

**NEW SOUTH WALES**  
**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES**

(HANSARD)

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FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-FOURTH PARLIAMENT

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**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

Tuesday 8 May 2007

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The House met at 2.15 p.m. pursuant to the proclamation of Her Excellency the Governor.

**The Clerk** read the proclamation.

**GENERAL ELECTION OF MEMBERS**

**Return of Writs**

**The Clerk** announced the receipt of a list, certified by Her Excellency the Governor, of the names of the person duly elected to serve in the Legislative Assembly of New South Wales at the General Election of Members held on 24 March 2007, together with the writs on which they had been returned.

**The Clerk** announced further that with Her Excellency's certification the writs had been duly returned prior to the day on which they were legally returnable.

**OPENING OF SESSION**

**The Usher of the Black Rod**, being admitted, delivered a message from the Commissioners empowered by Her Excellency the Governor to open this session of Parliament requesting the immediate attendance of the members of this honourable House in the Legislative Council Chamber to hear the Commission for the opening of Parliament read.

*The members of the House, having attended the Legislative Council Chamber, reassembled.*

**COMMISSION TO ADMINISTER PLEDGE OF LOYALTY**

**The Clerk** announced that Her Excellency the Governor had issued a Commission authorising the Hon. Morris Iemma, the Hon. John Arthur Watkins and the Hon. Frank Ernest Sartor to administer the pledge of loyalty required by law to be taken or made by members of the Legislative Assembly.

**The Clerk** read the Commission.

**PLEDGE OF LOYALTY**

All members, with the exception of Mr Donald Page, took and subscribed the pledge of loyalty and signed the roll.

**SPEAKER OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

**Election**

**The Clerk** announced that pursuant to section 31B of the Constitution Act 1902 the House would proceed to the election of the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly. Having called for nominations, and

sufficient time having elapsed, he declared nominations closed and informed the House that one valid nomination had been received: Mr G. R. Torbay.

The member for Northern Tablelands, Mr G. R. Torbay, was declared elected Speaker of the Legislative Assembly.

*George Richard Torbay was then taken out of his place by Ms Dawn Fardell and Mr Steve Whan and conducted to the chair.*

**The Speaker-elect**, standing on the upper step of the Speaker's rostrum, said: I thank the members of this House for their expression of confidence in electing me Speaker of the New South Wales Legislative Assembly. I accept the office with pride. It is a great honour for me but also a great responsibility, which I do not take lightly. I have many people to thank today as well as the members of this House: my wife, Rosemary, my children, my parents, Peter and Fifi, my brothers and sisters, and many friends. All of them are in the gallery today. My phone and email have run hot with good wishes from supporters. These have come not just from the electorate of Northern Tablelands, where the goodwill I have received has been overwhelming, but also from right across the State.

I acknowledge my debt to my family. Rosemary and our children, Leah, Angie and Joel, have experienced all the ups and downs of political life with few of the benefits. Politics is taxing on a family, particularly a close family such as ours. Without their support and encouragement—and, I must admit, some stringent criticism at times around the kitchen table—I could not have entered so fully into politics and its demands. I thank my parents and take a moment or two to remind all who are present today of the sacrifices that many parents make for their children. This is particularly true of migrant families such as ours.

My father, Peter, came to Australia from Lebanon by ship on his own at the age of 11 because his family wanted him to have a better future. He joined his older brother in his fruit shop in Sydney and has been working ever since to ensure that his six children succeeded in life. My mother, Fifi, was put into an orphanage at an early age because her widowed mother could not afford to maintain the family. She came to Australia as a 17-year-old bride. She too has worked ever since with my father in small hospitality-based businesses to support her family. Today I know their hearts are swelling with pride, as mine does with gratitude. The successful migrant story in Australia is one that should be told again and again.

The good wishes from the community and their advice contain a strong message for all of us. Just about everyone who contacted me raised some criticisms of the conduct of parliamentarians on the floor of the House and encouraged me to preside over an improved standard of debate. I will be encouraging robust and issue-based debate, but members should be aware that baseless personal attacks and defamation are not regarded as acceptable standard by the community. I will not hesitate to use the standing orders and previous rulings to target poor conduct from either side of the House. Those members who have not acquainted themselves with the correct procedures—there are a number of new procedures—should seek the valuable advice and service of the Clerks and all of the support staff of the House who do a tremendous job and who will be pleased to assist with members' enquiries.

Having had the honour of serving as a member of the Legislative Assembly for the past eight years, the issue of parliamentary privilege has also caused me some disquiet. I support parliamentary privilege and its purpose of serving the public interest without fear of legal reprisal. However, during my time in this place this privilege has been abused many times. I remind all members that parliamentary privilege is for the public interest and not for the personal or political interest. It is at times like this that we need to reflect that this is the people's Parliament. I intend to encourage elected representatives to invite more constituents and interested groups to meetings in Parliament. To this end, I will consult with members on issues regarding privileges of members of parliament to ensure that services are in place to make these visitors feel welcome and that the necessary services are available. I also take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank on behalf of us all the electorate office staff. They do a great job in the front line of representation on behalf of all members.

Finally, I give an assurance that, as Speaker, I will show impartiality on all matters. I have a deep respect for the institution of Parliament and the processes of democracy. I will do all in my power to uphold them in the interests of the people we represent and the members who serve them. To this end, I have invited both Government and Opposition members to assist me as Temporary Speakers and I look forward to their support. We will work together to ensure balance, fairness, strong debate and respect for the institution of Parliament.

I congratulate all members on their success in the election. I congratulate the Premier and his Government on their win. I congratulate the Leader of the Opposition and his frontbench members on their elevation. I acknowledge the strong contribution of previous Speakers of this House, particularly my predecessors, the Hon. John Aquilina, the Hon. John Murray and the Hon. Kevin Rozzoli. I ask all members to give their support to the Deputy-Speaker, the Assistant Speaker and the Temporary Speakers in their roles. The door of the Speaker's office will always be open to those who wish to raise issues of concern. I again thank the House for this enormous privilege.

**The Speaker (The Hon. George Richard Torbay)** took the chair.

**Mr MORRIS IEMMA** (Lakemba—Premier, and Minister for Citizenship) [3.15 p.m.]: Over the years I had thought of calling the member for Northern Tablelands many things, but I never thought that I would be referring to him as Mr Speaker! In doing so I have to say that the model of an Independent Speaker took many by surprise—and, yes, that includes the Leader of the House. I wish to follow my introductory remarks by placing on the record our thanks, appreciation and tribute to the Hon. John Aquilina, an outstanding Minister and Speaker, who has graciously accepted a new post of Leader of the House as we in New South Wales embark on a unique experiment based on lifting parliamentary standards. We can all contribute to that but today, with Mr Speaker's appointment, perhaps we can aim for something better.

The bearpit will never be the sandpit or a polite debating society because politics is a real contest between ideas and competing visions for the public good, but Parliament can be more orderly, more rational and more constructive. Mr Speaker, all members of this House will look to you to help to ensure that result, armed as you are with an unprecedented qualification—that of being an Independent member. Today also represents a step toward the House of Commons model, which does so much to bring order and rigour to the Mother of Parliaments. If we can achieve even a partial improvement along those lines, this experiment will prove to have been very successful indeed.

Mr Speaker, on behalf of all my colleagues I congratulate you on the enormous responsibility you have assumed: it is a mark of the esteem in which you are held by the community and by this House. It is a great day for your family, your friends and for the community that you so ably represent. Above all, it is an important day for this Chamber which, despite all its faults, is still the voice of the people. If only that voice, and not our own, could be heard more in this place, we would be a better democracy and a better Parliament. Mr Speaker, congratulations and thank you for agreeing to serve the people of New South Wales in this unique and historic way.

**The SPEAKER:** Thank you, Premier.

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL** (Ku-ring-gai—Leader of the Opposition) [3.17 p.m.]: Mr Speaker, on behalf of my Liberal Party colleagues I welcome and congratulate you on your appointment. My Liberal Party colleagues will always applaud a return to impartiality of the chair of this Chamber. Mr Speaker, you are the first Independent Speaker since Henry Morton, who served for just six months in 1913. I hope that your service exceeds his when it reaches its full term. You are the twenty-ninth person to fulfil this role—a list of the illustrious and the ignominious whose reputations have been determined by this Parliament's most enduring battle. That has not been a battle about tariffs versus protectionism, industrial matters or a battle of ideas and policies for rural and city people but rather that most important battle: the battle of the Parliament versus the Executive, and the role and model of this place as the citizenry's watchdog upon Executive Government.

It is upon the way in which this Chamber operates that your reputation, Mr Speaker, will be determined. The battle has been an unequal one in recent years while Labor has sought to downgrade the role of Parliament and to downgrade the role of this Chamber. Regrettably, Labor has been aided and abetted by those who occupied the chair. It is an important issue to all of us, not as political party politicians but as individuals who come here to represent our communities, that we get a fair go in this place and are able to raise concerns on behalf of those we represent, regardless of whether we are Liberal, Labor, Nationals or Independents.

We are pleased with your election; we hope that it will restore some degree of balance. The last non-Government Speaker of this House was Daniel Levy, who served during the Storey Labor Government. Levy, along with Kevin Ellis and Kevin Rozzoli, are the three best twentieth century Speakers to have served in this Chamber. That is not my claim, even though all three came from my side of the Chamber: That is the claim of the Parliament's historians, David Clune and Gareth Griffith. Each of those Speakers exercised an impartiality in the Chair that was applauded by their opponents. Each ensured that, irrespective of their party background,

members got a fair go in this Chamber. Each ensured that this Parliament and this Chamber did what it was meant to do; hold Government, through its Premiers and its Ministers, to account.

Mr Speaker, I commend to you the role of Speaker Rozzoli and remind you that within six months of taking the Chair he had ejected a Government Minister for interjecting. For the 51 members who have been here since 1995 such action has been unheard of. I remind you also that Speaker Rozzoli put forward proposals for an independent Speakership that failed, due to the lukewarm support of the Independents who then held the balance of power. Mr Speaker, I commend all three Speakers I have mentioned as models for a new Speaker. They did not attend party meetings, they stayed out of partisan politics, they did not ring around the State seeking candidates to run in other seats. Partisan behaviour from the Chair—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Leader of the Opposition has the call.

**Mr Frank Sartor:** Not gracious, Barry.

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** Have I struck a raw nerve with members opposite? Partisan behaviour from the Chair has tarnished the reputation of this House, and has contributed to the pressure that has deteriorated the behaviour in this Chamber. Mr Speaker, I urge you to look beyond the issues of impartiality and behaviour. There are important issues and reforms that should be looked at, particularly relating to Question Time and the nonsense that only half the number of questions are asked here compared with the number asked in the Queensland Parliament. In addition, relevance, and members opposite quoting correspondence between members and Ministers on behalf of constituents during Question Time—which occurred for the first time in the past 12 years—should be reviewed.

Further, we should review the decision to push back the receipt of petitions and notices of motions to times when there are very few visitors in the gallery. We should reconsider the lack of this Chamber's participation in estimates committees. Those committees are a basic principle of responsible government, because they allow for the Government to be held to account for the big issues of this State. There is no bigger issue than the budget, yet members of this Chamber do not have the opportunity to hold Ministers to account for what is in the budget each year.

Mr Speaker, you also addressed privileges. I commend you, as I commended previous Speakers, to the issue of a privileges Act modelled on the Federal Act, which would provide a degree of protection for members of this place and a degree of certainty for members of the public. Frankly, leadership and determination are more important than the standing orders in your role. The three Speakers to whom I referred did not let standing or sessional orders get in the way of their exhibiting a degree of impartiality.

Mr Speaker, the three Speakers whom I commend to you allowed neither standing orders nor sessional orders to get in the way of ensuring impartial behaviour from the Chair, and I look forward to that continuing. Responsible government demands that openness, transparency and accountability are important. There is much to be done and your appointment suggests that we are heading in the right direction, but only time will tell.

**The SPEAKER:** Thank you.

**Mr ANDREW STONER** (Oxley—Leader of The Nationals) [3.23 p.m.]: Mr Speaker, on behalf of the New South Wales Nationals I congratulate you on your election to the august position of Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of this, the mother of Australian Parliaments. I take this opportunity to congratulate also the Premier on his courageous decision to facilitate the election of an Independent Speaker in this House. I am aware that that move earned him the opprobrium of some of his Labor Party colleagues who desired for one of their own the succulent plum that this position represents.

**Mr Frank Sartor:** You are not going to be gracious either, are you!

**Mr ANDREW STONER:** I am congratulating the Premier and the Speaker. The Minister for Planning should show some decorum. As I said, it was a courageous decision and one that deserves commendation. Positions such as Speaker should not be treated as the victory spoils of an election or as bargaining chips in factional battles. Positions such as Speaker belong to the people of New South Wales, and the expectation is that the occupants of those positions conduct themselves in a manner that does the people proud. Mr Speaker, you and I have conversed directly about your ambition for that position. We have had a long period of partisanship by previous Labor Speakers. If you can deliver on your lofty goals of lifting the standards of this House,

upholding a genuine standard of impartiality, and overseeing a return of constructive, robust debate, you will have achieved something great for our democracy and for the people of New South Wales—and The Nationals will be the first to congratulate you.

However, I express my concern that you have recommended to the Premier that he increase the remuneration of two Government members. I have difficulty in understanding how that could be justified, especially in light of the budget cuts the Government has imposed on the operation of this Parliament. If money was available it could have been spent on the better running of this Parliament or on worthy causes such as improving country hospitals and regional water supplies or assisting the country people who are struggling with the drought. Mr Speaker, I hope that your relationship with the Government, which prior to the recent election you described as "cosy", will not unduly influence your exercise of your powers in the best interests of all the people of New South Wales. Finally, I am delighted to see a country-based member of Parliament in the Speaker's chair. As you would be aware, The Nationals is the only political party in this State to solely represent the interests of country and coastal people.

**Mr Frank Sartor:** Rubbish!

**Mr ANDREW STONER:** Do members opposite say they solely represent the interests of country people? The Government is losing seats in country New South Wales, and the Minister for Planning should look at that. Our success at the recent State election showed that country people are sick of being taken for granted, and our theme of "100 per cent country" resonated with country people from Broken Hill to Byron Bay. Country people want politicians to work together to ensure they get their fair share.

**Mr Gerard Martin:** They did in Monaro.

**Mr ANDREW STONER:** What was the swing against you, Bundy? Country people are not interested in petty party politics such as they experience from the member for Bathurst, or personal vendettas or factionalism, which is what they see in this Government. The people want to see results. The Nationals welcome your appointment, Mr Speaker, because if you deliver on your promises, the processes of democracy will improve in all of New South Wales, including regional and rural New South Wales. I therefore wish you every success as Speaker. The New South Wales Nationals want you to succeed in your new role, and particularly to raise the standards of parliamentary debate and, therefore, the accountability of government in New South Wales.

**The SPEAKER:** I acknowledge the comments of the Premier, the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of The Nationals and thank them for them. I look forward to working with all members for the betterment of both the perception and the conduct of Parliament.

**Mr DAVID CAMPBELL** (Keira—Minister for Police, and Minister for the Illawarra) [3.29 p.m.]: Mr Speaker, I congratulate you on your election. I inform members that the Governor will receive the House at Government House at 5.00 p.m. this day for the purpose of presenting its Speaker.

### NEW STANDING ORDERS

**The SPEAKER:** I advise the House that on 21 February 2007 Her Excellency the Governor approved the standing orders adopted by the House on 21 November 2006. The standing orders take effect from today. I remind members that a number of procedures have changed, particularly those relating to the routine of business and to the passage of legislation. The new routine of business is set out in Standing Order 97. Question time will now be held closer to 2.15 p.m. A number of procedures that previously occurred before question time will now be dealt with at the conclusion of it. That includes the tabling of papers and committee reports, the announcement of the receipt of petitions and the matter of public importance, and the placing or disposal of business.

Ministers will still be able to make ministerial statements before and after question time. Members will be able to give notices of motions for Government Business, bills and business with precedence prior to questions. Notices of motions to be accorded priority—the former motions for urgent consideration—will also be given before questions, as they were previously. Terminology and procedures for the passage of legislation have changed. Bills will now be introduced rather than read a first time. The second reading stage has been replaced with the agreement in principle stage. Amendments to legislation will now be considered in detail by the House rather than by the Committee of the Whole. If there is no consideration in detail stage the Chair will

declare a bill to have passed the House unless a motion has been moved that the bill not be passed. If, however, the House considers a bill in detail the House will vote on the question that the bill be now passed.

As members would have already noticed, the prayer and the acknowledgement of country read at the commencement of each sitting day have been revised, as the acknowledgement of country has now been formally adopted into the standing orders. Members should stand during both the prayer and the acknowledgement. I expect that it will take members a few weeks to adapt to many of the changes. I advise all members to familiarise themselves with the new standing orders and to raise any concerns with the Clerks. Your patience and co-operation will be appreciated as we all familiarise ourselves with the new procedures.

### **STATE COAT OF ARMS**

**The SPEAKER:** I inform the House that in conforming with the State Arms, Symbols and Emblems Act 2004 the royal coat of arms has been replaced by the State coat of arms. The State coat of arms has been a symbol of our sovereignty since being granted in October 1906. I also inform the House that the royal coat of arms will be preserved and displayed in the Jubilee Room, where the public will be able to view this important part of parliamentary history. I acknowledge the work of the Phoenix Foundry, which just happens to be located in Uralla in the electorate of Northern Tablelands, in producing the coat of arms and I acknowledge the work undertaken by the staff of the Parliamentary Building Services and the Heritage Office in arranging for it to be placed in the Legislative Assembly Chamber.

### **DEPUTY-SPEAKER OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

#### **Election**

**Mr RICHARD AMERY** Mount Druitt [3.33 p.m.] Mr Speaker, I congratulate you and wish you good luck in your new position. I move:

That Anthony Paul Stewart be elected Deputy-Speaker.

**Mr GERARD MARTIN** (Bathurst) [3.34 p.m.]: I second the motion.

**The SPEAKER:** Is there any further nomination for the office of Deputy-Speaker? There being no further nominations, I will put the question.

**Question—That Anthony Paul Stewart be elected Deputy-Speaker—put and resolved in the affirmative.**

**Motion agreed to.**

**The SPEAKER:** I declare Paul Anthony Stewart, member for Bankstown, elected Deputy-Speaker.

**Mr TONY STEWART** (Bankstown) [3.35 p.m.]: Mr Speaker, I join those who have already spoken in debate in congratulating you on your appointment. I reinforce the need for impartiality and I look forward to working closely with you as your deputy to ensure that that occurs. I thank my colleagues for the support I received today.

**The SPEAKER:** I thank the Deputy-Speaker and on behalf of all members I congratulate him on his appointment.

### **LEADER OF THE HOUSE AND SECOND ASSISTANT-SPEAKER**

**Mr DAVID CAMPBELL:** I seek leave to move a motion for the adoption of sessional orders relating to the Leader of the House and the election and role of a second Assistant-Speaker.

**Leave not granted.**

## BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

### Suspension of Standing Orders: Leader of the House and Second Assistant-Speaker

**Mr DAVID CAMPBELL** (Keira—Minister for Police, and Minister for the Illawarra) [3.36 p.m.]:  
I move:

That standing orders be suspended to permit the moving of a motion for the adoption of sessional orders relating to the Leader of the House and the election and role of a second Assistant-Speaker.

**Mr Chris Hartcher:** You can't do that. They are your standing orders.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Minister for Police has the call.

**Mr DAVID CAMPBELL:** I moved that motion in the spirit of discussion relating to the acceptance by the Speaker of the role thrust upon him by this Chamber, and in the spirit of remarks made by the Premier, the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of The Nationals relating to modernising the way in which this Parliament operates. I note in particular that the Leader of The Nationals said he was proud that a country-based member had been elected as Speaker. As the Speaker is based in the country he will have additional travel to fulfil his role. I am sure he would find additional assistance useful in ensuring the impartiality that has been demanded by Opposition members.

Additional assistance will also mean that the Speaker will be able to continue to represent his country-based Northern Tablelands electorate. In itself that is sufficient reason for members to support a motion to provide for two Assistant-Speakers. We must ensure that the Speaker, the member for Northern Tablelands, has time to look after his constituents in his geographically large electorate in a remote part of this State. In itself that is enough reason for members to support a motion to set a new direction for the operation of this House, to ensure support for the Speaker and the impartiality that was so warmly embraced by the Leader of the Opposition before he went on to traduce a number of other issues. This is a sensible way to ensure there is ongoing and sound administration in this place, to ensure we spread the workload of this place, and to ensure that this Chamber supports the impartiality of an Independent Speaker.

**Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI** (Murrumbidgee) [3.38 p.m.]: Mr Speaker, I congratulate you on your appointment as Speaker. Twenty minutes after your appointment a Government Minister moved a motion to suspend standing orders. That is an example of what we have seen over the last eight years since I became a member of Parliament, and it is one of the things you must look at changing. What do the standing orders mean if, at a whim, the Government can suspend standing orders, make changes, and do whatever it likes? If this Parliament is to be truly representative of the people and if we are to give members of the Government, the Opposition and the crossbenches an opportunity to raise issues that are important to their electorates, the standing orders must be upheld.

We must restrict the Government's ability to suspend standing orders. Today the Government is seeking to suspend standing orders so it can give the member for Riverstone special privileges as Leader of the House despite the fact that he is not a Minister. That is contrary to the standing orders—hence the motion to suspend them—that have applied in this House for a long time. It is a longstanding tradition of this place that the Leader of the House is also a Minister. The Government wants to give the member for Riverstone special privileges, including a car and driver, additional staff, and a salary increase. That will cost the New South Wales taxpayers a lot of money. The Government also wants to elect two Assistant-Speakers, which will also involve more staff, salary increases, and an additional impost on the taxpayers of New South Wales. The Opposition does not usually oppose sessional order proposals but we are opposing these because they will impose an unnecessary additional cost on the taxpayers of New South Wales.

The Government's proposals are politically motivated. John Aquilina is a disgruntled former Speaker of the House—with respect, he is not happy about your appointment, Mr Speaker—so the Premier is doing him a favour. The Government's motion is about giving political favours at taxpayers' expense. That is why the Coalition opposes it. I understand that Grant McBride—a failed Minister who was sacked—will be nominated as an Assistant-Speaker. That is another political favour. The Opposition opposes this waste of money. All 93 members in this place recently contested a State election. We all know what Labor has failed to fund in New South Wales, but I will give a few examples. The Greater Southern Area Health Service issued a memo requiring pregnant women to bring nappies to hospital for their new babies. Do Labor members think that is fantastic? The Government had no money for nappies but it can find an extra couple of hundred grand to throw at a few disgruntled Labor members of Parliament.

According to the *Daily Telegraph*, patients at Narrabri hospital were forced to buy their pillows. New South Wales hospitals are so starved of funds that patients must bring their own pillows to hospital! I am certain that Labor members are aware of numerous similar examples in their electorates. I am sure that those whose electorates are served by the Greater Southern Area Health Service have spoken with pensioners who have been forced to pay an additional \$100 for the oxygen they require in order to live a decent life. The Government claims that it has no money but Labor members should tell their constituents that it has found a couple of hundred thousand dollars to pour down the throats of the disgruntled former Speaker, former Ministers, and other Labor members. It is a continuation of the practice of the past eight years: everybody in the Labor Party gets a special job. Hands up those Government members who do not have a special job. Who does not get an additional salary? Nobody. That is why the Coalition opposes the Government's proposals. It is our responsibility to keep the Government honest and accountable and to ensure that it does not waste taxpayers' money. We oppose the motion to suspend standing orders.

**Mr DAVID CAMPBELL** (Keira—Minister for Police, and Minister for the Illawarra) [3.43 p.m.], in reply: We just witnessed from the member for Murrumbidgee an example of exactly what the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of The Nationals claimed would not occur in this place. Immediately after they called for higher parliamentary standards, the member for Murrumbidgee launched into personal attacks upon, and abuse of, members of the House. By identifying them by name and not by their electorates he failed to comply with the standing orders of this place. That illustrates the Coalition's stance in this debate. In contrast, the Government proposes in our motion actions that will lift standards in the House.

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

**The House divided.**

**Ayes, 52**

Mr Amery	Mr Greene	Mr Morris
Ms Andrews	Mr Harris	Mrs Paluzzano
Mr Aquilina	Ms Hay	Mr Pearce
Ms Beamer	Mr Hickey	Mrs Perry
Mr Borger	Ms Horner	Mr Rees
Mr Brown	Mr Iemma	Mr Sartor
Ms Burney	Ms Judge	Mr Shearan
Ms Burton	Ms Keneally	Mr Stewart
Mr Campbell	Mr Khoshaba	Ms Tebbutt
Mr Collier	Mr Koperberg	Mr Terenzini
Mr Coombs	Mr Lynch	Mr Tripodi
Mr Corrigan	Mr McBride	Mr Watkins
Mr Costa	Dr McDonald	Mr West
Mr Daley	Ms McKay	Mr Whan
Ms D'Amore	Mr McLeay	
Ms Firth	Ms McMahon	<i>Tellers,</i>
Ms Gadiel	Ms Meagher	Mr Ashton
Mr Gibson	Ms Megarrity	Mr Martin

**Noes, 39**

Mr Aplin	Ms Hodgkinson	Mrs Skinner
Mr Baird	Mrs Hopwood	Mr Smith
Mr Baumann	Mr Humphries	Mr Souris
Ms Berejiklian	Mr Kerr	Mr Stokes
Mr Cansdell	Mr Merton	Mr Stoner
Mr Constance	Ms Moore	Mr J. H. Turner
Mr Debnam	Mr Oakeshott	Mr R. W. Turner
Mr Draper	Mr O'Dea	Mr J. D. Williams
Mrs Fardell	Mr O'Farrell	Mr R. C. Williams
Mr Fraser	Mr Piccoli	
Ms Goward	Mr Piper	
Mrs Hancock	Mr Provest	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Hartcher	Mr Richardson	Mr George
Mr Hazzard	Mr Roberts	Mr Maguire

**Question resolved in the affirmative.**

**Motion agreed to.**

**LEADER OF THE HOUSE AND SECOND ASSISTANT-SPEAKER**

**Mr DAVID CAMPBELL** (Keira—Minister for Police, and Minister for the Illawarra) [3.52 p.m.]:  
I move:

That, for the duration of the current Parliament, unless otherwise ordered:

- (1) all provisions of the standing orders that apply to Ministers be read as also applying to the Leader of the House; and
- (2) all provisions of the standing orders that apply to the election and role of the Assistant-Speaker be read as also applying to a second Assistant-Speaker.

I do not intend to detain the House by addressing the motion. The arguments were put in my earlier comments about the suspension motion.

**Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI** (Murrumbidgee) [3.52 p.m.]: We oppose the waste of taxpayers' money involved in both the motion to suspend standing orders and the substantive motion. We oppose this motion.

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

**The House divided.**

**Ayes, 52**

Mr Amery	Mr Greene	Mr Morris
Ms Andrews	Mr Harris	Mrs Paluzzano
Mr Aquilina	Ms Hay	Mr Pearce
Ms Beamer	Mr Hickey	Mrs Perry
Mr Borger	Ms Hornery	Mr Rees
Mr Brown	Mr Iemma	Mr Sartor
Ms Burney	Ms Judge	Mr Shearan
Ms Burton	Ms Keneally	Mr Stewart
Mr Campbell	Mr Khoshaba	Ms Tebbutt
Mr Collier	Mr Koperberg	Mr Terenzini
Mr Coombs	Mr Lynch	Mr Tripodi
Mr Corrigan	Mr McBride	Mr Watkins
Mr Costa	Dr McDonald	Mr West
Mr Daley	Ms McKay	Mr Whan
Ms D'Amore	Mr McLeay	
Ms Firth	Ms McMahan	<i>Tellers,</i>
Ms Gadiel	Ms Meagher	Mr Ashton
Mr Gibson	Ms Megarrity	Mr Martin

**Noes, 39**

Mr Aplin	Ms Hodgkinson	Mrs Skinner
Mr Baird	Mrs Hopwood	Mr Smith
Mr Baumann	Mr Humphries	Mr Souris
Ms Berejiklian	Mr Kerr	Mr Stokes
Mr Cansdell	Mr Merton	Mr Stoner
Mr Constance	Ms Moore	Mr J. H. Turner
Mr Debnam	Mr Oakeshott	Mr R. W. Turner
Mr Draper	Mr O'Dea	Mr J. D. Williams
Mrs Fardell	Mr O'Farrell	Mr R. C. Williams
Mr Fraser	Mr Piccoli	
Ms Goward	Mr Piper	
Mrs Hancock	Mr Provest	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Hartcher	Mr Richardson	Mr George
Mr Hazzard	Mr Roberts	Mr Maguire

**Question resolved in the affirmative.**

**Motion agreed to.**

## **ASSISTANT-SPEAKERS**

### **Election**

**Ms LINDA BURNEY** (Canterbury—Minister for Fair Trading, Minister for Youth, and Minister for Volunteering) [3.57 p.m.]: Congratulations, Mr Speaker. I move:

That Alison Patricia Megarrity be elected Assistant-Speaker.

**Mrs BARBARA PERRY** (Auburn—Minister for Juvenile Justice, Minister for Western Sydney, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Citizenship) [3.57 p.m.]: I second the motion.

**Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI** (Murrumbidgee) [3.57 p.m.]: I move:

That Malcolm John Kerr be elected Assistant-Speaker.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD** (Wakehurst) [3.58 p.m.]: I second the motion.

**Mr MATT BROWN** (Kiama—Minister for Housing, and Minister for Tourism) [3.58 p.m.]: I move:

That Grant Anthony McBride be elected Assistant-Speaker.

**Mr DAVID CAMPBELL** (Keira—Minister for Police, and Minister for the Illawarra) [3.58 p.m.]: I second the motion.

**Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI** (Murrumbidgee) [3.58 p.m.]: This is an opportunity to extend the new era of impartiality, which we have entered by electing an Independent member as Speaker, by appointing an Opposition member as Assistant-Speaker. We remain opposed to having two Assistant-Speakers, but this is an opportunity for the Government, particularly the Premier, to support the election of an Opposition member as Assistant Speaker. There is an Independent Speaker and a Labor Deputy-Speaker. It is appropriate for a Coalition member to be Assistant-Speaker. Given the Government's insistence on having two Assistant-Speakers, we will be gracious enough to allow it to have one of the Assistant-Speakers. Mr Speaker, we are entering a new era, and the Coalition certainly intends to work with you to improve the standard of this House. The Opposition believes having a Coalition member as Assistant-Speaker will assist you in your desire to make this Chamber impartial for the benefit of the people of New South Wales. I commend the Coalition's nomination.

**Mr JOHN AQUILINA** (Riverstone) [4.00 p.m.]: Mr Speaker, first of all I congratulate you on your election as Speaker. I also congratulate you on one of the very first decisions you have taken, and that is to appoint two members of the Opposition as temporary Speakers. That in itself shows quite dramatically your own impartiality. It also shows that this House is going to unprecedented lengths to ensure impartiality in the application of the standing orders and sessional orders. In relation to the Assistant-Speaker positions, the Opposition has taken us through not one but two votes in opposing the election of a second Assistant-Speaker. Now they want one of those positions. First they oppose its establishment, and now they say, yes, we will take one, thank you, even though we do not agree with it—in fact we oppose it. One thing the Coalition has to learn, despite this great spirit of impartiality, is that Labor won government. The House will decide precisely what the sessional orders are and who will be the Assistant-Speakers. We have three nominations for Assistant-Speaker, with two to be elected, and the House will decide who will fill those positions.

**Mr CHRIS HARTCHER** (Terrigal) [4.02 p.m.]: Here we have the ultimate political pay-off: a troglodyte is elected Deputy-Speaker, a Terrigal is to be Assistant-Speaker, and every little subfaction is to be accommodated. The former Speaker, who was dumped by the Premier through the pages of the *Sydney Morning Herald*, is to get his reward as Leader of the Government. Every child player gets a prize—and aren't there a lot of children over there! They are all lining up for their Chair of Committee prizes. Wait until members see the list

of Chairs of Committees! They will all be getting their little prizes by just staying in their subfactions. The troglodytes have the Deputy-Speaker's job and that is all, because most of those on the Government side, other than the token representatives of the Left, are all from the Terrigal faction. The Terrigals rule; the troglodytes take a back seat.

The member for Mount Druitt was given the great honour of moving that a member of his subfaction get the Deputy-Speaker's job. Wasn't that a nice little gesture by the member to move that! You finally got something, after you had been passed over for the ministry, and after members who came to this place long after you all lined up for ministerial positions. That is the way it was. It has nothing to do with merit, and nothing to do with qualifications. It has everything to do with where you are in the factional ladder of opportunity. What a glorious list it is! They are all lined up to get their rewards. But do not despair, because there are Chair of Committee jobs coming up. There are the good ones that will take you overseas on those comfortable trips. They will all be yours, but they will be allocated strictly in accordance with the golden rule: factions first, then the subfactions, then you get your chance. So much for the new spirit in this House!

Mr Speaker, we all congratulate you. We all wish for a new spirit, but it has not taken long for all the snouts to get in the trough. They are all lined up. It has not taken long for the standing orders to be suspended. It has not taken long for the former Speaker to remind us of the fact, if we were not already aware of it, that Labor won government and the Government will use its numbers between now and March 2011 to kick us in the teeth at every opportunity. You get your chance, and you will use it. You, Mr Speaker, will be the fig leaf of democracy under which they shroud their activity. While we have the greatest hopes for you, we do have the feeling that you are being used and eventually will end up being abused. The factions have had their say. The troglodytes have got one job, the Terrigals are all there at the trough and are all dining. You token little lefties have your opportunity, and we will see how you use it.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I thank the member for Terrigal. However, I invite him to make future contributions through the Chair.

**Question—That Alison Patricia Megarrity be elected Assistant-Speaker—put and resolved in the affirmative.**

**Motion agreed to.**

**The SPEAKER:** I declare Alison Patricia Megarrity elected Assistant-Speaker.

**Question—That Malcolm John Kerr be elected Assistant-Speaker—put.**

**The House divided.**

**Ayes, 34**

Mr Aplin	Ms Hodgkinson	Mr Smith
Mr Baird	Mrs Hopwood	Mr Souris
Mr Baumann	Mr Humphries	Mr Stokes
Ms Berejiklian	Mr Kerr	Mr Stoner
Mr Cansdell	Mr Merton	Mr J. H. Turner
Mr Constance	Mr O'Dea	Mr R. W. Turner
Mr Debnam	Mr O'Farrell	Mr J. D. Williams
Mr Fraser	Mr Piccoli	Mr R. C. Williams
Ms Goward	Mr Provest	
Mrs Hancock	Mr Richardson	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Hartcher	Mr Roberts	Mr George
Mr Hazzard	Mrs Skinner	Mr Maguire

**Noes, 54**

Mr Amery	Mr Gibson	Mr Morris
Ms Andrews	Mr Greene	Mrs Paluzzano
Mr Aquilina	Mr Harris	Mr Pearce
Ms Beamer	Ms Hay	Mrs Perry
Mr Borger	Mr Hickey	Mr Rees
Mr Brown	Ms Hornery	Mr Sartor
Ms Burney	Mr Iemma	Mr Shearan
Ms Burton	Ms Judge	Mr Stewart
Mr Campbell	Ms Keneally	Ms Tebbutt
Mr Collier	Mr Khoshaba	Mr Terenzini
Mr Coombs	Mr Koperberg	Mr Tripodi
Mr Corrigan	Mr Lynch	Mr Watkins
Mr Costa	Mr McBride	Mr West
Mr Daley	Dr McDonald	Mr Whan
Ms D'Amore	Ms McKay	
Mr Draper	Mr McLeay	
Mrs Fardell	Ms McMahon	<i>Tellers,</i>
Ms Firth	Ms Meagher	Mr Ashton
Ms Gadiel	Ms Megarrity	Mr Martin

**Question resolved in the negative.**

**Motion negatived.**

**Question—That Grant Anthony McBride be elected Assistant Speaker—put and resolved in the affirmative.**

**Motion agreed to.**

**The SPEAKER:** I declare Grant Anthony McBride elected Assistant-Speaker. I congratulate him on that election.

### **MESSAGE FROM COMMISSIONERS**

**The SPEAKER:** I report that the House this day attended upon the Commissioners in the Legislative Council Chamber, where a commission for the opening of Parliament was read and a message to the Legislative Assembly was delivered. I lay the Commission upon the table of the House and order that it be recorded in the *Votes and Proceedings*.

### **LAW OF EVIDENCE BILL (pro forma)**

**Bill introduced on motion by Mr Morris Iemma.**

### **MINISTRY**

**Mr MORRIS IEMMA:** I inform the House that on 2 April 2007, with a view to reconstructing the Ministry, I submitted to Her Excellency the Governor my resignation as Premier, Minister for State Development, and Minister for Citizenship and as a member of the Executive Council, an action that involved the resignation of all Ministers. Her Excellency then commissioned me to form a new ministry. On the same day as I was sworn in as a member of the Executive Council and as Premier, and Minister for Citizenship, 20 persons were appointed by Her Excellency as members of the Executive Council and to offices indicated, with a further person appointed on 11 April 2007.

The Hon. John Arthur Watkins, MP,  
Deputy Premier, Minister for Transport, and Minister for Finance.

The Hon. John Joseph Della Bosca, MLC,  
Minister for Education and Training, Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for the Central Coast, and Minister Assisting the Minister for Finance.

The Hon. Michael Costa, MLC,  
Treasurer, Minister for Infrastructure, and Minister for the Hunter.

The Hon. John Hatzistergos, MLC,  
Attorney General, and Minister for Justice.

The Hon. Frank Ernest Sartor, MP,  
Minister for Planning, Minister for Redfern Waterloo, and Minister for the Arts.

The Hon. Reba Paige Meagher, MP,  
Minister for Health.

The Hon. David Andrew Campbell, MP,  
Minister for Police, and Minister for the Illawarra.

The Hon. Eric Michael Roozendaal, MLC,  
Minister for Roads, and Minister for Commerce.

The Hon. Ian Michael Macdonald, MLC,  
Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Energy, Minister for Mineral Resource, and Minister for State Development.

The Hon. Anthony Bernard Kelly, MLC,  
Minister for Lands, Minister for Rural Affairs, Minister for Regional Development, and Vice-President of the Executive Council.

The Hon. Philip Christian Koperberg, MP,  
Minister for Climate Change, Environment and Water.

The Hon. Kevin Patrick Greene, MP,  
Minister for Community Services

The Hon. Kristina Kerscher Keneally, MP,  
Minister for Ageing, and Minister for Disability Services.

The Hon. Joseph Guerino Tripodi, MP,  
Minister for Small Business and Regulatory Reform, and Minister for Ports and Waterways.

The Hon. Nathan Rees, MP,  
Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Water Utilities.

The Hon. Matthew James Brown, MP,  
Minister for Housing, and Minister for Tourism.

The Hon. Linda Jean Burney, MP,  
Minister for Fair Trading, Minister for Youth, and Minister for Volunteering.

The Hon. Paul Gerard Lynch, MP,  
Minister for Local Government, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and Minister Assisting the Minister for Health (Mental Health).

The Hon. Verity Firth, MP,  
Minister for Women, Minister for Science and Medical Research, Minister Assisting the Minister for Health (Cancer), and  
Minister Assisting the Minister for Climate Change, Environment and Water (Environment).

The Hon. Graham James West, MP,  
Minister for Gaming and Racing, and Minister for Sport and Recreation.

The Hon. Barbara Mazzel Perry, MP,  
Minister for Juvenile Justice, Minister for Western Sydney, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Citizenship.

### PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARIES

**Mr MORRIS IEMMA:** I also inform the House that, with effect from 4 May 2007, the following 10 members were appointed as Parliamentary Secretaries to the offices indicated:

Mr John Aquilina, MP,  
Parliamentary Secretary Assisting the Premier (Leader of the House).

Ms Tanya Gadiel, MP,  
Parliamentary Secretary Assisting the Premier on Community and Veterans Affairs, and Assisting the Minister for Police.

Ms Noreen Hay, MP,  
Parliamentary Secretary Assisting the Minister for Health.

Ms Virginia Judge, MP,  
Parliamentary Secretary Assisting the Minister for Education and Training, and the Minister for Industrial Relations, and  
Minister Assisting the Minister for Finance.

The Hon. Henry Tsang, MLC,  
Parliamentary Secretary Assisting the Premier, and Treasurer on Trade and Investment.

Mr Barry Collier, MP,  
Parliamentary Secretary Assisting the Attorney General, and Minister for Justice.

The Hon. Penny Sharpe, MLC,  
Parliamentary Secretary Assisting the Minister for Energy, and Minister for Mineral Resources.

Ms Sonia Hornery, MP,  
Parliamentary Secretary Assisting the Minister for Transport.

Mr Steve Whan, MP,  
Parliamentary Secretary Assisting the Minister for Primary Industries, and the Minister for Rural Affairs and Minister for Regional Development and the Minister for Planning.

Mr Michael Daley, MP,  
Parliamentary Secretary Assisting the Treasurer, and the Minister for Finance, and the Minister for Roads.

### **REPRESENTATION OF MINISTERS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**

**Mr MORRIS IEMMA:** I also inform the House of the representation of Legislative Council Ministers in the Legislative Assembly:

The Deputy Premier, Minister for Transport, and Minister for Finance will represent the Minister for Education and Training, Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for the Central Coast, and Minister Assisting the Minister for Finance.

The Minister for Planning, Minister for Redfern Waterloo, and Minister for the Arts will represent the Treasurer, Minister for Infrastructure, and Minister for the Hunter.

The Minister for Police, and Minister for the Illawarra will represent the Attorney General, and Minister for Justice.

The Minister for Climate Change, Environment and Water will represent the Minister for Lands, Minister for Rural Affairs, and Minister for Regional Development.

The Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Water Utilities will represent the Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Energy, Minister for Mineral Resources, and Minister for State Development.

The Minister for Health will represent the Minister for Roads, and Minister for Commerce.

### **LEADER OF THE HOUSE**

**Mr IEMMA:** I inform the House of the appointment of John Joseph Aquilina as Leader of the House as from 4 April 2007.

### **GOVERNMENT WHIP AND DEPUTY GOVERNMENT WHIP**

**Mr IEMMA:** I inform the House of the appointment of Gerard Francis Martin as Government Whip and Alan John Ashton as Deputy Government Whip as from 4 May 2007.

### **LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION, DEPUTY LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION AND OPPOSITION WHIP**

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** I inform the House that on 4 April 2007 the Parliamentary Liberal Party elected me as Leader of the Opposition, Jillian Gell Skinner as Deputy Leader of the Opposition and Daryl William Maguire as Opposition Whip.

### **LEADER OF THE NATIONALS, DEPUTY LEADER OF THE NATIONALS AND THE NATIONALS WHIP**

**Mr STONER:** I inform the House of my election as Leader of The Nationals, and of the election of Andrew Raymond Gordon Fraser as Deputy Leader of The Nationals and Thomas George as The Nationals Whip as from 28 March 2007.

## ASSENT TO BILLS

Assent to the following bills from the previous session reported:

Charter of Budget Honesty (Election Promises Costing) Bill 2006  
National Park Estate (Lower Hunter Region Reservations) Bill 2006  
Racing Legislation Amendment Bill 2006  
Western Sydney Parklands Bill 2006  
Parliamentary Contributory Superannuation Amendment (Criminal Charges and Convictions) Bill 2006  
Police Amendment (Miscellaneous) Bill 2006  
Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Miscellaneous Amendments Bill 2006  
Industrial Relations (Child Employment) Bill 2006  
Industrial Relations Further Amendment Bill 2006  
Workers Compensation Amendment (Permanent Impairment Benefits) Bill 2006  
Apiaries Amendment Bill 2006  
Charitable Trusts Amendment Bill 2006  
Companion Animals Amendment Bill 2006  
Home Building Amendment (Statutory Warranties) Bill 2006  
Registered Clubs Amendment Bill 2006  
Water Industry Competition Bill 2006  
Central Coast Water Corporation Bill 2006  
World Youth Day Bill 2006  
Crimes and Courts Legislation Amendment Bill 2006  
James Hardie Former Subsidiaries (Winding Up and Administration) Amendment (Trust Funds) Bill 2006  
Parliamentary Electorates and Elections Amendment (Child Sexual Offences Disclosures) Bill 2006  
Road Transport Legislation Amendment (Evidence) Bill 2006  
Aboriginal Land Rights Amendment Bill 2006  
Adoption Amendment Bill 2006  
Deer Bill 2006  
Education Legislation Amendment Bill 2006  
Freedom of Information Amendment (Open Government—Disclosure of Contracts) Bill 2006  
Legal Profession Further Amendment Bill 2006  
Mount Panorama Motor Racing Amendment Bill 2006  
Rural Lands Protection Amendment Bill 2006  
Sale of Goods and Warehousemen's Liens Amendment (Bulk Goods) Bill 2006  
Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill (No. 2) 2006  
Superannuation Administration Amendment (Trust Deed Schemes) Bill 2006  
Sydney Water Catchment Management Amendment (Warragamba) Bill 2006  
Environmental Planning Legislation Amendment Bill 2006  
Health Legislation Amendment (Unregistered Health Practitioners) Bill 2006  
Threatened Species Conservation Amendment (Biodiversity Banking) Bill 2006  
Trees (Disputes Between Neighbours) Bill 2006  
Victims Support and Rehabilitation Amendment Bill 2006  
Police Powers Legislation Amendment Bill 2006

## COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

### Report

**The Speaker** announced the receipt, pursuant to section 26 of the Commission for Children and Young People Act 198, of the report entitled "Children at Work Recommendations", received out of session on 13 December 2006.

**Ordered to be printed.**

## INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION

### Reports

**The Speaker** announced the receipt, pursuant to section 78(2) of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988, of the following reports:

Report on Investigation into Defrauding the RTA and RailCorp in Relation to Provision of Traffic Management Services, dated December 2006, received out of session on 21 December 2006

Report on an Investigation and Systems Review of Corruption Risks Associated with HSC Take-home Assessment Tasks, dated February 2007, received out of session on 1 March 2007

**Ordered to be printed.**

**DEPARTMENT OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY****Report**

**The Speaker** announced the receipt, pursuant to the resolution of the House of 23 November 2006, of the report for the year ended 30 June 2006, received out of session on 8 December 2006.

**Ordered to be printed.**

**NSW OMBUDSMAN****Reports**

**The Speaker** announced the receipt, pursuant to section 43 of the Community Services (Complaints, Reviews and Monitoring) Act 1993, of the report entitled "Report of Reviewable Deaths in 2005: Volume 2: Child Deaths", dated November 2006, received out of session on 29 November 2006.

**The Speaker** announced the receipt, pursuant to section 31AA of the Ombudsman Act 1974, of the report entitled "Domestic Violence: Improving Police Practice", dated December 2006, received out of session on 13 December 2006.

**Ordered to be printed.**

**PARLIAMENTARY JOINT SERVICES****Report**

**The Speaker** announced the receipt, pursuant to the resolution of the House of 23 November 2006, of the annual report for the year ended 30 June 2006, received out of session on 21 December 2006.

**Ordered to be printed.**

**POLICE INTEGRITY COMMISSION****Report**

**The Speaker** announced the receipt, pursuant to section 103 of the Police Integrity Commission Act 1996, of the report entitled "Report to Parliament: Operation Banff", dated December 2006, received out of session on 21 December 2006.

**Ordered to be printed.**

**COMMITTEE ON THE HEALTH CARE COMPLAINTS COMMISSION****Report**

**The Clerk** announced the receipt of report No. 14/53, entitled "Study of Complaints Handling and Practitioner Regulation in Other Jurisdictions—8–11 August 2006", dated January 2007, received out of session on 8 January 2007.

**Ordered to be printed.**

**JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ROAD SAFETY****Reports**

**The Clerk** announced the receipt of the following reports:

- (1) Report No. 14/53, entitled "Road Safety: From Local to Global Perspectives—Proceedings of the 4th Meeting of Australasian Parliamentary Road Safety Committees, together with supplementary papers Monday 3 April 2006 and Tuesday 4 April 2006, Parliament House, Sydney, Staysafe 70", dated December 2006, received out of session on 15 December 2006
- (2) Report No. 15/53, entitled "The Crash Testing of Repaired Motor Vehicles—Further Report 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, Staysafe 71", dated December 2006, received out of session on 15 December 2006

- (3) Report No. 16/53, entitled "Inquiry into Road Safety Administration and Mid-Term Review of the New South Wales Road Safety 2010 Strategy—Report of an Inquiry into Actions Undertaken by the Motor Accidents Authority to Address the Road Safety Situation in New South Wales, 2000-2005, Staysafe 72", dated December 2006, received out of session on 15 December 2006
- (4) Report No. 17/53, entitled "Inquiry into Road Safety Administration and Mid-Term Review of the New South Wales Road Safety 2010 Strategy—Report of an Inquiry into Actions Undertaken by the WorkCover Authority to Address the Road Safety Situation in New South Wales, 2000-2005, Staysafe 73", dated December 2006, received out of session on 15 December 2006
- (5) Report No. 18/53, entitled "Inquiry into Road Safety Administration and Mid-Term Review of the New South Wales Road Safety 2010 Strategy—Report of an Inquiry into Actions Undertaken in the Environment Portfolio to Address the Road Safety Situation in New South Wales, 2000-2005, Staysafe 74", dated December 2006, received out of session on 15 December 2006
- (6) Report No. 19/53, entitled "Inquiry into Road Safety Administration and Mid-Term Review of the New South Wales Road Safety 2010 Strategy—Report of an Inquiry into Actions Undertaken in the Health Portfolio to Address the Road Safety Situation in New South Wales, 2000-2005, Staysafe 75", dated December 2006, received out of session on 15 December 2006
- (7) Report No. 20/53, entitled "Inquiry into Road Safety Administration and Mid-Term Review of the New South Wales Road Safety 2010 Strategy—Report of an Inquiry into Actions Undertaken by Agencies Within the Transport Portfolio to Address the Road Safety Situation in New South Wales, 2000-2005, Staysafe 76", dated December 2006, received out of session on 15 December 2006
- (8) Report No. 21/53, entitled "Inquiry into Road Safety Administration and Mid-Term Review of the New South Wales Road Safety 2010 Strategy—Report of an Inquiry into Actions Undertaken in the Attorney General's Portfolio to Address the Road Safety Situation in New South Wales, 2000-2005, Staysafe 77", dated December 2006, received out of session on 15 December 2006
- (9) Report No. 22/53, entitled "Inquiry into Road Safety Administration and Mid-Term Review of the New South Wales Road Safety 2010 Strategy—Report of an Inquiry into Actions Undertaken in the Education and Training Portfolio to Address the Road Safety Situation in New South Wales, 2000-2005, Staysafe 78", dated December 2006, received out of session on 15 December 2006
- (10) Report No. 23/53, entitled "Inquiry into Road Safety Administration and Mid-Term Review of the New South Wales Road Safety 2010 Strategy—Report of an Inquiry into Actions Undertaken in the Police Portfolio to Address the Road Safety Situation in New South Wales, 2000-2005, Staysafe 79", dated December 2006, received out of session on 15 December 2006
- (11) Report No. 24/53, entitled "Inquiry into Road Safety Administration and Mid-Term Review of the New South Wales Road Safety 2010 Strategy—Report of an Inquiry into Actions Undertaken by the Roads and Traffic Authority to Address the Road Safety Situation in New South Wales, 2000-2005, Staysafe 80", dated December 2006, received out of session on 15 December 2006
- (12) Report No. 25/53, entitled "Progress in Improving the Safety of Railway Level Crossings, Staysafe 81", dated December 2006, received out of session on 20 December 2006

### AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORTS

**The Clerk** announced the receipt, pursuant to section 63C of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983, of the following reports:

Auditor-General's Report for 2006, Volume Five: Financial Audits, dated November 2006, received out of session on 29 November 2006

Auditor-General's Report for 2007, Volume One, dated February 2007, received out of session on 8 February 2007

### AUDIT OFFICE

#### Reports

**The Clerk** announced the receipt, pursuant to section 63C of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983, of the following performance audit reports of the Auditor-General:

Helping Older People Access a Residential Aged Care Facility: NSW Health, dated December 2006, received out of session on 5 December 2006

The Police Assistance Line: Follow-up of 2003 Performance Audit, dated 6 December 2006, received out of session on 6 December 2006

Attracting, Retaining and Managing Nurses in Hospitals, dated 12 December 2006, received out of session on 12 December 2006

Distributing Legal Aid in New South Wales, dated 13 December 2006, received out of session on 13 December 2006

Addressing the Needs of Young Offenders: Department of Justice, NSW Police Force, dated March 2007, received out of session on 28 March 2007

Responding to Homelessness, dated May 2007, received out of session on 2 May 2007

### PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

#### Report

**The Clerk** announced the receipt of report No. 20/58 (No. 163), entitled "Inquiry into Home and Community Care Program", dated January 2007, together with minutes of proceedings, dated December 2006, received out of session on 12 January 2007.

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT****Reports**

**The Clerk** announced the receipt of the following reports:

- Report No. 53/7, entitled "Visits of Inspection—Albury (February 2005), Wagga Wagga (August 2005): the 5<sup>th</sup> Landcare/Catchment Management Forum", dated October 2006, received out of session on 1 February 2007
- Report No. 53/8, entitled "13<sup>th</sup> International Soil Conservation Organisation (ISCO) Conference, 4-9 July 2004", dated October 2006, received out of session on 1 February 2007

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON PARLIAMENTARY PRIVILEGE AND ETHICS****Report**

**The Clerk** announced the receipt of the report entitled "Post Separation Guidelines—Meeting with the Parliamentary Ethics Adviser, November 2006", dated November 2006, received out of session on 18 December 2006.

**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE****Notices of Motions**

**Government Business Notices of Motions (for Bills) given, by leave.**

**CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT**

**Motion, by leave, by Mr John Aquilina agreed to:**

1. That this House adopt, for the purposes of section 9 of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988, the following code of conduct:

**PREAMBLE**

The Members of the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council have reached agreement on a Code of Conduct which is to apply to all Members of Parliament.

Members of Parliament recognise that they are in a unique position of being responsible to the electorate. The electorate has the right to dismiss them from office at regular elections.

Members of Parliament acknowledge their responsibility to maintain the public trust placed in them by performing their duties with honesty and integrity, respecting the law and the institution of Parliament, and using their influence to advance the common good of the people of New South Wales.

Members of Parliament acknowledge that their principal responsibility in serving as Members is to the people of New South Wales.

**THE CODE**

1. Disclosure of conflict of interest
  - (a) Members of Parliament must take all reasonable steps to declare any conflict of interest between their private financial interests and decisions in which they participate in the execution of their office.
  - (b) This may be done through declaring their interests on the Register of Disclosures of the relevant House or through declaring their interest when speaking on the matter in the House or a Committee, or in any other public and appropriate manner.
  - (c) A conflict of interest does not exist where the member is only affected as a member of the public or a member of a broad class.

2. Bribery

A Member must not knowingly or improperly promote any matter, vote on any bill or resolution or ask any question in the Parliament or its Committees in return for payment or any other personal financial benefit.

A breach of the prohibition on bribery constitutes a substantial breach of this Code of Conduct.

## 3. Gifts

- (a) Members must declare all gifts and benefits received in connection with their official duties, in accordance with the requirements for the disclosure of pecuniary interests.
- (b) Members must not accept gifts that may pose a conflict of interest or which might give the appearance of an attempt to improperly influence the Member in the exercise of his or her duties.
- (c) Members may accept political contributions in accordance with part 6 of the Election Funding Act 1981.

## 4. Use of public resources

Members must apply the public resources to which they are granted access according to any guidelines or rules about the use of those resources.

## 5. Use of confidential information

Members must not knowingly and improperly use official information which is not in the public domain, or information obtained in confidence in the course of their parliamentary duties, for the private benefit of themselves or others.

## 6. Duties as a Member of Parliament

It is recognised that some members are non-aligned and others belong to political parties. Organised parties are a fundamental part of the democratic process and participation in their activities is within the legitimate activities of Members of Parliament.

## 7. Secondary employment or engagements

Members must take all reasonable steps to disclose at the start of a parliamentary debate:

- (a) the identity of any person by whom they are employed or engaged or by whom they were employed or engaged in the last two years (but not if it was before the Member was sworn in as a Member);
- (b) the identity of any client of any such person or any former client who benefited from a Member's services within the previous two years (but not if it was before the Member was sworn in as a Member); and
- (c) the nature of the interest held by the person, client or former client in the parliamentary debate.

This obligation only applies if the Member is aware, or ought to be aware, that the person, client or former client may have an interest in the parliamentary debate which goes beyond the general interest of the public.

This disclosure obligation does not apply if a Member simply votes on a matter; it will only apply when he or she participates in a debate. If the Member has already disclosed the information in the Member's entry in the pecuniary interest register, he or she is not required to make a further disclosure during the parliamentary debate.

- 2. This resolution has continuing effect unless and until amended or rescinded by resolution of the House.

## CITIZEN'S RIGHT OF REPLY

### Motion, by leave, by Mr John Aquilina agreed to:

That, during the current Parliament, unless otherwise ordered, the following Citizen's Right of Reply be adopted:

- (1) That where a submission is made in writing by a person who has been referred to in the Legislative Assembly by name, or in such a way as to be readily identified:
  - (a) claiming that the person or corporation has been adversely affected in reputation or in respect of dealings or associations with others, or injured in occupation, trade, office or financial credit, or that the person's privacy has been unreasonably invaded, by reason of that reference to the person or corporation; and
  - (b) requesting that the person be able to incorporate an appropriate response in Hansard,
 and the Speaker is satisfied:
  - (c) that the subject of the submission is not so obviously trivial or the submission so frivolous, vexatious or offensive in character as to make it inappropriate that it be considered by the Standing Orders and Procedure Committee;

- (d) the submission was received within 6 months after the relevant comments were made in the House unless the applicant can show exceptional circumstances to explain the delay; and
  - (e) that it is practicable for the Committee to consider the submission under this resolution,
- the Speaker shall refer the submission to that Committee.
- (2) That the Committee may decide not to consider a submission referred to it under this resolution if the Committee considers that the subject of the submission is not sufficiently serious or the submission is frivolous, vexatious or offensive in character, and such a decision shall be reported to the Legislative Assembly.
  - (3) That if the Committee decides to consider a submission under this resolution, the Committee may confer with the person who made the submission and any member who referred in the Legislative Assembly to that person or corporation.
  - (4) That in considering a submission under this resolution, the Committee shall meet in private session.
  - (5) That the Committee shall not publish a submission referred to it under this resolution of its proceedings in relation to such a submission, but may present minutes of its proceedings and all or part of such submission to the Legislative Assembly.
  - (6) In considering a submission under this resolution and reporting to the Legislative Assembly the Committee shall not consider or judge the truth of any statements made in the Legislative Assembly or the submission.
  - (7) That in its report to the Legislative Assembly on a submission under this resolution, the Committee may make either of the following recommendations:
    - (a) that no further action be taken by the Committee or the Legislative Assembly in relation to the submission; or
    - (b) that a response by the person who made the submission, in terms specified in the report and agreed to by the person or corporation and the Committee, be published by the Legislative Assembly or incorporated in Hansard,
 and shall not make any other recommendations.
  - (8) That a document presented to the Legislative Assembly under paragraph (5) or (7):
    - (a) in the case of a response by a person or corporation who made a submission, shall be succinct and strictly relevant to the questions in issue and shall not contain anything offensive in character; and
    - (b) shall not contain any matter the publication of which would have the effect of:
      - (i) unreasonably adversely affecting or injuring a person or corporation, or unreasonably invading a person's privacy, in the manner referred to in paragraph (1); or
      - (ii) unreasonably adding to or aggravating any such adverse effect, injury or invasion of privacy suffered by a person.
  - (9) That a corporation making a submission under this resolution is required to make it under their common seal.

### TEMPORARY SPEAKERS

**The SPEAKER:** I nominate, pursuant to Standing Order 19, the following members to act as temporary Speakers in the absence of the Deputy-Speaker and the Assistant-Speakers during the current Parliament: Ms Diane Beamer, Mr Thomas George, Mr Wayne Ashley Merton and Mr Matthew Allan Morris.

### BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

#### Days and Hours of Sitting

#### Motion, by leave, by Mr John Aquilina agreed to:

That unless otherwise ordered the House shall meet during the budget and spring sittings as follows:

#### Budget Sittings

Tuesday 8 May	Tuesday 29 May	Tuesday 5 June	Tuesday 19 June	Tuesday 26 June
Wednesday 9 May	Wednesday 30 May	Wednesday 6 June	Wednesday 20 June	Wednesday 27 June
Thursday 10 May	Thursday 31 May	Thursday 7 June	Thursday 21 June	Thursday 28 June
	Friday 1 June	Friday 8 June	Friday 22 June	Friday 29 June

**Spring Sitzings**

Tuesday 25 September  
Wednesday 26 September  
Thursday 27 September

Tuesday 16 October  
Wednesday 17 October  
Thursday 18 October  
Friday 19 October

Tuesday 23 October  
Wednesday 24 October  
Thursday 25 October  
Friday 26 October

Tuesday 6 November  
Wednesday 7 November  
Thursday 8 November  
Friday 9 November

Tuesday 13 November  
Wednesday 14 November  
Thursday 15 November  
Friday 16 November

Tuesday 27 November  
Wednesday 28 November  
Thursday 29 November  
Friday 30 November

Tuesday 4 December  
Wednesday 5 December  
Thursday 6 December  
Friday 7 December

Tuesday 11 December  
Wednesday 12 December  
Thursday 13 December  
Friday 14 December

**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE****Suspension of Standing Orders: Routine of Business****Motion by Mr John Aquilina agreed to:**

That from 7.30 p.m. at this sitting:

- (1) inaugural speeches by made by the members for Toongabbie, Blue Mountains and Balmain; and
- (2) standing orders be suspended to provide that until the rising of the House, no divisions or quorums be called and at the conclusion of inaugural speeches the House adjourn without motion moved.

**SPEAKER OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY****Presentation**

**The SPEAKER:** The House will now proceed to Government House. Transport will not be provided. Members should make their own way to Government House to arrive before 5.00 p.m. As a mark of courtesy to Her Excellency, I ask that as many members as possible attend Government House and that they attend promptly before 5.00 p.m. I shall now leave the chair until the ringing of one long bell.

*The members of the Legislative Assembly proceeded at 4.40 p.m. to Government House, there to present the Speaker to Her Excellency the Governor.*

*The House resumed at 6.30 p.m.*

**The SPEAKER:** I report that today the Legislative Assembly proceeded to Government House, where I informed the Governor that immediately after the opening of Parliament the Legislative Assembly, in the exercise of members' undoubted rights, had proceeded to the election of their Speaker, that choice had fallen upon me, and that I had to present myself to the Governor as their Speaker; whereupon the Governor was pleased to offer me her congratulations. I then, in the name and on behalf of the House, laid claim to all members' undoubted rights and privileges, particularly to freedom of speech in debate, to free access to Her Excellency when occasion should require, and I asked that the most favourable construction should, on all occasions, be put upon their language and proceedings; to all of which the Governor readily assented. I thank members for their attendance.

*[The Speaker left the chair at 6.32 p.m. The House resumed at 7.30 p.m.]*

**PLEDGE OF LOYALTY**

**Mr Donald Page** took and subscribed the pledge of loyalty and signed the roll.

**INAUGURAL SPEECHES**

**Mr NATHAN REES** (Toongabbie—Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Water Utilities) [7.32 p.m.] (Inaugural Speech): Congratulations to you, Mr Speaker; a fine appointment. It is an honour to be in this place and to have been put here by 49,000-plus voters in Toongabbie, and it is an honour to be here as a member of the oldest parliamentary party in the world that advances the causes of workers and their families.

On the campaign hustings and at their front doors the people of Toongabbie told me four main things. They said, "You will be far more interesting than Peter Costello on budget night". Seriously, first, they said they expect their member of Parliament to be accessible. They are not overly keen on emails, faxes and text messages; they want to see their elected member face to face if he or she is to represent them. That means more home visits, more mobile offices, more contact, more engagement and more conversation. Second, they expect their member of Parliament to know the issues of their neighbourhood and to fight on their behalf in pursuing those issues. Third, they expect their member of Parliament to be upfront with them: not to make promises the member cannot deliver on, not to pretend there is a simple answer when there is not, and to give credit where credit is due.

Finally, where there is an issue to be resolved or a question to be answered, people do not care which tier of Government is responsible, they just want the problem fixed. People want a return to consensus wherever possible, a return to communal discussion and an end—a final end—to the blame game. Those expectations are fair and reasonable and it is my intent to deliver on each of them.

I grew up in Western Sydney, attended the local State school, Northmead High, and left at the end of year 12—the only student of 220 who, as I recall, had not applied to go to university. Instead, I completed an apprenticeship with Parramatta council and then worked as a greenkeeper, where I had plenty of time to think as I watered, rolled and mowed the cricket wickets. I eventually started at university, working nights as a garbo to help pay my way. The formal training during my apprenticeship was of practical use, but it was the life experience of working in a large council of 350 men and a handful of women that was the biggest reason for me being here today. The lessons I had absorbed over the years were crystallised in that period when I was also the union delegate for the depot and the secretary of what was in those days the Municipal and Shire Employees Union [MEU]. I was also the Secretary of the Granville sub-branch and, according to John Howard, a menace to our civilisation.

My activity in the union exposed me to arguments and experiences, wins and losses, dreams and shattered dreams, that cemented my commitment to the labour movement. Growing up, I recall my mum and dad reacting to 11 November 1975, when the duly elected Leader of the House of Representatives was sacked by the un-elected John Kerr in conspiracy with Malcolm Fraser and his constitutional vandals. I remember in particular the debate that sacking sparked, not just for mum and dad but between mum and dad and their friends. I remember the adult friendships that sacking wrecked and those it bonded into something stronger: comradeships, commitment and a party ideal. I was seven when it happened and, other than a very faint recollection of dad making me watch man walk on the moon, it was my first real impression of a serious world out there, outside the safety and quiet of home. It was a period in which there were actions being taken by and on behalf of those I loved that were based on what I would subsequently come to know as principles and values: a way of thinking and a cast of mind with a distinctly Australian infusion.

Starting in 1975 my eyes were opened to those key elements of our social fabric: fairness, justice, accountability, a fair go, and that Jack is as good as his master. Of course, this was not something that I was able to articulate at the time, but I knew in the aftermath of the dismissal when dad and his mates went around to newspaper sellers in the city and bought all the newspapers so they could pull a tarpaulin over them in order to maintain the rage that there was something new going on in my world. Later on, mum's commitment to the party and to feminism made just as deep an impression on me. Mum has always backed the underdog, the marginalised and the minorities, including the Left. Mum was never tempted by the urgers of corporatisation of the Australian Labor Party.

When I hit the workforce in my first full time job at 17, I was able to make better sense of the values, education and experiences I had absorbed. I worked with men who were unable to read or write but who carried newspapers under their arms, such was their needless shame. I worked with men who were desperate to take advantage of the second chance they had been given having just been released from jail. And I worked with people who through no fault of their own, their parents or their schooling were likely always to do it tough. Whilst campaigning it was brought home to me again that every family, every home has its own story, its own tragedy, its own triumphs, its own way through the fiery hoop that is our life on earth. Those of us who have been lucky enough to kick a few goals lately should acknowledge the role of good fortune in our destiny. Equally, misfortune can wreak havoc on even the hardest working and best-intentioned families and individuals.

A comfortable, contented existence rearing a family can be rent asunder by fate—perhaps a relationship breakdown or a period of illness, unemployment, raised voices or a moment of emotional accident that changes everything. These ordinary, everyday events in a life can change some destinies forever and put good, decent people on the margins of involvement in their tribe and their community—involvement in its decision making,

its contests and its victories; this power asymmetry we find everywhere we go, this insiders/outside phenomenon that, at its worst, can give rise to the sorts of massacres we see in America all too frequently. I believe it is a big part of my work—and our work—to think about these things: to think, for instance, that the first entitlement of every human born is a quality education that lets them choose with pleasure and dignity where they will go in the world; to think of what happens to people in their ninetieth, and now their hundredth, year; to think that in the future maybe all of us should go beyond year 12 at school—as I almost did not—in order to position ourselves to take advantage of opportunities.

For Australia, the story is in the numbers—if we want to continue to punch above our weight in the global ring, we need to make sure we are trying, and trying hard, to be the best-educated population in the world. There is an economic argument for an emphasis on education but just as critical is its import for our social architecture. It is beyond dispute that living standards and socioeconomic situations affect our health and the health of those around us. The research links health with education—how long one stayed at school and the gladness of heart of the family one grew up in.

The guiding principles for the health of our community should not be determined by what people can afford, but rather the values we want our society to embody. For example, how can we provide health care for those who need it most in our society if a government believes one's sickness is one's fault and that medical costs should be decided by market forces, no matter how sick one is? That is the Howard health care ethic; a slow but inexorable move towards privatisation of our health system in which the market will decide, according to income, who gets to be treated by a scarce medical workforce—and, left unchecked, the market will decide. It will decide to let the poor and the ageing take their grumbles and their aching teeth to their graves. We can do better than that. User pays is no way to treat matters of life and death. User pays will not get young doctors to rural areas with shrinking populations. User pays will not stop the referral of the sick to treatment centres far from home.

About three years ago I was in Hyde Park at lunchtime and I watched as a couple walked towards Macquarie Street. Aged in their early sixties, they held each other's hand and he had a yellow x-ray envelope under his arm. Their style of dress spoke of Sydney's western or south-western suburbs: simple, neat, unassuming. They had that sense of unfamiliarity with their surrounds and were clearly using each other for support as they headed towards a Macquarie Street specialist. I have no idea whether the news for them that day was good or bad, but I do believe it is unfair that the Macquarie Street services they were travelling to were not available closer to home. Think of it—Macquarie Street, the legal, medical and legislative establishments, the power and the privilege that all exist in that precinct. We know that in many cases the people accessing those systems are doing so at times of extreme anguish and anxiety. We could not design a precinct more intimidating and disempowering if we tried.

In redressing these power imbalances, it has been Labor governments that have sent resources to the west and south-west of Sydney. Further, this State Labor Government has forced the Commonwealth to move, at about the same rate as the Middle East road map, on initiatives as obvious as a medical school in Western Sydney. For too long Western Sydney was an afterthought for policy makers. We from Western Sydney know that. Despite the institutionalised bias in many quarters, Western Sydney continues to punch above its weight. Western Sydney is Australia's third biggest economy, worth in excess of around \$70 billion annually and home to one in 10 Australians. Western Sydney is kicking on. The employment prospects for young people are much, much better than when I left school 20 years ago. In those days, parts of Western Sydney had general unemployment rates of about 15 per cent and youth unemployment was through the roof.

Today there has been a 180 degree turnabout, and a large part of that is due to State Labor governments recognising Western Sydney's potential, putting in the planning instruments, the infrastructure, the schools and colleges, and the right policy settings to encourage investment and growth that are making a world of difference to a new generation. We need to make sure through our urban centres planning, transport investment, delivery of infrastructure and partnerships with local government, and the education of arriving strangers that those gains continue and are built upon. Further, we have to involve our communities in the planning and delivery of services and investment and the cultural uplift and good living that will follow.

Anyone who has campaigned hard in an election cannot help but notice how little engagement many people choose to have with politics and the political process. I lost count, when doorknocking, of the number of people who said to me, "You're the first candidate that's knocked on my door in X years." The record during my campaign was from a lady who said that no-one had knocked on her door in 55 years. All members in this place would have heard similar remarks. That proves to me that we need to do more to sell the idea that politics is a bridge between a desire for the good and the machinery of the possible, and that regardless of ideology we in

politics are here to try—at least to try—to bring about the changes that make this world a better place. The distance that can exist between us and the electorate too quickly grows to cynicism and then outright condemnation of us, our system and the polity and democracy in general. I am brand new in this place but I hope in my time here I can do my bit to narrow that distance. Part of narrowing that distance is to improve parliamentary standards and I hope we in this place, old hands and fresh faces together, can take the opportunity to do this with an independent Speaker and a new Leader of the Opposition more civilised and gentle of speech than the previous one.

Finally, I want to say thank you to some people. Each thank you will be necessarily short and rest assured I am making arrangements to thank the hundreds of supporters and friends who assisted me before, during and after my campaign. Firstly, I thank my partner, Stacey. She is the most decent, selfless, patient and generous person I know. She has been a tremendous support and influence since we met when I played the undertaker's pimplly apprentice in the school production of *Oliver*. My debt of gratitude to you for your style and grace can never be adequately repaid, and I thank you from the bottom of my heart. I thank also Rachel and Clarissa for your support and friendship since you were children at Little A's.

I thank Mum and Dad for encouraging me to always question, to help me define right from wrong—and for making me finish sixth form. I thank in chronological order Andrew Refshauge, with whom I began to work in December 1997, Craig Knowles, John Della Bosca, Bob Carr and Premier Iemma for their patience, support and guidance as I worked with them in government. I thank Marcus Schintler and Kirsten Mulley for their tolerance and counsel at important times. I thank Derek Margerison and Jason Kara for running my campaign. We doorknocked every house in the electorate at least once; and they thought I was mad when I said we were going to do that on countless 35 degree days. They kept me sane, fed and watered—although they would probably argue about me keeping sane! I thank also Barbara and Lucy, their respective partners.

Thank you to Macca, my best mate of 27 years, his wife, Katrina, and boys James and Will. Thank you also to Greg Knight, Kim Gibbs and Harry. When we lined up together to enrol for our TAFE apprenticeship courses on 10 February 1986 none of us guessed things would turn out like this. You have been there from the start. Thank you very much. Thanks to my sister Emma, my nephews Samuel and Oliver, and Emma's partner, Greg, who makes all the necessary arrangements. Thanks too to Mark Hanlon, Chris Moutter, Alison Houghton, Liam Hogan and Rose Khalilizadeh for turning up over and over to doorknock the entire electorate. I thank Jenny and James and Teddy too. Big thanks to Nicole Scott and the soccer kids! A special acknowledgement to Elaine and Bill Evans, Yvonne Hennessy, Srimi Peres, Albert Murfet and Victoria Brookman, who staffed my office and answered the many calls from constituents, volunteers, well wishers and the occasional crank call.

A special thank you to Helen Taylor and, regrettably too late, her husband, Tom. Thank you to the branch organisers, Lisa Lake and the efficient Wentworthville branch, Michelle Rowland, Alex Bukarica, Brian and Judy Thomas, Bob Christie, the Facchin Family, Maria Power, Tony Day, Rodney Rammers and Lalor Park branch. Thanks to the Herlinger family, who ensured that the Toongabbie branch would always rise to a challenge, and finally the cool head of Barjinder Pal who effortlessly organised the Seven Hills branch to cover more booths than any other. Thanks to all my colleagues who donated their weekends and leave time to help me, including Paul and LJ, Mick Chouifete, Kitty Connell, Jeremy Anderson, Jason Clare—who I was delighted to see preselected last weekend—Mario Falchoni, Emilio Ferrer, Paul Reidy and Craig Sheehan. Thanks also to Omar Jamal, Cathy Parmeter and family, Phil and Ruth Mahony, Fifi Esber, Didier Silarsah, Antony Dale, Felix Eldridge and Young Labor, Mark, Karl and Prue Guillaume at Head Office, Prabhu Salvadoss, Dinesh Sethi, Rob Creasey, Mel Stewart and Dan, and the whole Collins family headed by Mel. Thank you to Father Arthur Bridge for your support and guidance, and to my Aunty Kerrie, Marg Perri, Sandra Butler, and also Eddie and Ross.

Thanks also to the Transport Workers Union, the Public Service Association, the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union, the Community and Public Sector Union and the United Services Union. I literally would not have had a campaign without you. I thank Paul O'Grady, John Faulkner, John Watkins, John Lee and Luke Foley for your counsel and guidance. I thank also Anthony Albanese and John Graham, as well as Janette Allen, Todd Clewett, Anjali Bhati, Jacqui Henfrey and Susan Calvert for your tremendous fundraising efforts. A special thanks to Bob Ellis and Vivian Skinner, both of whom travelled long distances to give me a hand. Thanks too to my good mate Rob Grieve and his wife, Lucy, who still managed to assist despite expecting a baby. I thank Tanya Gadiel also for her advice and John Maclaughlin for his support. A special thanks also to my dear friend Davina Langton, and her colleagues Eammon and Kirsten in the Premier's office. I extend my thanks to everyone else who believed enough in our fight to place a poster in their yard or on their front fence or do a round of letterboxing. In conclusion, I thank all of those who sit behind me, and in front of me, for your patience, counsel and friendship over the years. It was much appreciated, thank you.

**Mr PHILIP KOPERBERG** (Blue Mountains—Minister for Climate Change, Environment and Water) [7.47 p.m.] (Inaugural Speech): Mr Speaker, I congratulate you on your election to that august post. I commend my colleague Nathan Rees for his very fine inaugural speech. Recognising the privilege afforded to me on this occasion, I rise to deliver my inaugural speech and thank members present for their indulgence. The purpose of the inaugural speech by members has been variously described to me as an opportunity to provide biographical detail, espouse one's philosophy in one discipline or another, recite history, make a point, support an ideology, pay tribute to current and past colleagues or simply introduce oneself.

Rarely do members of our society have the opportunity to be placed on the public record in such a comprehensive manner. That privilege is not lost on me and I will endeavour not to abuse it. Mr Speaker and members, whilst I may touch on all of these opportunities, my principal aim on this occasion is to pay tribute to the men and women with whom I have worked in public service for more than 40 years. I will also take the opportunity to acknowledge that Australia remains a country of enormous opportunity for all. However, we are facing a considerable challenge in climate change, and it is one we must meet with the courage of our convictions and the creativity of our ideas.

Going back a little in time, I have vivid memories of my arrival in this country—it was December, I think—in 1953 at Darwin. We, and many hundreds more Dutch, had exited Indonesia somewhat hurriedly during the period that followed Indonesian independence. If my memory serves me correctly, in the space of a day my parents had a choice of boarding an aircraft bound for The Netherlands, South Africa, the United Kingdom or Australia. My parents chose wisely to board a Qantas aeroplane bound for Darwin, Australia. In the subsequent years we lived in Bathurst, Blackheath in the Blue Mountains and various parts of the Illawarra, where I spent much of my adolescence. They were, as Charles Dickens would say, the best of times and the worst of times. Often there would not be enough money to put food on the table, yet one Christmas my dear late mother somehow managed to produce two brand-new Malvern Star bicycles for my brother and me even though there was not enough money to buy anything for her. Bless her.

After the Second World War my family found itself in Indonesia. My years in Indonesia were largely spent in the rich rainforests and jungles of Sumatra and Java, where I developed an early affinity with many aspects of nature. I have many wonderful and vivid memories of monkeys running around on the front lawn and, indeed, on the sideboard in our house as they strove to help themselves to the fruit often stored there. Fourteen years after my arrival in Australia I would find myself in a different type of bushland, first becoming involved in a way of life known to many Australians: bush fire fighting. In 1967 we moved to the Blue Mountains, where I have lived ever since and where I was first approached to join an iconic organisation: an Australian bush fire brigade. The captain of the North Springwood Bushfire Brigade, the late Frank Martin, mentored me in the way of fire in the Australian bushland. I very quickly became inspired by the selflessness of those who gave their all, often at considerable risk, to protect the people of the Blue Mountains from the ravages of a frequent visitor: an Australian bushfire.

The inherent risk was demonstrated starkly to me on the afternoon of 28 November 1968—one of the darkest days in Blue Mountains fire history—when three of my fellow brigade members, Greg Elly, Tom Chalmers and Peter Hawkins, were trapped to the north of White Cross by a ferocious fire in which they were to perish. The gravity of what had occurred weighed heavily on the whole community but the fight to protect lives and property went on, with only little time to reflect upon the tragedy that had befallen our volunteer colleagues. To me it epitomised the spirit of Anzac. Against all odds, people from all walks of life fought to protect what was dear to others, with little thought of what might befall them. In those days volunteer firefighters routinely lost their lives. In fact, in the years between 1970 and 1980 an average of three volunteer firefighters in New South Wales made the supreme sacrifice annually.

Tonight as this Fifty-fourth Parliament convenes we can celebrate the fact that the level of casualty amongst our brave volunteer emergency service workers has declined considerably. Work done by successive governments, but particularly by the Carr-Iemma governments post-1994, when some 1,200 fires wreaked widespread damage across our State, has resulted in our bush fire fighting capacity being second to none in the world. The NSW Rural Fire Service, NSW Fire Brigades, the State Emergency Service, Forests NSW, the National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Volunteer Rescue Association are now part of a rational, cohesive and integrated emergency management system. It has no equal anywhere and is the envy of many. These organisations are now amongst the best trained, best equipped and most disciplined in the world—and the bulk of them remain volunteers! Whether volunteer or salaried, their professionalism and their skill is their common bond.

I pay tribute to some people I have worked with. From my early years as the district fire manager of the Blue Mountains, between 1970 and 1982, many people spring to mind as having made a contribution towards the evolution of the bush fire fighting movement in this State. Prominent amongst them are the late Vince Ward and Kevin Grady; Bob Schofield, the then district manager at Hornsby; Lionel Smith, the then district manager at Baulkham Hills; and many others whom I am precluded from recalling in this speech due to the constraint of time. With the advent of the NSW Rural Fire Service following the Government's adoption of many of the recommendations of the John Hyatt inquiry into the 1994 fires, I again had the privilege of working with thousands of volunteers. In the Rural Fire Service alone there are some 70,000 volunteers and staff who, collectively, have made a wonderful contribution to the safety of communities across the State, as have their colleagues in the other services that I have already mentioned.

Trevor Anderson, Shane Fitzsimmons, Ross Smith, Tony Howe, Rob Rogers, Bruce Holtz, Keith Harrap, Jane Hollier, Marianne Carmichael and Keith Simpson are just some of the many who hold or have held executive positions within the Rural Fire Service and have contributed enormously to the place that the service now enjoys in the global network of emergency management. As I recall, Bernard Dowling was the district fire manager in the Blue Mountains who preceded me. It was he who persuaded me to change my vocation and to accept a salaried position within the bushfire movement. I think I am indebted to him.

I want also to pay tribute to the heads, past and present, and members of the other emergency services with whom I have had the privilege of working for some 21 years and beyond. Commissioner Greg Mullins, Director-General Brigadier Phil MacNamara, Acting Commissioner Rob Rogers, Major-General Horrie Howard, Commissioner Ian McDougall, Brian Gilligan, former Director General, National Parks and Wildlife Service, and Dr Tony Fleming, current head of the National Parks and Wildlife Service, have all made enormous contributions to fire and emergency management in this State. Richard Lyons, Director, Office of Emergency Services, and his staff are also people to whom I am indebted for their ability, inter alia, to turn fanciful ambition into achievable objectives. I owe an enormous amount of debt to Mark Aarons, former deputy chief of staff to Bob Debus, one of the great environment Ministers of this Government. I owe him a debt for his mentoring of me in matters of the environment and for persuading me to join this place.

I am indebted to my children, Stephen and Elizabeth, for their unwavering support during my long emergency services career. I am proud that my son, Stephen, and my daughter's partner, John Paul, are serving members with the New South Wales Fire Brigades. It says something that they joined the urban fire brigade whilst I ran the rural fire brigade. Obviously they were not going to have me inflicted upon them. I have had the honour of working with many fine Ministers, 12 in all, to whom I owe various degrees of gratitude for their support. But it would be remiss of me if I were not to acknowledge the stewardship in particular of Ministers such as Peter Anderson, the first Minister for whom I worked, Bob Debus and Tony Kelly. Each had a vision that accommodated the rapid transformation of fire and emergency management organisations and catapulted them into the twenty-first century.

I turn now to the present. I am very thankful for the privilege of being an elected member of this place and for the confidence shown in me by my parliamentary colleagues and the Premier. My tribute would not be complete were I not to express my profound appreciation to members of my electorate for their confidence in me, and to the team that so ably assisted me during the campaign. Mr Mick Fell, my campaign director, was a constant source of encouragement—and boy did I need some encouragement! He displayed great skill and commitment during those long tiring days. To the hundreds of volunteers and branch members I simply want to say, "Thank you." I will do my best to ensure that their confidence in me was not misplaced. John Derum, Claire Steward and Trish Doyle are just three of many people who provided invaluable support and assistance to me both during the campaign and ever since.

To be a member of a Government committed to the values of social justice, industrial relations equity, education and environmental management is a privilege I never expected to enjoy. I want to pay tribute to my current staff members who have been with me for only a matter of weeks, and whom I now regard as family, for their inspiration, their guidance, their mentoring and their very wise counsel. To be responsible for issues such as climate change, environment and water at a senior level would not have been possible in my wildest dreams. To be entrusted with a senior portfolio enabling a contribution, no matter how small, to meet a global challenge is as daunting as it is exciting. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

The global community has one last chance to ensure that future generations inherit a world in which they may still enjoy an environment fundamental to the wellbeing of the planet. The vast forests, the enormous numbers of animals and plant species, biodiversity, breathable air, drinkable water, sustainable agriculture and

industry are but a few legacies that we are obliged to leave those who follow us. Our challenges are onerous and require a global response, but a global response can occur only if there is an individual commitment. Global warming and its consequences have to be addressed now. We owe it to our grandchildren and to our great grandchildren. We cannot, as past and current generations have, take for granted that the planet will continue to absorb the unsustainable demands we place on it.

The science is in. Whilst healthy scepticism has its place, the need to act is overwhelmingly supported by indisputable fact. It is a fact that past and current levels of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions have resulted in CO<sub>2</sub> concentrations in the atmosphere of the order of 380 parts per million. If the world's best scientists are correct, a concentration of just 450 parts per million will result in there being a 95 per cent chance of global temperature increases of up to three degrees. The consequences of such increases in the earth's atmosphere are not issues that we ought to contemplate gladly. Over the last 600,000 years the highest that CO<sub>2</sub> concentrations have ever been is of the order of 260 parts per million. Only twice in the last 600,000 have global temperatures been higher than they are now—once about 280,000 years ago and again about 110,000 years ago. But these events both preceded and succeeded ice ages.

Around 1900 AD about 13.5 million square kilometres of the earth's surface was covered by ice. In 2005 the area of the earth covered by sea ice has shrunk alarmingly to just 12 million square kilometres. I could continue quoting ad infinitum alarming facts from Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [IPCC] reports, the Stern report and Al Gore's book, *An Inconvenient Truth*, but as a new member I would not inflict that upon members. I will leave the impenetrable speeches to later in my parliamentary career. The Iemma Government is committed to accepting and acting on its responsibility to be part of the global solution to a potentially catastrophic situation. That will be my core business as Minister for Climate Change, Environment and Water. The challenge ahead is to ensure that we work in unison with science, agriculture and industry. We want to achieve outcomes that address the preservation of the environment whilst at the same time sustaining both primary and secondary industry.

In short, our challenge is to protect the environment whilst the economy continues to thrive. A robust economy need not be at the expense of our environment. Indeed, I strongly hold the belief that a weak and depleted environment almost certainly dictates that our economy will inevitably fail. Neither of those outcomes is at all palatable. The focus of my every working day as Minister will be to continue to argue the case that it is not an either/or end game on the economy and the environment. The two can go, have gone, and will continue to go hand in glove. I state unequivocally: A healthy and protected environment equals a strong and prosperous economy and a society for future generations to inherit. Former United States of America President John Fitzgerald Kennedy said:

Our most basic common link is that we all inhabit this planet. We all breathe the same air. We all cherish our children's future. And we are all mortal.

JFK spoke these words more than four decades ago but they are prescient today in relation to the task ahead of us in turning back the tide on climate change. The environment is our most basic common link but too often through our actions we have inadvertently, or in some cases deliberately, been guilty of trying to sever this link. Tonight in this Chamber I declare that I will feel, when my time is up in this portfolio, that I have had considerable success if, when I leave it, there are fewer climate change sceptics in New South Wales.

But I will not engage in some sort of McCarthyistic witch-hunt—no, something far less dramatic. Simply, as Minister, I intend to argue persistently and cogently the case for climate change to continue to be a primary focus of our attentions and to help the people of New South Wales continue to change their behaviours on emissions. We cannot turn back the clock. We must still be able to turn on the switch and have light. We must still have heating. We must still have jobs and we must still be able to transport ourselves from place to place, and herein lies the challenge. We must neither be the generation that did nothing nor the generation that switches off the lights as the last to leave.

This Government is providing a lead in many areas. Our targets in terms of emissions reduction, renewable energy and water security are both meaningful and realistic, and that is why I am proud to be a member of this team. Together with the Premier, my Cabinet and caucus colleagues, my fellow members of Parliament and, above all, the people of New South Wales, I will work day in and day out to advance the cause of preparing us to deal with the climate change challenge. Our children deserve no less.

**Ms VERITY FIRTH** (Balmain—Minister for Women, Minister for Science and Medical Research, Minister Assisting the Minister for Health (Cancer), and Minister Assisting the Minister for Climate Change, Environment and Water (Environment)) [8.07 p.m.] (Inaugural Speech): I am honoured today to come into this Chamber as the elected representative for the people of Balmain. When Europeans arrived in 1788 the area that is now Balmain, Birchgrove and Rozelle was inhabited by the Gadigal people of the Eora nation, who fished in its rich waters. Today we are still on the land of the Gadigal people, and I acknowledge that and pay tribute to their elders, past and present. On behalf of the residents of Balmain I say sorry to the people whose land we stole, and sorry to the generation of Aboriginal people who were removed from their families, the stolen generation.

The electorate of Balmain includes some of the oldest suburbs in Sydney. After 1788 this sandstone peninsula was home not only to the local indigenous people but to European settlers, who were timber cutters, whalers and seafarers. It was not long before this area's proximity to the water saw it become an important part of Sydney's developing maritime industry. And the workers in this industry lived in the cottages and row terraces that continue to line the streets of our suburbs. I am proud to say that Balmain has a working class history. It has a union history. It has a Labor history. I know that there is some contention as to the date and place of the birth of the Australian Labor Party, but the Labor tradition that I claim gives that honour to Balmain, where the first local Labor electoral league was established on 4 April 1891. It was the local urban unions that took this initiative, tired of not having a formal voice amongst the property interests that dominated Parliament.

Just two months later, in June, 45 Labor electoral leagues were established in New South Wales, and in that same month 35 official Labor candidates were elected to the New South Wales Parliament. This early period of political activity saw union men congregate in Balmain on the corner of Beattie and Darling streets every Sunday night to engage in vigorous political debate. The political consciousness of Balmain was in full swing then and, I can attest, has remained in full swing for more than 100 years. But it is not only the men who were active in the seat of Balmain; women also played a prominent role in local politics. The seat of Balmain elected the first Labor woman ever to the New South Wales Parliament in 1939. She spent her early life working as a domestic servant, going on to work as a shop assistant and joining the Shop Assistants Union of New South Wales. Her name was Mary Lily Quirk and she represented Balmain from 1939 to 1950. On the day she was sworn in the galleries were filled with women who had come to support her.

Mary Quirk was especially concerned with the interests of women and industrial workers—interests which half a century later are still being championed by Labor members of this House. During Mary Quirk's time, people who had middle-class ambitions did not mention where they lived if they came from the inner city. Several decades later, however, a decline in inner-city industry, spectacular harbour views and close proximity to the city meant a renewed appeal for Sydney's middle class. In 1968 the *Sydney Morning Herald* wrote:

An army of young people is marching into Glebe, buying up and renovating the houses, and hoping they have not made a mistake.

The gentrification had begun. The 1960s and 1970s saw the formation of local resident action groups—another signal that the new middle class had arrived in the inner city. These action groups were adept at using the media and mobilising their forces for common goals. The spirit of collectivism, rooted in a unionist past, had found a new outlet and conservation policies were some of the first pursued by these groups. Collectivism was at the forefront of the fight to save Glebe, Annandale and Leichhardt from being carved up by expressways. Following several confrontations in 1972, and the imposition of a green ban, the fight was won when the newly connected Whitlam Government purchased the Glebe estate. This was both a social outcome providing affordable housing for people in the inner city and a social outcome saving the heritage of those buildings. The campaign was led by Tom Uren. Of course, I am proud to have Tom Uren as a constituent and a local Labor Party branch member.

Today the seat of Balmain is bustling, bohemian and bursting with kids. I have lived in the inner west since I was 11 years old; I loved growing up there, and I have loved watching it change. I love the fact that you can walk to the shops and encounter so many people from different backgrounds. I love that it is a place where difference is not just accepted but encouraged. I love that the fight to protect so many of our heritage buildings has been so successful, and I will continue that fight. I see my role as a fierce protector of all that is great about this electorate and my home. I consider myself incredibly lucky to represent such a diverse collection of historic suburbs: Annandale, Balmain, Balmain East, Glebe, Forest Lodge, Haberfield, Leichhardt, Lilyfield, Camperdown, Birchgrove, Dobroyd Point and Rozelle.

Our local area is at the heart of the State's baby boom. We had a 25 per cent increase in the number of children born last year in the Leichhardt municipality. This baby boom brings with it its own infrastructure issues. We desperately need more child care places, and we need to plan for an influx of children into our local schools. The changing demographics of the inner city also mean that we need to plan for green space. Very few of us in the inner city have backyards of our own. That is why public green space that exists must always be defended, and it is why we must always be on the lookout for new green space opportunities.

We are absolutely blessed in Balmain to live so close to arguably the most beautiful part of Sydney: Sydney Harbour. I believe passionately that this asset belongs to everyone, not just the few who are lucky to live on the water. When I was growing up in Glebe the foreshore at Blackwattle Bay consisted of warehouses and timber yards. It is now a beautiful harbourside walk. Access to our precious harbour foreshore is very important to Sydneysiders, and I am particularly supportive of the State Government's vision of a Woolloomooloo-to-Glebe foreshore walk.

My brother and I grew up in a very opinionated family. My parents, Stewart and Bev, joined the Labor Party in the wave of protest that surrounded the sacking of the Whitlam Government in 1975. Indeed, my very first demonstration was as a two-year-old toddler in a pram outside Parliament House in Canberra when Gough Whitlam delivered his famous speech, declaring:

Well may we say God Save the Queen, because nothing will save the Governor-General.

I believe Charles was about two months old at the time. In the eighties my parents were very involved in the peace and anti-nuclear movements. I never considered that activism in these movements was in any way contradictory to activism in the great Australian Labor Party. In fact, the two were inextricably linked. It has been Labor, at both the State and Federal levels, that has been at the forefront of change in this country. It is Labor governments that deliver on the aims of our nation's great social movements.

It was Labor activists, together with the women's movement, that filled the ranks of the public campaign for equal pay for work of equal value. It was a Labor government that introduced this country's first anti-discrimination legislation. It was Labor that pulled the last of our troops out of Vietnam and led the fight against conscription. It was Labor that opposed the 2003 United States led invasion of Iraq, an invasion that is now characterised by all but the most avid Bush supporters as a monumental mistake. It was Labor that delivered real law reform for the gay and lesbian community. It was Labor, together with the movement for indigenous rights in our country, that enshrined native title rights for indigenous people. And it will be Labor, and only Labor, that will seize the political momentum and tackle the challenges of climate change in this country.

Unlike many of the challenges we have had to overcome in the course of human history, climate change is truly global in reach, with consequences that threaten the very elements that sustain life on our planet—access to clean water, the production of food and the diversity of the natural environment. These are the stakes that we are playing for. This is the inheritance we will leave to future generations if our response is one of inaction. The science is in. We know that climate change is happening and we know the long-term threat it poses to the planet. According to the landmark Stern report, the economic benefits of strong early action easily outweigh the costs. Stern shows that adapting to the consequences of climate change would be equivalent to as much as 20 per cent of global economic output—more than the combined cost of the Great War, the Second World War and the Great Depression.

In contrast, the cost of effective action now would be just 1 per cent or, to put it another way, for every \$1 we invest now we stand to save at least \$5 in the future without having to cap the aspirations of rich or poor countries. And we know that most of the victims of our collective failure to act and to invest now will be the people in the poorest countries. For Labor, tackling climate change has a social justice dimension. In fact, social justice and economic security for working families are the key priorities of any Labor government. And they are the priorities of the broader labour movement and the union movement, of which I am proud to call myself a member. I am also proud to have been appointed the Minister Assisting the Minister for Climate Change, Environment and Water, and I look forward to working with Minister Koperberg on this important issue.

Before running for Parliament I was a solicitor with a Sydney law firm that specialised in employment law. It gave me a real insight into some of the major issues facing women in today's workplace, an experience that will be invaluable in my role as Minister for Women. Issues such as health and safety at work, pay equity between men and women, the need for job security and certainty about hours of work, and the importance of family-friendly conditions are all crucial issues for working women in New South Wales. It is clear that the

difficulties facing working women have become so much greater since the introduction of the Federal Government's devastating welfare to work and WorkChoices legislation. The latest average weekly earnings figures released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in February show that the pay gap between men's and women's wages is beginning again to increase since the introduction of WorkChoices. Women's average weekly full-time earnings are approximately 85 per cent of men's equivalent earnings. The average weekly earnings for all women in the New South Wales work force, including part-time and casual workers, is approximately 69 per cent.

In a modern democracy in which as many women as men finish school and attend university this continuing economic inequality for women is simply unacceptable. Across the board women's increasing engagement in the work force has, according to the *Economist*, contributed to global growth exceeding that attained by China in the past decade or so. Yet this is occurring on unequal terms for many of the women involved. As the Minister for Women, I will do what I can to address that disparity. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

To do this, more must be done to assist women and their families to better balance paid work with family responsibilities. New South Wales Labor has a proud record of supporting women's quest for equal pay. New South Wales became the first Australian industrial jurisdiction to legislate for equal pay with the introduction of the Female Rates (Amendment) Act by the Cahill Labor Government in 1958. Modern Labor has stayed true to this tradition. I would also like to pay tribute to the Labor feminists who have been an inspiration and support to me personally—particularly Jeannette McHugh, Ann Symonds, Sue Tracey, Christine Kibble and, of course, my aunt Meredith Burgmann, who taught me always to be brave and to stand up for my beliefs.

I am pleased to have been given ministerial responsibility for science and medical research and for cancer. Science runs in my family: My grandfather, Victor Burgmann, had a long scientific career and was the Chairman of the CSIRO in the late 1970s. Having said that, I am pretty sure that scientific talent is a recessive gene because it definitely skipped my generation. At the heart of our humanity is our constant need to search for truth. There is something very human about our never-ending desire to push the boundaries of science and medical research. I believe we, as a society, need to provide the capacity for our scientists to think, to explore and to discover solutions that will help humankind, whether it be through breakthroughs in medical science or perhaps technological advances that will help in the fight against climate change. One of the great achievements of the Labor Government has been the establishment of the Cancer Institute of New South Wales. I have visited the institute and was overwhelmed by the breadth and depth of its work in the promotion of world-class cancer research. I look forward to being its advocate within government.

The heart that sustains the Australian Labor Party is the rank and file branch members, many of whom are in the public gallery tonight. I thank you. I am honoured to have been preselected through a rank and file ballot, and I would like to pay tribute to the 600 or so local branch members in the seat of Balmain. The campaign in Balmain was hard fought for the Labor Party and we would never have got there without the hours of work contributed by local party members, working because they believe in the Australian Labor Party. A special thanks must go to the people who formed the core of my campaign team, Tamsin Lloyd and Hannah Diddams, two incredibly talented young women with great futures ahead of them, and to my chief of staff and good friend John Graham. I would also like to thank the union movement, especially the AMWU, for their support. To all the branch campaign co-ordinators, to members who letterboxed, doorknocked, answered telephones, put up posters, staffed street stalls and handed out on election day—you all know who you are—I thank you very much.

I want to thank Alice Murphy, Mayor of Leichhardt, and Leichhardt Labor councillors Damian Copley-Finch, Bob Webb and Chris Windsor. I would also like to thank my City of Sydney council colleagues Michael Lee and Tony Pooley. Thanks of course must be extended to Sandra Nori, previous member for Port Jackson, for her 19 years of service to our local community. I have many State parliamentary colleagues who have been very supportive, but I want to single out in particular Carmel Tebbutt, Penny Sharpe and Linda Burney for their encouragement and support over many years of friendship. I would like to thank my hardworking and committed ministerial staff. We have only just started working together but I am blown away already by everyone's enthusiasm and commitment. Special thanks also to Christina Harlamb for her incredibly hard work in the electorate office.

At a personal level I would like to thank Anthony Albanese for his steadfast support and advice over the years. Thank you also to Luke Foley, John Faulkner and Lis Kirkby and to my excellent local Federal member and friend, Tanya Plibersek, whose opinion I always seek and who I do not believe has ever been wrong. To Ken Fowlie, my boss at Slater and Gordon, thank you for being such a good friend to me. I learnt a

lot working with you. To Michael Coutts-Trotter, Jenny McAllister, Tim Ayres, Rae Cooper and Rose Tracey, thank you for your personal support. Last but not least, much love and thanks to my wonderful, supportive family. To my mother, Beverley, and stepfather, Andrew, to my father, Stewart, and stepmother, Kate, thank you for loving me and giving me the confidence to do a job like this.

To my brother, Charles, and sister-in-law, Amanda, I know that you will always keep me on the straight and narrow and I will never be able to get away with anything. I am very lucky in that I could not have better in-laws. Thank you to Eileen Chesher, Karen Chesher and Mick Saxby, Deb, Joe, Alex, Tom and Ellie Vass, John Chesher, Shauna Wilkinson and Isabel Chesher. Last but not least, thank you to my kind, patient and clever husband, Matthew, and to my beautiful daughter, April. Just looking at you always makes me happy. I hope that together all of us can make a better world for April to grow up in.

**The SPEAKER:** I congratulate the three new members who gave their inaugural speeches this evening.

**DEATH OF KEITH O'CONNELL, FORMER MEMBER FOR PEATS**

**DEATH OF IVAN JOSEPH WELSH, FORMER MEMBER FOR SWANSEA**

**The SPEAKER:** It is with regret that I have to inform the House of the death on 28 November 2006 of Keith O'Connell, and the death on 15 March 2007 of Ivan Joseph Welsh, former members of the Legislative Assembly. On behalf of the House I have extended to their families the deep sympathy of the Legislative Assembly for the loss they have sustained. I ask members to stand as a mark of respect.

*Members and officers of the House stood in their places.*

**The House adjourned at 8.35 p.m. until Wednesday 9 May 2007 at 10.00 a.m.**

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