Grafton Bridge

Petition requesting the construction of a new bridge over the Clarence River at Grafton, received from **Mr Steve Cansdell**.

Road Tunnel Air Filtration

Petition asking the Government to ensure that all Sydney road tunnels are fitted with air filters, received from **Ms Clover Moore**.

Inner City Bicycle Lanes

Petition requesting dedicated bicycle facilities for the entire length of William Street, and on Craigend Street and Kings Cross Road, received from **Ms Clover Moore**.

Cross City Tunnel

Petition requesting government decisions concerning the Cross City Tunnel be based on the public interest, received from the **Mr Andrew Stoner**.

LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE**Report**

Mr Allan Shearan, as Chairman, tabled the report entitled "Annual Review: July 2005-June 2006", together with minute extracts regarding the report.

Report ordered to be printed.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE**JOHN LEWTHWAITE PAROLE**

Mr PETER DEBNAM: My question without notice is directed to the Attorney General. Given that the Attorney General promised that if paedophile child killer John Lewthwaite "crosses the line even in the most trifling way, he will find himself back behind bars" and given that he is on bail after being arrested for wilful and obscene exposure, will the Attorney now change his flawed parole system to ensure that John Lewthwaite is off the streets and in gaol today.

Mr BOB DEBUS: Two points need to be made. First, this matter is before the courts.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Gosford will come to order.

Mr BOB DEBUS: Second, the Minister with portfolio responsibility for parole is not me. On both counts it is inappropriate that I should comment.

Mr Peter Debnam: Point of order—

[Interruption]

Mr SPEAKER: Is the Leader of the Opposition taking a point of order or asking another question?

Mr Peter Debnam: Minister, the words are yours.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. The honourable member for Parramatta has the call.

[Interruption]

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition will resume his seat.

[Interruption]

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The House is less than five minutes into question time and the Leader of the Opposition has already contravened the standing orders.

STATE CREDIT RATING AND EMPLOYMENT

Ms TANYA GADIEL: My question without notice is addressed to the Premier. What is the latest information on any threats to the triple-A credit rating or the New South Wales unemployment rate, and related matters?

Mr MORRIS IEMMA: Last week we welcomed the reaffirmation of New South Wales' triple-A credit rating by international ratings agency Standard and Poor's.

Mr Alan Ashton: Big tick!

Mr MORRIS IEMMA: Big tick, as the honourable member for East Hills said. The agency's report was a continuing endorsement of the Government's management of the State's economy.

Ms Peta Seaton: You can't control spending.

Mr MORRIS IEMMA: The honourable member for Southern Highlands claims we cannot control spending. We will come to spending in a moment—the sooner the better. Standard and Poor's said it expected New South Wales will rein in expenditure levels and meet its budgeted return to an operating surplus, unlike the Opposition, which continues to make wild and unachievable spending commitments. The Leader of the Opposition continues to add to his \$20 billion spendometer, which is ticking over faster than the Liberal Party membership tally in Cherrybrook. The spendometer is so out of control and so unrealistic that today we give the Coalition's outrageous spending a new name.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Murrumbidgee will come to order.

Mr MORRIS IEMMA: It is no longer the spendometer. For the benefit of the honourable member for Southern Highlands, she can refer to it as the Peter meter. The Leader of the Opposition is on record as saying that people will be looking for someone with strong economic credentials to lead New South Wales. He boasts that he and the Leader of The Nationals each holds a Master of Business Administration [MBA] degree and that is why they can be trusted with the State's finances—just like the chief executive and the chief financial officer of Enron boasted of their MBAs as they bankrupted the \$150 billion company.

In 1980 to 1981 the Leader of the Opposition also claimed that he enrolled in a BA part time at Macquarie University. However, he lists it as "not completed due to work commitments". A perusal of his parliamentary record also shows a mysterious job on an old curriculum vitae that reads, "1985 to 1986

self-employed. Owner/operator of a Fitness Centre." Strangely, the Leader of the Opposition has erased that reference in all future resumes; it has been airbrushed out of his past. Public records reveal that there were no registered business names by gym owner-operator Peter Debnam, so it is difficult to know what sort of fitness centre it was. But jazzercise was very popular in the eastern suburbs in those days. I can just picture the lycra unitard, the headband and the leg warmers!

To continue, between 1987 and 1992 the Leader of the Opposition was a director of South Pacific Hatcheries, an aquaculture and prawn research business. When he signed on, the net profit of that company was \$129, but with him on board the fisheries company suddenly tanked, recording a loss of \$95,000. In 1990 the Leader of the Opposition took the fish tank business into liquidation. He then went on to torpedo another healthy company, David Russell Stock and Station Agents. Prior to the 1990 appointment of the Leader of the Opposition the company had shown a profit of \$30,000, but in less than a year he had turned it around to record a net loss of \$19,363.

Luckily for the company the Leader of the Opposition resigned as a director in February 1992 and it went on to make a miraculous recovery. Four months after he left, the company stumbled out of debt to record a modest profit of just over \$2,000. With the Leader of the Opposition just a bad memory, a year later it stormed back to its pre-Debnam position with a profit of just under \$40,000. That business brilliance is also being remembered as the Leader of the Opposition fumbles over his 29,000 job cuts, which cannot be done without slashing the jobs of police, teachers and nurses. No wonder he is backing away from it now.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Members will stop calling out.

Mr MORRIS IEMMA: This morning he told the *Sydney Morning Herald* that the figure of 29,000 was not his number. It is a pity that on 22 and 23 February this year the *Sydney Morning Herald* quoted him at that number and even higher. The Leader of the Opposition will seek to hide from another statistic. If he puts his 29,000 front-line workers on the employment scrapheap, the State unemployment rate will jump from 5.1 per cent to almost 6 per cent. If he got his hands on the Treasury benches, New South Wales would be just behind Tasmania with the highest unemployment rate in the country. That is the Leader of the Opposition's plan for New South Wales.

With the illustrious Peter meter now topping \$20 billion, I have offered the Leader of the Opposition an amnesty. I recognise he has been caught short on his spending promises, so I am willing to stop the clock briefly at \$20 billion. He can tell us now which projects he would like to back out of, which promises he would like to scale back, and which ones he made in the heat of the moment and would like to take off the list. When the estimates committee hearings are concluded whatever has not been adjusted, withdrawn or refined will stand as the Coalition's official spending commitments. It will stand as the official Peter meter. I say to the Leader of the Opposition, "Take this opportunity, this is your chance." The honourable member for Parramatta asked what we saw as the biggest threat to the State's finances. It is the Peter meter—the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr Peter Debnam: Point of order—

Mr SPEAKER: The point of order is in relation to what?

Mr Peter Debnam: I lay upon the table the words of—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The standing orders do not permit the Leader of the Opposition to table anything.

Mr Peter Debnam: If he just steps over the line—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition will resume his seat. I suggest to him that before the session gets under way he should brush up on his knowledge of the standing orders.

Mr Peter Debnam: Mr Speaker—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition will resume his seat.

Mr Peter Debnam: I would get a copy of the standing orders if we stuck to the standing orders and if there were the same rules for this side as there were for that side.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition will resume his seat.

Mr Peter Debnam: Mr Speaker, you have only seven months. You cannot protect them all the time.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The only person contravening the standing orders is the Leader of the Opposition.

LANE COVE TUNNEL

Mr ANDREW STONER: My question without notice is directed to the Minister representing the Minister for Roads. In view of the Premier's statement in March that he would not interfere with the construction schedule of the Lane Cove Tunnel, can he confirm—

Mr Gerard Martin: Another question about the bush!

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Bathurst to order. The Leader of the Nationals has the call.

Mr ANDREW STONER: In view of the Premier's statement in March that he would not interfere with the construction schedule of the Lane Cove Tunnel, can he confirm that his Government will now spend millions of dollars to delay surface roadworks until after the election but not alter associated road changes that will cause traffic chaos?

Mr DAVID CAMPBELL: The Lane Cove Tunnel project is the final link in Sydney's orbital road network. It will complete the 115 kilometres of road network looping the city. I am advised that the \$1.1 billion Lane Cove Tunnel project involves a 3.6-kilometre twin tunnel motorway beneath Epping Road linking the M2 Motorway at North Ryde with the Gore Hill Freeway at Artarmon and widening the Gore Hill Expressway to three lanes each way. The project will also involve a 7.5 kilometre cycle and pedestrian path from Wicks Road, North Ryde, to Naremburn. When complete the Lane Cove Tunnel will be a 3.6 kilometre length of road. In comparison, the Sydney Harbour Tunnel is 2.3 kilometres and the M5 East is four kilometres.

The tunnel will cut travel times to the Sydney central business district by up to 15 minutes. The tunnel will bypass five sets of traffic lights. Motorists travelling from the harbour crossing to the M2 will bypass 26 sets of traffic lights. It will mean reduced traffic noise along Epping Road and improved access to local streets, including the reinstatement of right turns. It will also mean improved pedestrian safety and improved public transport. Currently, around 45 buses an hour travel along Epping Road during morning and evening peak periods. With the tunnel in operation commuters will save three to five minutes travel by bus.

Mr Andrew Stoner: Point of order: My point of order relates to relevance. The Minister is just waffling on about the project. We want to know whether he will spend taxpayers' money on delaying surface road changes instead of fixing them.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I am pleased that the Leader of the Nationals has raised that matter in a point of order because in my view the Minister was answering the question precisely.

Mr DAVID CAMPBELL: I note the earlier interjection of a Country Labor member who observed that the Leader of The Nationals asked a question about a significant city project. There are no questions from The Nationals about the bush, which is why they are going so badly and why the Independents are so well regarded in the bush. With the tunnel in operation commuters will save three to five minutes travel by bus during peak periods. A number of changes that are in the public domain were contemplated in the planning process, including transit lanes on the widened Gore Hill Freeway and a new bus interchange near Longueville Road, and the reconfiguration of Epping Road to provide bus lanes and additional right-turn movements at Parklands Avenue and Centennial Avenue intersections for westbound traffic.

The Government is very aware of community concerns regarding traffic changes associated with the Lane Cove Tunnel project. I am advised that the Lane Cove Tunnel went through a rigorous environmental assessment in 2001-02, which included the public exhibition of an environmental impact statement. A number of changes, which are in the public domain, were contemplated during the planning process. The Government will be keeping a very close eye on the implementation of these arrangements.

**OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC PROSECUTIONS AND POLITICAL INTERFERENCE
ALLEGATIONS**

Mr MATTHEW MORRIS: My question is directed to the Attorney General. Can the Attorney General update the House on allegations of political interference with the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Attorney General has the call.

Mr BOB DEBUS: The allegation that yet another senior Liberal member of Parliament has sought to intrude upon the independent decision-making processes of the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions [DPP] is deeply concerning.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Murray-Darling will come to order.

Mr BOB DEBUS: I have sought urgent legal advice from the Crown Solicitor about whether the law or Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions guidelines have been breached. The events of the past week have raised some serious questions that need to be answered. First, have the actions of the Leader of the Opposition and Senator Heffernan placed court proceedings in jeopardy?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Deputy Leader of the Opposition will come to order.

Mr BOB DEBUS: Second, are the actions a matter for the Independent Commission Against Corruption? While I await this advice I shall speak about the contempt that the Liberal Party has displayed towards the independence of our justice system.

Mr Peter Debnam: Point of order: Why does the Attorney General not explain his contempt over John Lewthwaite?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! This is not a second reading debate. The Leader of the Opposition seems to be confusing question time with a debate. There are many forms of the House available to the Leader of the Opposition to address his concerns. The way in which he has done it is not one of them.

Mr BOB DEBUS: It is to the shame of the Liberal Party that this point needs to be made: Political considerations should have no place in the decision to mount a criminal prosecution. While the Government is working hard to ensure that prosecution decisions are free from political interference, the Liberal Party is more concerned with using the justice system to settle its factional battles. The day that politics takes precedence in criminal prosecutions is the day that the justice system loses its integrity and the courts lose respect as independent tribunals of fact. It is clear that the Leader of the Opposition is so out of touch that he believes prosecution decisions should be based on political configurations, not the law. We should all be concerned that his unwelcome meddling may have seriously jeopardised future court proceedings. We all saw him on television last week taking credit for picking up the telephone to the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions. Will he be as quick to call a press conference to claim credit for aborting a trial?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Attorney General has the call.

Mr BOB DEBUS: When the Leader of the Opposition releases policies, as he did two weeks ago about the DPP, we know that we need to read them carefully. The policy announced two weeks ago is laughably called, "Restoring Faith in the Legal System: Making the DPP Accountable." Accountable to whom? Is it the Leader of the Opposition? Perhaps it is Senator Heffernan. The Leader of the Opposition thinks that accountability is about a Director of Public Prosecutions who accommodates political whims and prejudices. The Coalition's policy says disingenuously that its oversight body "will allow for a meaningful, accountable and ongoing debate on the administration of justice." That is hypocritical.

Mr Barry O'Farrell: Point of order: My point of order—and it is probably a credit to the British parliamentarians who are in the Public Gallery—is that that is exactly what happens on the House of Commons Home Affairs Committee. Oversight of the Director of Public Prosecutions—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! That may be a point of explanation but it is not a point of order. The Attorney General has the call.

Mr BOB DEBUS: Actually, it is not—and I am sure that many of the gentlemen in the public gallery will confirm that it is not. The Government has consistently asserted that politicians should not be able to grill the DPP about particular prosecution decisions in some shonky oversight structure. That cannot be done in Britain either. It is the very opposite of the way that things should be done. The Coalition's absurd policy goes on to say:

A requirement to make public the reasons for decisions would be triggered by a request from affected victims, the Attorney General, or the Parliamentary Oversight Committee.

It left out the words "Peter Debnam or Bill Heffernan". It is small wonder that the honourable member for Epping is sitting quietly on the back bench opposite, unable to stomach this nonsense any longer. I wish he were back on the front bench. The Leader of the Opposition rejoices in the fact that he may be given some credit for having influenced a prosecution decision. That is a matter of public record: it is what he wants. Not content with that, he is quoted in today's edition of the *Australian* newspaper as saying that he is "happy to give the judicial system a kick in the arse any time." What this charming fellow apparently means by a "kick" is sacking about 20 per cent of DPP staff under his proposal to slash 29,000 jobs from the public sector if New South Wales should ever risk putting him in government. People such as witness assistance staff, who talk daily with the victims of crime; paralegals, who process vital court papers; and solicitors, who get cases ready for the most serious criminal offences are those to whom the Leader of the Opposition would show the door. A Liberal government would return our courts to the chaos, delays and inefficiencies of its last term in office, a period characterised by the closure of 39 local courthouses in a single day.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Attorney General has the call.

Mr BOB DEBUS: The Leader of the Opposition is unfit to lead this State, he is unfit to lead his party and he is most certainly unfit to ensure the integrity of the administration of justice in this State.

SURGERY WAITING LISTS

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: My question is directed to the Premier. Is the Premier putting patients' lives at risk with the instruction to doctors in a NSW Health letter that "patients can only be added to the waiting list provided the procedure can be undertaken within the clinical priority timeframe"?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Bathurst will come to order. The Premier has the call.

Mr MORRIS IEMMA: There she goes again! The honourable member for North Shore cannot bring herself on just one occasion to say something positive about the hardworking clinicians in our hospital system who have succeeded in bringing about a dramatic reduction in the 12-month plus waiting list and in waiting times.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for North Shore has asked a question. She will listen to the Premier's reply in silence.

Mr MORRIS IEMMA: She has once again slandered the hardworking clinicians who have been responsible for a remarkable improvement in access to surgery through the Predictable Surgery Program instituted over the past 18 months. When it comes to the sorts of ridiculous assertions that the honourable member for North Shore makes in this place, I will also listen to, and take the advice of, respected clinicians such as Professor Brian McCaughan and Dr Patrick Cregan, who head the Predictable Surgery Program. Time and time again, the honourable member for North Shore makes ridiculous and idiotic statements in the House, seeking to undermine the integrity of the work of those clinicians and the success that they have had in improving access to surgery for patients across the State as well as reducing the overall 12-month plus waiting list and waiting times on that list.

INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURE

Mrs KARYN PALUZZANO: My question without notice is directed to the Premier. What is the Government's response to the Liberal Party's call to reduce New South Wales' infrastructure spending?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Gosford and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition will cease calling out. The Premier has the call.

Mr MORRIS IEMMA: Infrastructure is of vital interest to the constituents of the honourable member for Penrith. We all awoke this morning to the extraordinary claim by the Commonwealth Treasurer, reported in today's *Australian Financial Review*, that New South Wales is building too much infrastructure.

Ms Peta Seaton: That is not what he said.

Mr MORRIS IEMMA: Oh, "It is not what he said", said the honourable member for Southern Highlands in embarrassment. I wonder what the Leader of the Opposition and the constituents of Penrith think about Mr Costello's comments this morning?

Mr Frank Sartor: He believed it.

Mr MORRIS IEMMA: That is right, he does believe it. He has to be kidding! In the past the Treasurer and the Prime Minister have roundly abused the States for not investing enough in infrastructure, particularly in ports. Now Mr Costello is trying to pin the blame for rising inflation on the States and their infrastructure spending. Talk about a catch-22 situation—damned if you do and damned if you don't. He cannot have it both ways. If the Treasurer thinks we are spending too much then let him download a copy of the 10-year, \$110 billion infrastructure plan that was released in May. It is on the web site. He can download it and then tell us which projects he would like us to cancel. Which projects does the Commonwealth Treasurer believe should be abandoned? The honourable member for Southern Highlands can assist him in that exercise.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Southern Highlands will come to order.

Mr MORRIS IEMMA: Queanbeyan is close to Canberra. Perhaps the Commonwealth Treasurer does not want the Queanbeyan Hospital redevelopment to proceed—or Wellington gaol, the Newcastle rail corridor, the Pacific Highway upgrade or Port Botany? Given that his Prime Minister is so interested in ports infrastructure, perhaps he does not want the Port Botany expansion to proceed. The fact is that we are proceeding and are proud to proceed with our investment of \$10 billion this year and \$110 billion over the next 10 years. I might add that the \$10 billion investment for this year amounts to an average of \$27 million per day. The Minister for Water Utilities is nodding his head in agreement.

Electricity accounts for 23 per cent of an upgrade, and we will not to stop our infrastructure investment to suit Mr Costello or the Leader of the Opposition. What I can say about the Commonwealth Treasurer is that his comments can be elevated to the classic statement: The dog ate my homework. The Commonwealth Treasurer comes in fast behind his Prime Minister. One minute we are not spending enough on infrastructure and the next minute we are spending too much, because he happens to get some bad economic news about interest rates. Of course, the Treasurer also sits on the sidelines and does nothing about petrol prices. That is classic Costello. When things are going well it is all due to the Commonwealth Treasurer's expertise in economic management, but at the first sign of bad news he blames someone else. When things go bad and there is bad economic news he blames someone else and he always starts with the States. It is always the fault of the States.

Mr Andrew Stoner: You always blame the Feds.

Mr MORRIS IEMMA: They deserve condemnation. They rip \$3 billion out of the State economy each year, so of course we will condemn them! That is an additional \$3 billion that we could be investing in even more infrastructure for the people of New South Wales, including the constituents of the honourable member for Penrith. It is typical Costello tactics—shift the blame, blame someone else and have a go at the States. Of course, as usual there is nothing but silence from those opposite and from the Leader of the Opposition. This week he has the opportunity to stand up and tell the Commonwealth Treasurer, "You have got to be kidding! New South Wales is spending record amounts on infrastructure, and we support the Government in its infrastructure plan for the State." Did we hear something from the Leader of the Opposition this morning? Did we hear him standing up to his colleagues in Canberra, supporting New South Wales, supporting the record infrastructure investment? No! What we got this morning is what we got on WorkChoices—silence. It is what we got on interest rates—silence. It is what we have had on petrol prices—silence. Now we have silence on Costello's criticism that we are spending too much on infrastructure.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Bathurst will come to order.

Mr Gerard Martin: Kiss of death Debnam!

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

Mr MORRIS IEMMA: That is right. We know that there has been a lot of tension of late between the Prime Minister and the Treasurer. Last week the Prime Minister was saying that the States were to blame for rising interest rates because they were not releasing enough land. Today the Federal Treasurer is saying the States are to blame because they are not spending enough on infrastructure. On the one hand the Prime Minister wants the States to release land for more housing, which we are doing, and on the other hand the Commonwealth Treasurer does not want the infrastructure to follow. He thinks we are spending too much. What we have now in Canberra, supported by the silence of the New South Wales Coalition, is a proposition in respect of which the Coalition stands for massive land release, new housing subdivisions, new estates and new suburbs, without any infrastructure because it does not suit Peter Costello's macroeconomic policy.

It does not suit Peter Costello because he has so mismanaged the Australian economy that interest rates and petrol prices are rising, and he wants someone else to blame. That is all it is, and so, as usual, he turns to the States: blame the States, blame the Chinese economy, blame the trade unions, blame the weather—perhaps even blame the fog around Canberra airport. Perhaps that is why he wants the Queanbeyan Hospital redevelopment stopped. He will blame anyone but Peter Costello, and the Leader of the Opposition sits there in silence. Does the Leader of the Opposition support the Prime Minister's position of wholesale land release? Does he support the building of new homes and new suburbs so that the infrastructure is delivered—the right infrastructure at the right time and in the right place—to service the needs of the people in the new housing subdivisions? Or does he support the old Liberal policy, as we saw in Kellyville in the north-west, of just letting it happen and perhaps one day roads, water and sewerage might follow? Just let the developers have a free hand and allow the new communities to be built without the infrastructure. That is the new Coalition policy, as determined by Canberra and to be slavishly followed by Canberra's lapdogs on the Opposition benches in New South Wales.

HOSPITAL WAITING LISTS

Mr RUSSELL TURNER: My question is directed to the Premier. In view of this letter, which proves that the Premier has demanded that New South Wales doctors fudge hospital waiting lists, will he now admit that waiting list figures for Orange Base Hospital have not decreased and remain at the record levels at which they were when he was Minister for Health?

Mr MORRIS IEMMA: That is almost as good as when the shadow Minister visited the honourable member's electorate a couple of weeks ago and rabbited on about radiology services and cardiac services, only to find that the cardiac services at Orange hospital are up and running and that we are proceeding to expressions of interest on the redevelopment of Orange hospital and Bloomfield hospital. While we are talking about the Central West, I might say how proud I am that the Bathurst hospital project is under way, with construction starting. That is part of the Government's record investment in Central Western Health infrastructure.

In relation to waiting lists, a version of this question was asked at the media conference of Professor McGaughan and Dr Patrick Cregan. The Surgical Services Task Force is overseeing the Sustainable Access to Surgery Program; the clinicians themselves are oversighting this. In response to the honourable member's question, I repeat the response I gave to the honourable member for North Shore. I will take the advice of people of the utmost professional integrity, like Professor McGaughan, Dr Cregan and the other clinicians on that task force—the persons who have been engaged to reform surgical services in this State. The honourable member and his shadow Minister made a miserable attempt to discredit the work of those clinicians. There is no way that people like Dr Cregan and Professor McGaughan would lend their professional standing and integrity to the Predictable Surgery Program if the honourable member's assertion were true.

What the honourable member for Orange says is utter nonsense. Despite the success in reducing the overall waiting list from 59,000 to 53, 000, and the long-wait list from 10,500 to 50, and improvements in waiting times, all that the honourable member for Orange can do is attempt once more to slur the integrity of the clinicians involved. Despite the chance that the Coalition had in its ten years in office to rebuild these hospitals, it never did. The Government has proceeded to retrofit all these hospitals—not just Orange but also Bloomfield, as well as the other hospital that services the Central West, Bathurst. Those three hospitals have had the biggest capital works in health infrastructure projects outside Sydney. Has the honourable member for Orange ever uttered one word of support for that program? Not one. That says it all.

RAIL SAFETY

Mr BARRY COLLIER: My question without notice is addressed to the Minister for Transport. What is the latest information on the Government's safety improvements to the rail network, and related matters?

Mr JOHN WATKINS: The Government's top priority in transport is safety. Every single passenger, whether on buses, trains or ferries, has the right to expect that safety is put first. That is why, when the McInerney commission into the tragic Waterfall rail accident in 2003 delivered its recommendations, we immediately set about implementing those changes with a quarter of a billion dollars of initial funding. One of the most complex issues to address was a change to RailCorp's passenger containment policy, or evaluating the best way to manage an emergency exit from a stricken train. The current policy does not allow passengers to evacuate themselves from a train—recognising the very real fact that the surrounding area can often be far more dangerous. In its work to replace the passenger containment policy, the Government has been mindful of the multitude of operating conditions across the rail network—from tunnels to railway bridges, from fenced sections of track to multi-track sections. Before any change of policy, all of those matters needed to be considered through a detailed and thorough risk assessment.

Today I advise the House of a new direction for emergency evacuation of trains. RailCorp will replace its current policy with one that involves movement of passengers to the next carriage as a first route of escape and, where that is not possible, a secondary exit route through the carriage doors. This policy has been developed after thorough analysis. Engineering experts were engaged to undertake a detailed risk assessment following consultation with the Independent Transport Safety and Reliability Regulator on the types of issues that needed to be examined. The risk assessment considered four containment levels: no containment, partial containment, moderate containment, and full containment, which is RailCorp's current policy. The risk assessment concluded that partial containment allowing passenger initiated exit when the train is stationary without a crew override facility provides the least overall risk of harm. The risk assessment also noted that there is no option that produces an outcome that is without risk.

The Government will invest in retrofitting an internal door release on 1,200 train cars over the next five years. Our 700 new train carriages will be fitted with a new door mechanism before they enter service. Passengers can operate the devices when the train is stationary, and if activated an alarm will be sent to the train crew. Passengers will be educated about when and how to use the new facilities, and staff will be thoroughly trained. I am advised that the Independent Transport Safety and Reliability Regulator has endorsed RailCorp's approach.

When considering rail safety it is worth asking what affect the Opposition's policy to cut 29,000 jobs would have on our safety regulators. The Independent Transport Safety and Reliability Regulator would almost certainly go, as would the other safety agency, the Office of Transport Safety Investigation. Safety experts at RailCorp, State Transit and Sydney Ferries would all be classed "back of office" and be targeted first by the Opposition. But it is a moot point, because to meet the 29,000 target the Opposition would have to move on train drivers, police, nurses and teachers in any case. The Government will look at any practical measure to improve public transport options. That is why I was fascinated by a small personal advertisement at page 49 of the *Daily Telegraph* of last Tuesday, 22 August, *Daily Telegraph*. I am not sure whether you saw it, Mr Speaker, but you would need a magnifying glass to read the fine print. It read:

Who is going to make our Trains run on Time?

Naturally, I was interested in that. The answer? It gave a web site, www.peterdebnam.com.au. So, despite the fact that 91 per cent of trains are now running on time, compared to 61 per cent a year before, I was interested to check what was on that web site. True to form, there was nothing there about rail.

Mr Brad Hazzard: Point of order. Minister, with all the noise from the Government benches, we missed that web site. Could you repeat the address—www.peterdebnam.com.au?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Wakehurst will take his point of order or resume his seat.

Mr Brad Hazzard: I could not hear the Minister, so I asked him to repeat it.

Mr SPEAKER: If the honourable member for Wakehurst made less noise, he would be able to hear the Minister's reply.

Mr JOHN WATKINS: I checked the web site. There was nothing at all on it about rail. All it contained were gratuitous photographs of the Leader of the Opposition in his Speedos! There is a law being broken here.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The House will observe decorum.

Mr JOHN WATKINS: There is a law being broken here—and I do not mean indecent exposure! I am actually referring to false advertising. The Leader of the Opposition did not have to advertise that he has no transport policies, because we already know that he has none at all. Have a look at the Liberal Party web site disclaimer—just in case anyone made the mistake of taking the Opposition seriously! It stipulates:

We make no statements or guarantees relating to the operation of our Electronic Services, or that the information and material provided through our Electronic Services is accurate, suitable for you, always available, complete or current.

We encourage you to check the accuracy and currency of any information provided through our Electronic Services before referring others to that information.

We will be very careful about referring other people to that information. I enjoyed the advertisements put in the personal columns of the newspaper by the Leader of the Opposition. Underneath that advertisement my eye was taken by another one inserted by the Leader of the Opposition, which said, "Barry, I regret not getting your number. Please call." Things have come to an impasse when the Leader of the Opposition has to put advertisements in the paper to communicate with the bloke who sits next to him.

MINISTER FOR ENERGY AND WESTSIDE PROPERTY DEVELOPMENTS

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Energy, Minister for Ports and Waterways, and Minister Assisting the Treasurer on Business and Economic Regulatory Reform. Given that he publicly claimed to have previously referred for investigation to the Independent Commission against Corruption [ICAC] his interest in Westside Property Developments, but that the ICAC revealed it had received no complaint in 2002 and the Minister did not request such an investigation, will he explain his attempt to mislead the public?

Mr JOSEPH TRIPODI: On 16 August 2002 the Independent Commission against Corruption [ICAC] released a statement advising that I "expressed a willingness to co-operate with the ICAC in anticipation of an investigation [I] thought might be undertaken in relation to Westside". I agree with the ICAC's interpretation of my action in 2002. I also wrote to the ICAC on the morning of 16 August inviting it to investigate claims about my financial circumstances that were published in that day's *Sydney Morning Herald*.

SCHOOL SAFETY

Ms VIRGINIA JUDGE: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Education and Training. Will the Minister inform the House about the latest measures to improve safety in our schools?

Ms CARMEL TEBBUTT: I start by reiterating that schools in New South Wales are among the safest places in our community. Nonetheless, one incident of violence is one incident too many. Violence in schools cannot be tolerated. As I have said on many occasions, students have the right to a safe learning environment and teachers have the right to a safe workplace. In a report dated September 2002, Professor Andrew Gonczi stated:

It is safe to say that overall, serious violence in New South Wales schools is rare.

However, in an education system with more than 741,000 students and 80,000 teachers across 2,246 schools in New South Wales, incidents occur. In most cases, schools can deal with those incidents under our strong discipline and anti-bullying plans, which complement the Premier's respect and responsibility agenda. We have strengthened the suspension and expulsion procedures so that principals can suspend or, in serious cases, expel the few students who are violent or use a weapon, or who threaten such action. In addition, as part of the Government's school behaviour and discipline plan we have established 13 new behaviour schools and 23 new tutorial centres since 2002. By 2007, 22 suspension centres will be operating.

These alternative education centres provide students with targeted support, and they are working. Early data from the suspension centre initiative shows that around 89 per cent of students who attend a suspension centre do not return. Initiatives like these, introduced by the Government, keep our schools safe and provide options for troubled students. We will not apologise for taking this decisive action. We will keep on working to prevent disruptive behaviour and violence, and to make sure that our students can learn in an environment that is free from violence and disruption.

A recent court decision involving a student enrolled in a mainstream government high school in 2001 demonstrates the type of issues I am talking about. The student's history of destructive conduct outside the New South Wales government school system was not disclosed to the enrolling school. Within weeks of the student's enrolment his behaviour had become a serious concern, culminating in his threatening students and teachers with a knife and a baseball bat. Had his prior history been known, he would never have been enrolled without a comprehensive risk assessment and behaviour management plan. Potentially he may have been placed in a special behaviour school or some other education setting. In this case the court found that the department had an obligation to evaluate and control the risks posed by enrolling students. Although all students have an unequivocal right to an education, that right must be met concurrently with the right of other students and staff to a safe environment. That is why we have introduced a new enrolment form, asking parents to inform the school if their child has a previous history of violence or related issues.

Today I can update the House on further measures the Government is introducing for students who cannot be adequately accommodated in mainstream schools. The Government will introduce legislation to provide the director general with the power to direct a student who is severely disruptive or violent, or who poses a risk to other students and teachers to an alternative education setting, such as a behaviour school, a tutorial centre or some other alternative education setting. This will apply if, after a comprehensive risk assessment, the student's local school is found to be unsuitable having regard to the safety of all students and staff at the school.

I can reassure honourable members that in taking these steps we are not signalling that we have given up on this small group of students who have significant behaviour problems—quite the opposite. Time out from a regular school environment with extra support, a tailored learning plan and teachers trained to deal with behaviour problems can save a student's education. However, this point seems to be lost on those sitting opposite. The Government takes seriously its commitment to a public education system that provides a quality education for everyone. Herein lies one of the great challenges for public education, and it is a challenge that people on the other side will never get.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of The Nationals will cease calling out.

Ms CARMEL TEBBUTT: If we want to make our public education system available to everyone, we need to make sure that we can accommodate the minority of students whose behaviour could prevent others from learning and could place students and teachers at risk.

[Interruption]

Where you send your children is more important. It is a shame that those opposite do not take these issues seriously.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Deputy Leader of the Opposition will come to order.

Mr Barry O'Farrell: Give them support.

Ms CARMEL TEBBUTT: That is exactly right. But the Opposition labelled behaviour schools as dumping grounds. They insult the teachers who work in these schools. They insult the students who attend these are schools. The Leader of the Opposition and his education spokesperson, the honourable member for Wakehurst, are so out of touch with real life that their only solution is to offer more counsellors.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Wakehurst will contain his enthusiasm.

Ms CARMEL TEBBUTT: Counsellors in our schools do a wonderful job. They work very hard; they support troubled students. But where will the funding come from for the extra counsellors the Opposition has promised? Do we add that to the \$20 billion list of unfunded promises, the promises that they will not tell

anyone how they will pay for? If I were a teacher threatened by a student with a baseball bat, by a student holding up a chair or by a student with a knife, I would not want just more counsellors. I would want something a little more satisfactory than that. Members of the Opposition have shown how out of touch they are.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Minister for Aboriginal Affairs will come to order. The Minister for Fair Trading will come to order.

Ms CARMEL TEBBUTT: These students need a wake-up call, time out from the mainstream school environment and a chance to improve behaviour. They need to reconnect with education through support from trained teachers.

Mr Barry O'Farrell: Absolutely! Give them that support.

Ms CARMEL TEBBUTT: That is exactly right, and that is what is available in our behaviour schools.

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

Ms CARMEL TEBBUTT: Perhaps the honourable member for Wakehurst should visit one of our behaviour schools, because he seems to be lost in some sort of 1970s time warp.

Mr Brad Hazzard: Mr Speaker—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! When the Minister suggested that the honourable member for Wakehurst or another member of the Opposition visit one of these schools, she did not mean right now.

[*Interruption*]

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

[*Interruption*]

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Wakehurst to order for the second time. He will resume his seat.

[*Interruption*]

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

Ms CARMEL TEBBUTT: Perhaps the Opposition should ask the honourable member for Orange, who supports our approach and who, on 16 August, was quoted as supporting a suspension centre in his area. The Opposition clearly is not united. Perhaps the Leader of the Opposition and the honourable member for Wakehurst should speak to the honourable member for Orange.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber. The Minister has the call and will be heard in silence.

Ms CARMEL TEBBUTT: It is not just the Government that is saying that behaviour schools are delivering results. In a recent letter to the *Sydney Morning Herald*, a community member, who is part of an external feedback group for one such behaviour school, the Highlands School, stated:

[The school] is not a school which figures in any league tables, nor is it likely to produce a name on the Premier's list of HSC high achievers, but it does demonstrate what is possible when inspired leadership and motivated staff rise to a challenge. They have given hope to many children who came to the school with none.

He continued:

In most cases, within weeks the change for the better is dramatic.

I encourage the honourable member for Wakehurst to visit some of our behaviour schools. I congratulate the principal, Ross Bowey, on the behaviour work he is doing at the Highlands School. Our initiatives are providing

support for troubled students and at the same time making sure that our schools are free from violence and disruption.

Questions without notice concluded.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Routine of Business: Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders

Mr CARL SCULLY (Smithfield—Minister for Police) [3.31 p.m.]: I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to provide that, at this sitting, unless otherwise ordered, the House adjourn without motion moved at the conclusion of the consideration of the urgent motion until Wednesday 30 August 2006 at 10.00 a.m.

Mr PETER DEBNAM (Vaucluse—Leader of the Opposition) [3.31 p.m.]: I make the point to the House that matters have come to this because, after 12 years of trashing the economy in New South Wales, the Government has sent the budget into crisis and is now pulling back funds from front-line services right across New South Wales.

Mr Milton Orkopoulos: You are sacking 29,000 people.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Minister for Aboriginal Affairs will come to order.

Mr PETER DEBNAM: The Minister for Aboriginal Affairs is a member of a Cabinet that has sacked front-line people across New South Wales. There are currently vacancies for 1,285 nurses in New South Wales and 650 police, and Cabinet has cut back on Roads and Traffic Authority services.

Mr Carl Scully: Point of order: We try to accommodate the Leader of the Opposition because of the position he holds, but this is going well beyond the leave of the motion.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. The Leader of the Opposition is complying with the standing orders.

Mr PETER DEBNAM: This is all about the budget crisis in New South Wales. For the last couple of years, the people of New South Wales have been asking the simple question: Where did all the money go? That was the straightforward question that has been asked for two years right across this State. Now people are simply saying that New South Wales is broke.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Members of the Government will cease calling out.

Mr PETER DEBNAM: Who is responsible for that? It is not just Bob Carr, who escaped from this Chamber, the Parliament and the people of New South Wales. It is also the Premier, who has been deeply involved in the strategies and policies of the Labor Government for his entire time in this Parliament. This year the Premier was involved in determining the budget that has sent this State into a \$700 million deficit. In an election year, when the Labor Party tells people that it is going into deficit to the extent of \$700 million, one can guarantee that the deficit will be at least double that amount. We first heard that news in the estimates hearings during the past 24 hours. The Government is softening us up again to tell us the figure is going to be bigger than predicted. When Government members pretend that the deficit will miraculously bounce back to become a \$300 million surplus next year, we know they are all kidding. We can guarantee that in New South Wales the deficit created by this Labor Government, which will reach its 12-year mark at the next election, will be in excess of \$1 billion and that next year there will be another \$1 billion deficit, even by the Government's own forecast.

The Government has not told the truth on any day in its 12 years of running this State. The reality is that the Government has public servants striking today because they are frustrated over the Government not delivering resources to the frontline so that they can do their jobs. It is not just the people in Parliament who speak to the Opposition about the way in which the Government has mismanaged the budget, but the train drivers, the nurses, the doctors, the police and the teachers. They simply ask how come the Government protects a burgeoning bureaucracy, yet cuts off the fingers and toes of people at the front line. Time and time again the Government is starving front-line services of the funds that are desperately needed. The Leader of the House,

who failed in every single portfolio and is now failing as Minister for Police, has managed a rundown of police numbers to the point where 650 police are being ripped out of New South Wales.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the House will resume his seat.

Mr PETER DEBNAM: Every single local area command in this States has lost police officers. It is no wonder then that the number one issue in every single community and every single neighbourhood across this State is youth crime and antisocial behaviour.

Mr John Price: That is a lie.

Mr PETER DEBNAM: The honourable member for Maitland says it is a lie, but he knows the truth. In his electorate and in every other electorate across the State there is concern with youth crime and antisocial behaviour and the lack of police numbers. Instead of standing up for his community, he has become an apologist for the worst Labor administration that anybody has seen in Australia. The Government has Parliament House staff on strike today simply because the Government has mismanaged the budget and is not delivering resources to the front-line people who want to serve the people of New South Wales. Government members should be ashamed of themselves.

Question—That the motion be agreed to—put.

The House divided.

Ayes, 48

Ms Allan	Mr Gibson	Mr Pearce
Mr Amery	Mr Greene	Mr Price
Ms Andrews	Ms Hay	Ms Saliba
Mr Bartlett	Mr Hickey	Mr Sartor
Mr Black	Mr Hunter	Mr Scully
Mr Brown	Ms Judge	Mr Shearan
Ms Burney	Ms Keneally	Mr Stewart
Mr Campbell	Mr Lynch	Mr Tripodi
Mr Chaytor	Mr McBride	Mr Watkins
Mr Collier	Mr McLeay	Mr West
Mr Corrigan	Ms Megarrity	Mr Whan
Mr Crittenden	Mr Mills	Mr Yeadon
Mr Daley	Mr Morris	
Ms D'Amore	Mr Newell	
Mr Debus	Ms Nori	<i>Tellers,</i>
Ms Gadiel	Mr Orkopoulos	Mr Ashton
Mr Gaudry	Mrs Paluzzano	Mr Martin

Noes, 38

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

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Motion agreed to.

CONSIDERATION OF URGENT MOTIONS

State Plan

Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro) [3.42 p.m.]: My motion is urgent as it is about the New South Wales State Plan, a document that the Government is working on that contains priorities and challenges facing New South Wales for the next 10 years. My motion to debate that matter is urgent because over the last few weeks of the parliamentary recess a number of consultations have been held across New South Wales at which members of the community have had input into the State Plan. Those consultations involved randomly selected interest groups and community leaders from various parts of the State. They have provided the Government with some terrific feedback about their concerns for New South Wales over the next 10 years.

My motion is urgent because it is important for this House to emphasise the importance of long-term planning, planning by more than just the electoral cycle. I noted the reaction of the Opposition earlier when I foreshadowed the importance of debating this motion today, because the motion seeks to condemn the Opposition for undermining the State Plan. I note that the Opposition has no long-term plan for New South Wales. People from New South Wales are saying, "Great idea, Morris Iemma, to have a 10-year plan, a good initiative. It is good to get out of the same old electoral cycle which sees elections in three-year and four-year time lines set up for State plans." The electoral cycle is not the way to plan for the long-term future of the State.

Mr Donald Page: Point of order: The member is clearly debating the issue, he is not establishing urgency. I ask you to bring him back to establishing urgency.

Mr DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Monaro is in order. He may continue.

Mr STEVE WHAN: It is urgent to debate this matter today because these consultations have been ongoing for the past few weeks. They are a recent development, unlike the Opposition's pathetic attempt to yet again go on about tunnels in Sydney. New South Wales people have been giving feedback at Queanbeyan, Coffs Harbour, Wollongong, Wagga Wagga, Newcastle and a variety of other towns across the State. The feedback deserves to be heard in this place; it deserves to have its importance recognised in today's debate. We need to make sure that we are considering how we plan for the next 10 years, and that is a lot more that can be said about the Opposition.

We need to debate this motion today because the people of New South Wales need to hear how the Opposition's plan extends to about 23 March next year—and it is a desperate plan at that! It is held together by band-aids in the hope that the Coalition will not implode before 23 March 2007. It is urgent that today we hear about the Opposition's lack of planning and, as the Premier said earlier today, the Opposition's desperation in coming up with a \$20 billion grab bag of unfunded promises. The Opposition's desperation was evident when I foreshadowed this motion. They simply want to drag this plan down and not participate in the debate or listen to the people of New South Wales, who want longer-term planning.

The Opposition is desperate not to hear that the people in New South Wales do not want its 29,000 job cuts, its \$23 billion in unfunded promises or its lack of credibility. The people of New South Wales want the Premier's new approach, which is about planning for the future of New South Wales. That is why it is important to debate this motion today. Members of communities around the State have made their voices heard at community planning forums. Thousands have accessed the web site and put forward their thoughts. People from my electorate have told me that they like the idea of longer-term planning for this State. They reject the Opposition's prescription of a plan held together with band-aids and unfunded promises that gets them to 23 March next year. That is why this motion is urgent and should be debated in this place today.

Lane Cove Tunnel

Mr ANDREW STONER (Oxley—Leader of The Nationals) [3.49 p.m.]: My motion should be given priority for debate today because the Premier told Channel Seven in March this year:

I am not interfering with the Lane Cove Tunnel construction schedule at all.

Guess what? He has been caught lying his head off and misleading the people of New South Wales. This issue must be debated today because Labor is using taxpayers' money to buy electoral advantage, and that deserves to go to the Independent Commission Against Corruption [ICAC]. This matter is urgent because the Premier, who has learned well from his mentor, Graham "whatever it takes" Richardson, is trying to buy a result at the ballot box with taxpayers' hard-earned money. A stench of corruption now hangs over the Iemma Labor Government. I must go through all the issues step by step if I am to establish priority. If the Government were confident that it got the Lane Cove Tunnel right, as is its responsibility, it would be confident that it could make the surface road changes without traffic chaos. That follows; it is a process of logic. We are still three months away from the tunnel opening date and Premier Morris Iemma wants to delay surface road changes until after the election. The tunnel has not even opened but the Government is prepared to spend taxpayers' money to shelve the road changes until after the election.

The next process of logic is that the Government already knows either that its management of the project will be a disaster or it is not prepared to take a chance before the election. It is using taxpayers' money to buy time until after the election, which is outright corruption. It is either one or the other. If the Minister for Roads had done his job the Government would have nothing to fear and there would be no need to waste taxpayers' money. It would just roll out the surface road changes as per the contract. But if the Premier does not take that challenge he is admitting by default that he and his entire Government are corrupt.

This matter is urgent. I challenge the Government to come clean today about its grubby, shonky, backroom deals by answering these basic questions: What meetings has the Premier and/or the Minister for Roads had with Connector Motorways in relation to these surface road changes? What agreements has the Iemma Labor Government entered into with Connector Motorways relating to delaying surface road changes? It is that simple, and that is why this matter must be debated today. The Government must do the right thing, come clean about its dealings with the operator and start the surface road changes before the election, or it must explain itself to the people via the ICAC. As for the hapless, bungling Minister for Roads—the latest in a conga line of disasters starting with Scully, Costa and Tripodi—it is time for him to go. Eric Roozendaal will go down in history as the Minister who managed to lose \$200 million worth of taxpayers' money in under a year. Is it any wonder that, despite record tax revenue, the Iemma Labor Government is broke?

Mr Gerard Martin: Point of order: The Leader of the Nationals is misleading the House. The mob opposite lost \$900 million of taxpayers' money on the bungled transport link. What about the \$50 million they lost on Luna Park?

Mr DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. The honourable member for Bathurst will resume his seat.

Mr ANDREW STONER: This matter must be given priority today because it does not stop there. The Iemma Labor Government delivered a double whammy to the people of New South Wales. Not only will it delay road surfaces to the Lane Cove Tunnel at great expense to taxpayers—and we are not talking small figures like the \$12 million wasted on the Snowy Hydro float or the \$1 million wasted on the plan for the State Plan that the Premier wants to debate today—this will cost taxpayers tens of millions of dollars. But there's more! This is the steak knife that Premier Morris Iemma is sticking into the hearts of taxpayers, and there is more compensation to come. If this grubby Labor Government is re-elected it will be up for a whole lot more compensation when it is forced to renege on surface road changes. Yesterday's announcement was not about making changes; it was simply about buying time. To put it into context, the backflip on the Cross City Tunnel road changes looks like it could cost up to \$96 million in business consideration fees. The business consideration fee for the Lane Cove Tunnel is \$80 million. [*Time expired.*]

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

The House divided.

Ayes, 48

Ms Allan	Mr Gibson	Mr Pearce
Mr Amery	Mr Greene	Mr Price
Ms Andrews	Ms Hay	Ms Saliba
Mr Bartlett	Mr Hickey	Mr Sartor
Mr Black	Mr Hunter	Mr Scully
Mr Brown	Ms Judge	Mr Shearan
Ms Burney	Ms Keneally	Mr Stewart
Mr Campbell	Mr Lynch	Mr Tripodi
Mr Chaytor	Mr McBride	Mr Watkins
Mr Collier	Mr McLeay	Mr West
Mr Corrigan	Ms Megarrity	Mr Whan
Mr Crittenden	Mr Mills	Mr Yeadon
Mr Daley	Mr Morris	
Ms D'Amore	Mr Newell	
Mr Debus	Ms Nori	<i>Tellers,</i>
Ms Gadiel	Mr Orkopoulos	Mr Ashton
Mr Gaudry	Mrs Paluzzano	Mr Martin

Noes, 38

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

Question resolved in the affirmative.

STATE PLAN**Urgent Motion**

Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro) [4.00 p.m.]: I move:

That this House:

- (1) congratulates the Government for the development of a State Plan which will guide the way that the State Government improves services, sets priorities and meets the challenges facing New South Wales over the next 10 years;
- (2) thanks the thousands of community members across the State who have participated in community forums and online feedback forms to have input into the plan;
- (3) condemns the Opposition for undermining the plan, and only presenting the people in New South Wales with a series of unfunded promises; and
- (4) notes the Opposition has no long-term plan for New South Wales.

When the Premier announced that the New South Wales Government would develop a State Plan to guide the way that we improve key services, set priorities and plan to meet the challenges of the next 10 years, most people in the community welcomed the announcement. In some quarters there was certainly a little cynicism. But in the weeks since the Premier's announcement groups and communities have come on board to support the plan, identifying their key issues and joining in the processes around the State.

I attended the State Plan consultations in Queanbeyan—I will talk more about that later—and I noted people's very positive responses to the plan and the process. I highlight particularly the fact that several people have mentioned to me how much they welcome a government looking beyond the electoral cycle. Many people have told me that they are now starting to see and appreciate the new approach that the Premier brings to government. This State Plan process has revealed that. It is a longer-term approach that involves consulting the people, not just interest groups, and listening to their priorities. A local councillor who was at the plan consultations highlighted that point yesterday. He told me that he appreciated being part of the consultations. He said that he was starting to see the Premier putting his mark on the Government and that he liked what he saw.

It is a new direction for New South Wales. Since the launch of the draft State Plan, I am pleased to report that there have been more than 35,000 visits to the State Plan web site. I encourage everyone in the community to have their say through that web site. The Government has already received more than 1,000 submissions from community members about the State Plan, with the closing date for submissions still two weeks away. I am delighted to report that the people of Monaro and south-eastern New South Wales had their say through thoughtful contributions that will help to guide the way that New South Wales is run.

The community and stakeholder consultations conducted over the past two weeks have demonstrated overwhelming support for the development of a State Plan, and the process is not yet complete. By mid-September hundreds and hundreds of community members across New South Wales will have taken part in community consultations, giving their ideas on the State Plan directly to members of the Cabinet. In addition, more than 1,000 community leaders, including local government, will give their input directly to members of Cabinet at the community forums. I am delighted to report to the House that the forum in Queanbeyan in my electorate went very well. The Minister for Planning attended the forum and was most welcome. He was present for the three meetings that were held during the afternoon, from which I believe he gathered some valuable information.

The Queanbeyan meeting made several recommendations that I will run through briefly. When asked, "What is the New South Wales Government doing well in your area?", community members in attendance replied, "Delivering on promises". They mentioned in particular the hospital, the ambulance station and efforts to provide road bypasses for Queanbeyan. They said that the Government is doing well in providing primary schools in Queanbeyan, supporting trade and skills initiatives—they particularly welcomed the new trade school that was announced when Cabinet was in town recently—conservation of the natural environment, and national parks and catchment management. When asked "What could the New South Wales Government be doing better?", they mentioned increased support for New South Wales in cross-border issues, long-term water management, a reduction in heavy vehicle traffic, creating local employment pathways and improving the provision of health and transport services in rural areas. They are all extremely relevant points that will be taken into account in the planning process.

People were asked to rank the 29 priorities in the draft State Plan and to state what they believe are the most important to their areas. The community members who attended the meeting said that priority 4 of the plan—"More harmonious communities through increased community participation"—was a key priority. During many of the discussions that I heard people talked about the need for governments at all levels to show leadership in enhancing community participation and the acceptance of people who come from different cultural backgrounds. People said that priority 5,—"Health services meeting key national benchmarks"—was very important, as were the priorities of "Reduced avoidable hospital admissions", "Increased proportion of budget dedicated to prevention and early intervention" and "Rural and regional New South Wales with a growing skills base and increased business".

I sat in on the community leaders forum, which was separate to the forum with local government leaders. I had the privilege of sitting at a table with several people from the electorate of the honourable member for Bega as well as my constituents. Overwhelmingly, their number one priority was to have the Government do more about early intervention, which is priority 13 on the draft list—"Increased proportion of budget dedicated to prevention and early intervention". They talked particularly about working with people who have problems with drugs and alcohol, mental illness and a range of other issues across the social sector. This motion is about thanking the thousands of community members across the State who have participated in the forums and who have submitted online feedback forms. They have made very helpful contributions and the New South Wales Government is now better placed to improve services across the State. People have told the Government that they have also found this exercise useful. I refer honourable members to some input from the web site. One correspondent wrote:

It would be really great to be able to say that this new draft State draft plan turns out to be very successful in providing an excellent future for our next generation.

Another wrote:

Good idea ... We need more action, less politics. And a much stronger focus on providing rural and regional Australia with what it is due.

People have told us that they are watching to make sure that the New South Wales Government implements the plan when it is finalised. Another correspondent wrote:

This State Plan is a positive move and the government should be congratulated on it, however, tangible deliverables need to be seen, sooner rather than later.

I am pleased to say that the New South Wales Government hears this feedback and finds it useful. We are committed to implementing the final results of the consultation and to making sure that this State Plan is measurable in future budgets—and for more than just one election term. Our approach is in stark contrast to that of honourable members opposite, whose objective is to undermine the plan. We witnessed that today—the giggling and carrying on about a State Plan. What is so strange about wanting to plan for 10 years? People do it—they plan for their lives. In fact, it is something every government should be doing. The fact that this is the first time it has been done is a great credit to the current Premier.

How will the Opposition ensure that the community has a say in how the New South Wales Government goes about improving services and setting priorities? Does it have a plan that will assist New South Wales to meet the challenges that will face this State during the next 10 years? Does the Opposition have a long-term plan for New South Wales? No, the Opposition barely has a plan to get it through to 24 March 2007. All members of the Opposition ever do is carp, criticise and complain. Members of the Opposition refuse to get on board and commit themselves to what will emerge from the consultation on this plan, that is, goals that are almost universally supported by the community. They refuse to get on board because it does not suit their approach of a grab bag of policies formed on the run and saying yes to everyone who turns up at the door. They have no plan, just a patchwork of unfunded promises. They are trying to make it to March without imploding.

The Liberals and The Nationals are on their own in bagging the State Plan. The real challenge for them is to get up in this Chamber and say something constructive, but that probably will not happen. They will probably get up and bag the plan, but I would welcome it if the honourable member for Bega did something other than that. I have not spoken to a single resident of Monaro who does not agree that governments need to plan for longer than the electoral cycle. Underneath the development of the State Plan are the State infrastructure plan and long-term health plan, which have also involved consultation with the community. The Opposition has also bagged those plans, as it bagged the 10-year, \$110 billion investment in the State's infrastructure. The Opposition bagged it, but last week we heard this plaintive little cry from The Nationals. "Excuse me, sir," they said to their leaders in the Liberal Party, "We would like to have a country infrastructure plan." The Nationals do not want to have a State infrastructure plan or a State Plan; they want a country infrastructure plan.

The Nationals, the once great Country Party, know that they will be ignored by the city Liberals. They know that the grab bag of promises is not going to include rural seats because the Liberals are more interested in placating voters who live on Sydney's north shore. In this House the Leader of The Nationals talks only about roads in Sydney, not roads in the country. While we heard a plaintive cry for a country infrastructure plan, there was no action on the part of the Opposition. There were no commitments, just a grab bag of promises to take it up to 24 March 2007. We heard nothing to match the Government's historic commitment to develop a 10-year plan. It will involve better planning for New South Wales and a new approach to government from the Premier. He is showing how we should deliver good services in New South Wales.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega) [4.10 p.m.]: During the next 10 minutes I shall spell out the Opposition's commitments and its plan for this State following the election on 24 March 2007. It is interesting that the honourable member for Monaro should be spruiking the concept of a State Plan. One question that should be asked is: Why did the honourable member for Monaro attend the Federal redistribution hearing last week and talk about Eden-Monaro? Does that mean that the honourable member for Monaro is planning to jump ship or does he realise that he cannot win the State seat of Monaro? The honourable member is running scared from David Madew, so he trotted along to the boundary commission hearings relating to the Federal electorate.

Mr Steve Whan: Point of order: It is clear that the honourable member for Bega is not addressing the substance of the motion. However, I would be delighted to answer his question. I protect the interests of the

people of Monaro and their interests are not served by having some remote member who should be servicing Wagga Wagga. If the Nationals had any guts—

Mr DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Order! The point of order has some validity. If the honourable member for Monaro gives me an opportunity I will ask the honourable member for Bega to return to the motion. The honourable member for Bega has the call.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: The honourable member for Monaro knows that he will lose his seat in 2007. He is planning his longer-term political strategy to contest the Federal election at the end of next year, after being dumped by the people of Monaro because of his dismal representation on issues such as Snowy Hydro, health care, disability services and mental health care. There have been issues around the Family Carer Support Program in Monaro. Where was the honourable member for Monaro in relation to that program? He sat silent. He has been talking about Queanbeyan Hospital. How many years behind schedule is that? I think it is a whole four years, and we have not seen a brick laid.

The honourable member has the hide to move a motion relating to a plan for a Government that has been in office for 11½ years. It is nothing more than an attempt to recreate the current Premier, who is part of a Government that was described as a snake. It is a snake that shed its skin when Carr and Egan left, but it is still the same snake. The Government comprises Ministers such as the Treasurer, Michael Costa—he is very popular in the Parliament today, let me tell you—the Minister for Police, and the Minister for Planning, topped off with the Premier, who is nothing more than a factional hack and has been for years. Now the Premier is producing nice glossy documents and running around the State pretending to have some form of consultation with local communities and trying to fix the Government's problems.

Ms Marie Andrews: Point of Order: We are debating a motion relating the State Plan. The honourable member for Bega has hardly mentioned the words "State Plan". I draw your attention to the matter of relevance in this debate.

Mr DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Order! I uphold the point of order. The honourable member for Bega should start speaking about one of the four paragraphs in the motion. I suggest that he do so immediately.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I would like it noted for the record that I am voting for Marie Andrews for Peats. With regard to her preselection she has John Della Bosca and his wife circling around, looking to undo her in a preselection for Peats. As we know, the Premier has had to step in and save her. Let me come back to the motion at hand, because I have excited Government members by making the point that the honourable member for Monaro is not long for the political world and not long for this Parliament. I shall talk about some of the issues that really matter to the community. Does the Government's plan address the 215,000 people who are currently on the New South Wales dental waiting list? It does not do that.

The Coalition's intention, when it is in government, is to commit to a policy designed to reduce that dental waiting list. It is about providing increased remuneration for dental professionals in the public sector, and it is about providing more dental and paradental clinicians and establishing a clinical institute for dental health. I will move beyond dental care and talk about nurses. Does the plan do anything to address the crisis in our hospitals? The Opposition recognises that nurses are the backbone of this State, so why does the Government not do the same? We have a plan to commit \$207 million over four years to improve nursing degree courses by ensuring that a greater amount of time is spent in clinical practice in hospitals or other health settings. We will increase training opportunities for registered and enrolled nurses wishing to re-enter the workforce. We will appoint an extra 50 clinical nurse and educators over our first term in office and we will provide funding for additional 500 nurses. The list goes on.

Let me talk about the delivery of health care in New South Wales, particularly in the regions. The honourable member for Monaro has been out promoting that awful Greater Southern Area Health Service, which has become nothing more than a moribund administration attempting to deliver to 47 hospitals across one-third of the State. We have a plan to reappoint local hospital boards in the health system. We have a plan to establish clinical institutes designed to assist local hospital boards to deliver front-line medical services and to assist doctors and nurses to get on with their daily routines instead of having to deal with the Greater Southern Area Health Service and the Department of Health.

We have a plan to ensure that health services in the bush are improved. We will remove the Greater Southern Area Health Service. For our region, that will be a big plus and step forward in health care. We also

will require greater quality care in our hospital system by seeking to reduce the rate of hospital-acquired infections. We will retain the New South Wales Clinical Excellence Commission. We will look to establishing quality and risk management programs. We will also provide stronger communities by backing our volunteers, which is more than this lot opposite can say. We will look at a housing and home buyer rescue package, again designed to put this State back on track.

The Labor Government has killed this State's housing sector with its vendor duty and its numerous changes to land tax over the past couple of years. All of a sudden, six months out from a State election, the Government's spin machine is putting out the message, "We are a new Government. We are actually going to start to listen." Quite frankly, some of the feedback that we have had from the forums to date has not been all that positive. One high-profile businessperson who attended a forum on the North Coast made it very clear that the meeting's structure was not conducive to open and frank discussion, particularly regarding the needs of employers and industry. Social and welfare sector representatives were there, as were people from the business sector. The forum just did not work.

The Government is doing nothing more than continuing the spin for which it is renowned. It is well practised and well versed at spin, which it has used now for 11½ years. People have had an absolute gutful of this. One need only ask any fisherman in this State how they feel about the marine park issue or speak to any New South Wales farmer about native vegetation to know how they feel. Go into Snowy communities and see how those people feel about the Snowy River and the lack of planning around that. For the past couple of weeks, every day on South East ABC there has been story after story about the state of the Snowy. The honourable member for Monaro has been ducking for cover. The Government still has not set up that magical scientific committee, but yet again the honourable member for Monaro has nothing to say in relation to that.

We know it is the plan of the honourable member for Monaro to vacate this place in March 2007 and plan for the Federal election. Gary Nairn is sitting there, rubbing his hands, and waiting for the honourable member for Monaro to contest the Federal seat. There is one problem in that: Mr Kel Watt seems to be running about the countryside! So I look forward to the result of the preselection contest for that Federal seat between the honourable member for Monaro and Mr Kel Watt. The fact is that the honourable member for Monaro is running scared from David Madew, who is out there working hard, representing local communities, giving a voice to local communities—not promoting some supercilious plan, such as this State Plan, which is designed to do nothing more than create the perception that the Government is doing something, when it simply has not done anything for 12 years. [*Time expired.*]

Ms MARIE ANDREWS (Peats) [4.20 p.m.]: It gives me much pleasure to speak in support of this motion. I take this opportunity to thank the people of the Central Coast for their input to the State Plan. I was very pleased to attend the Gosford community leaders meeting on 23 August and hear what my local community has to say about the plan, and where they think we can do better. The Deputy Premier, the Hon. John Watkins, and the Minister for the Central Coast, the Hon. Grant McBride, were in attendance at all the meetings and they listened intently to what the people of the Central Coast had to say.

Now I am able to report to the House that there are a number of areas in which people think we are doing well, including improved policing and reduction in crime. The people of the Central Coast also acknowledge our efforts to improve arterial and regional roads in some areas, and they are pleased at the improvements in the reliability of train services, during both peak and off-peak periods. Of course, they also have a range of suggestions for improvement, and we are grateful for their efforts in these areas as well. The people of the Central Coast would like to have governments help to increase local employment opportunities and to have improved support and education for new parents. They would also like to hear more about crime prevention and managing anti-social behaviour. We hear them. This input from the Central Coast residents will be fed into the government agencies, help to determine priorities and allocation of priorities, and guide the way we deliver services and provide direction to the State.

Apart from community forums, with people randomly selected in a range of communities round the State, there will also be special consultation sessions with 750 community leaders, for instance local mayors, religious leaders, representatives of large charity or service groups, and volunteers who run sporting groups or other youth activities. People will be able to say how they think the New South Wales Government could do better and have input into what we should be doing to improve even further our schools, hospitals and roads.

The forums are being attended by Ministers and senior public servants to ensure the Government and bureaucracy receive feedback directly from the community. These meetings are a great opportunity to ensure our needs and concerns are put on the map. That is great for the Central Coast and it is certainly great for the State of New South Wales. Government certainly does not have all the answers. That is why it is up to us to put our concerns to the community and let the public have a say. The public are being asked to respond to four questions on the State Plan. First, what is the State Government doing well in your local area? Second, what could the State Government be doing better? Third, what do you see as the major challenge facing your area in the next 10 years? Fourth, of the 29 priorities outlined in the draft State Plan, which ones are the most important for your area?

I urge everyone who has not become involved in the process to date to now do so. The web site is www.nsw.gov.au/stateplan. In particular, I encourage young people to let us know what they think about the State Plan. There is a page on the web site urging everyone to have their say. As my colleague the honourable member for Monaro has reported to the House, thousands of people are checking it out, making submissions, ensuring the issues most important to them get on the Government agenda. I would like to read into *Hansard* some of the contributions being made by people which show that the Government is on the right track in developing this plan. One reads:

Morris is on the right track. Thank you for letting the average person have some input.

Another reads:

Consultation is a requirement for an efficient democracy—good one, Mr Iemma.

So the Government is doing the right thing: consulting the people of New South Wales about the direction in which we are taking the State. Sadly, the Opposition can only criticise. I was disappointed to read in my local newspaper, the *Express Advocate*, that the Liberal member for Gosford, Chris Hartcher, had nothing good to say about the process. He did not offer an alternative approach. He did not even offer a plan. All he could do was criticise. Thankfully, the people of New South Wales have a Government that will listen to what the people are saying. The people want a plan and we would like the Government to include our views, rather than adopt the negative approach of the Opposition. At the community leaders forum that I attended were leaders in health services, education, planning, youth services, conservation, greenhouse horticulture—a very wide variety of leaders of the Central Coast community. Their comments were very well received. Many of the people who attended the earlier forum were pleased to be able to have their say. I congratulate the Premier on this important initiative and I thank the people of the Central Coast for their valuable input. [*Time expired.*]

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI (Murrumbidgee) [4.25 p.m.]: It is true that the Labor Government of New South Wales has a plan. That plan is undoubtedly to lie and cheat in an attempt to win the next State election. This so-called State Plan is part of that plan. Over the past few years the Government has been planning to plan for a plan. Now it has the plan out, it is planning meetings about the plan. There is very little substance in the State Plan. Fancy trying to come up with a State Plan six months out from a State election! If you ask me, it is a timely and convenient State Plan stunt—just an excuse to go about the State holding community forums, trying to tell people that you are listening to them and to their concerns, making it all sound terrific. This is very much in the mould of Bob Carr—spin over substance. This is the Government saying: Oh, we've got a great plan! We have seen the plans that the Labor Government in New South Wales has had over the years. This document was Labor's \$30 billion plan to win the next election.

Mr Gerard Martin: Point of order: The honourable member for Monaro is using props, and I do not mean the one on his shoulders!

Mr DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Monaro knows the rules about props. He may use the document as his personal notes, but may not display it. If he does, I will direct him to resume his seat.

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI: I am just reading it. It was the Labor Party's gamble to win the next election. It was a \$30 billion plan that included \$3 billion for rail, \$2 billion for hospitals and \$1.2 billion for education. I assume that \$2 billion for hospitals included the hospital in Queanbeyan that was promised four years ago.

Mr DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Order! As long as it is used to make a passing reference, the honourable member for Murrumbidgee may continue.

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI: The hospital must be built up to the second or third storey by now. Surely it must have patients by now and surely it must be ready to have carpet or linoleum laid. But no, building has not started yet. The Government made this promise four years ago, but building has not started yet. The Government's plan is to fudge its way through until the next State election. What confidence can we have that the hospital will be built if, God forbid, Labor were re-elected? I assume that part of the \$2 billion includes \$5 million to upgrade the emergency department in Griffith Hospital, which is in my electorate. Again, three or four years down the track, we are waiting for that work to start.

The Government is great with announcements, but that is its record. All its fancy promises are on the record—\$30 billion to win the next election, Bob's billions. The Government has made these announces in the past, but it has failed to deliver on them. It has taken the Government four years to plan for the Queanbeyan Hospital. It is taken the Government three years to plan for the upgrade of the Griffith emergency department. Now it is rolling out another plan and expecting the people of New South Wales to believe that it will deliver on it. If the Government could not do a relatively simple thing such as renovate the emergency department of the Griffith Hospital after three years, how can it expect anything to come of this State Plan? The State Plan for New South Wales is a load of rubbish. It has been devised by the Government to try to lie and cheat its way into winning the next election.

The Labor Government's true plan is for small business. It involves taking big businesses and, after 12 years, turning them into small businesses. The Government plans to reintroduce vendor duty if it is re-elected. It plans to amalgamate local councils. Prior to the last State election council amalgamations were not on the agenda, but as soon as the election was over the Government amalgamated councils. A couple of years prior to the election the Government said, "No more." However, on the off chance that the Labor Party wins the next State election there will be more council amalgamations. The \$700 million budget deficit will probably be \$1 billion or \$2 billion, and that is part of the plan for the next term of this Parliament if New South Wales is unlucky enough to have Labor to win at the next State election. The Government has a plan, but it will be diabolical for New South Wales.

Mr GERARD MARTIN (Bathurst) [4.30 p.m.]: I am delighted to support the motion moved by the honourable member for Monaro. The Opposition's approach is underscored by the two lightweights who spoke on the motion. The honourable member for Bega admitted that he did not participate in the process. On the other hand I, like most members on this side of the House, went through the process and sat through the meeting at Bathurst. When I came out of the two-hour session at 9.30 at night I noticed two name tags sitting on the registration desk, one for the honourable member for Lachlan and one for the honourable member for Orange—two members of The Nationals. I understand they failed to attend meetings all over the State. At the session I attended many people from way out west said, "We used to be supporters of the Country Party or the National Party, but we are here today because we understand what Morris Iemma is about." Initially there was some cynicism about the State Plan, but people are getting behind it, turning up at meetings and making a contribution.

The three sessions in Bathurst with local government leaders, community representatives and community leaders, which was the meeting I attended with Ministers Orkopoulos and Kelly, were the first of the consultation processes around the State and they were well attended. The honourable member for Bega provided us with anecdotal evidence about a businessman on the North Coast who said he did not think it was a forum in which he could get his point across. All I can say is that he must have been as thick as a brick because the forum I attended, which was conducted by an independent facilitator, was extremely inclusive. Anyone who attended the forums got their message across. That has been documented and the proof will be in the final plan. I congratulate the people from Bathurst and the Far West of the State on their contributions to the process. The honourable member for Monaro made similar comments about the consultation process in his area, and similar comments are being echoed around the State. The difference between the Opposition and the Government is that the Government is participating and the Opposition is not.

The Leader of The Nationals, who did not speak to the motion—he sent in the lightweights—is now saying that he will negotiate with the Leader of the Opposition to put together a plan for the State. Suddenly, six

months out from an election, the penny has dropped: The Government is on the front foot, it is doing something constructive and it will make a difference to people's lives in the longer term. As the honourable member for Monaro said, this is longer-term planning, 10-year planning, and it is inclusive. We have heard about the Opposition's dental policy, which has a number of problems that will be exposed in the coming weeks. You have to have dentists to run a dental program, and that is the Opposition's biggest problem. Thanks to the Federal Government, New South Wales is training fewer dentists than it did 10 years ago, which means fewer dentists are graduating than are retiring. How will the Opposition run a public dental health system without dentists? We should not forget that the Opposition would wipe out the voucher system, which will have a big impact on country areas. Let us not mix plans with policies.

The Government's State Plan is measured, thought out and calculated. It is definitely making an impact. It is the result of a whole-of-government approach and the community is participating. I know that people in my area who used to support The Nationals and the Liberal Party are saying, "You can talk to this Government. It is consulting. Whether they are leaders in local government, captains of industry or representative of local community groups, such as Meals on Wheels and disability groups, the Government is consulting. We are having a meaningful input into this process, and we thank the Premier for it." The State Plan has the Premier's stamp across it, and highlights the difference between him and the kiss of death, the Leader of the Opposition, and his plans for the economy. When I was a local mayor and the Coalition was in government it closed 30 country hospitals, 18 country railway lines and 37 courthouses, and it sacked 2,500 teachers. The list went on. The Coalition should not talk to us about having a plan for the people of New South Wales. The Government has it. The Premier is showing leadership and we will take the people of New South Wales with us in developing a cohesive plan that will make a difference. [*Time expired.*]

Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro) [4.35 p.m.], in reply: I thank the honourable members who contributed to the debate. The honourable member for Peats continued her usual very high standard of representation for her area and put forward effectively the views her constituents expressed at their consultation, a process that they obviously valued. The honourable member for Murrumbidgee was up to his usual, albeit, much lower standard of contribution. The honourable member for Bathurst highlighted that people in his area and the west of the State, many of whom were former Coalition supporters, appreciated the opportunity to attend the consultation process. The honourable member for Bega promised us 10 minutes—

[*Quorum formed.*]

The Coalition does not like hearing about the good planning that is going on in New South Wales. The honourable member for Bega promised to speak for 10 minutes on Coalition policy. He managed to do so for less than three minutes in his 10-minute contribution, yet spent five minutes abusing people and calling people names, and three minutes mentioning unfunded promises on the Peter meter.

I will give the House a quick insight into the Coalition's policy-making process by referring to what is happening in Monaro. A couple of months ago the Coalition candidate for Monaro—the merger has already happened in Monaro—distributed in people's letterboxes a promise that he would build a Queanbeyan bypass. A little while later in the *Queanbeyan Age* on 4 August he said that if the Coalition won government in March, it would get straight on with building the bypass. To do it, he said, they would use \$40 million from the State Office Block. Later it was pointed out to him that the proceeds from the sale were not transferable.

Obviously recognising that the Coalition's candidate had blundered and was stepping into the same sort of policy-making fiasco that the Coalition often engages in, the Coalition then brought the leader of The Nationals down to Queanbeyan—and may he forever remain the Leader of The Nationals. There was much anticipation that he would confirm the proposal and show where the funding was coming from for The Nationals' promise to build a ring road, but what he did was get all the media out and promised to investigate having a traffic plan. When the Leader of the Nationals arrived in Monaro, he could not even manage to back up his candidate. Such is the calibre of policy making in the Opposition; it is policy making on the run. The Coalition says yes to everybody at forums, and then tries to make the numbers add up. The Coalition knows that the numbers do not add up. They have a \$23 billion black hole. Only the Iemma Government is planning for New South Wales's future. That is why this motion is so important.

Question—That the motion be agreed to—put.

The House divided.

Ayes, 45

Ms Allan	Mr Gibson	Mr Pearce
Mr Amery	Mr Greene	Mr Price
Ms Andrews	Ms Hay	Ms Saliba
Mr Bartlett	Mr Hunter	Mr Sartor
Mr Black	Ms Judge	Mr Shearan
Mr Brown	Ms Keneally	Mr Stewart
Ms Burney	Mr Lynch	Mr Tripodi
Mr Chaytor	Mr McBride	Mr Watkins
Mr Collier	Mr McLeay	Mr West
Mr Corrigan	Ms Megarrity	Mr Whan
Mr Crittenden	Ms Moore	Mr Yeadon
Mr Daley	Mr Morris	
Ms D'Amore	Mr Newell	
Mr Debus	Ms Nori	<i>Tellers,</i>
Ms Gadiel	Mr Orkopoulos	Mr Ashton
Mr Gaudry	Mrs Paluzzano	Mr Martin

Noes, 31

Mr Aplin	Mr Humpherson	Mrs Skinner
Mr Barr	Mr Kerr	Mr Slack-Smith
Ms Berejiklian	Mr Merton	Mr Souris
Mr Cansdell	Mr Oakeshott	Mr Stoner
Mr Constance	Mr O'Farrell	Mr Torbay
Mr Draper	Mr Page	Mr J. H. Turner
Mrs Fardell	Mr Piccoli	Mr R. W. Turner
Mr Fraser	Mr Pringle	
Mrs Hancock	Mr Richardson	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Hartcher	Mr Roberts	Mr George
Mr Hazzard	Ms Seaton	Mr Maguire

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 4.50 p.m. until Wednesday 30 August 2006 at 10.00 a.m.
