

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Wednesday 11 May 2011

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**The Speaker (The Hon. Shelley Elizabeth Hancock)** took the chair at 10.00 a.m.

**The Speaker** read the Prayer and acknowledgement of country.

## HEALTH SERVICES AMENDMENT (LOCAL HEALTH DISTRICTS AND BOARDS) BILL 2011

**Message received from the Legislative Council returning the bill without amendment.**

### TRIBUTE TO LIONEL ROSE, MBE

**Debate resumed from 10 May 2011.**

**Mr BRYAN DOYLE** (Campbelltown) [10.01 a.m.]: I speak on the condolence motion for a great Australian, Lionel Rose. I remember as a young fellow at Greenacre listening to the call of that great fight between Lionel Rose and Fighting Harada. It could be said that one thing applies to all of us: the quality of a man's life is often best remembered by his best moment. Lionel Rose was a young fellow representing his country in a sport that is often a representation of life. If you are a boxer alone in a ring with an opponent who can do you harm, you will be struck; and, even if you hit back with one of your best efforts it may still have no effect. Lionel's was a huge achievement: he took on Fighting Harada, who was recognised as one of the best exponents of his sport in the world, and defeated him. It was such a quality victory on the world stage overseas. It was a huge achievement.

As I said in my inaugural speech, when I was a youngster I thought that everyone was Australian. It was not until I grew older that I found that people had different backgrounds. Having worked in the bush, at Broken Hill and Wilcannia, I am somewhat familiar with some Aboriginal cultures, and I know about their connection to land and family. For Lionel Rose to be so far away from home at such a young age, at 19, was a huge effort and a great mark of the man himself. My grandparents ran Doyles Railway Hotel at Werris Creek after the Second World War, at a time when Australians of Aboriginal background did not enjoy all the civic rights that we all enjoy now. My grandparents made a special effort to employ people of Aboriginal background and to give them a go. My grandmother was always upset with the Japanese after the Second World War, having lost a brother-in-law at Bougainville, and knowing the treatment that was occasioned to Australian prisoners of war. So to her, Lionel Rose fighting in Japan was a sign. I clearly remember the importance my grandmother placed on that bout.

Lionel Rose provided inspiration to people in my electorate of Campbelltown. The Tharawal Aboriginal Medical Centre in Campbelltown is recognised as a world-class medical centre, and my friend the member for Macquarie Fields works at the centre each week. The advances we have made in the provision of medical and general services to Australians of Aboriginal background can be traced back to the success and character of people like Lionel Rose—proud Australians of Aboriginal background who stood up and made a difference for the better. We all have successes and failures in our lives. When a person like Lionel Rose can claim a world title and be named Australian of the Year, that shows that in this great country anyone from any background who uses his or her God-given talents and works hard can be the best he or she can be, whether that be as a world champion or a good father or mother, or just being good at one's work or whatever we turn our minds to. Lionel Rose set us a fine example of what we can all achieve.

**Ms LINDA BURNEY** (Canterbury) [10.07 a.m.]: I join members in speaking to this condolence motion for the late Lionel Edward Rose. We have already recognised country this morning, but I will expand on that in the lead-up to my comments about Lionel Rose. One great thing about our Parliament—I say this for all members—is that we pay respects to the first peoples, and we have done so for a long time now. I acknowledge that the Minister at the table, Robyn Parker, was instrumental in the formation of early reconciliation groups here at Parliament House. There are not many parliamentary Chambers in which the State flag and the Aboriginal flag are displayed side by side as a symbol of unification. It is a decent thing to do in this Parliament.

Recognising country is about many things. It is about paying respects to the first peoples. It is about reminding us of the importance of truth telling and the great role we play as lawmakers in that truth telling and as leaders in the community. It is also about unification in terms of the heritages that make up Australia. Our country is made up of people from throughout the world, and it is based on the wonderful foundations of the world's oldest continuous surviving culture, which is the heritage of us all. It is for all Australians, not just Aboriginal people. I make those comments because we stand together today, as many members have said, to acknowledge that Lionel Rose was an important Australian.

I speak today also as the member for Canterbury and as Deputy Leader of the Opposition, but most significantly I speak as an Indigenous person, an Aboriginal person from the Wiradjuri nation. I make the point to those of you who are new to the Parliament that it is quite unusual for a condolence motion to be moved in this place for someone who was not a former member of Parliament. It happens on rare occasions. So we are participating today in something very special—a condolence motion for a man who will be given a State funeral and who brought Australians together and made them proud at a time about which we need to remind ourselves. Lionel Rose achieved this, particularly as a result of the Harada fight, of which so many people have spoken. The reception he received when he returned to Australia following that fight showed just what it meant to the Australian people.

I remind members that this event took place at a time when Aboriginal Australians had only just won the right to vote in all State and Federal elections. It took place before the land rights movement began to gain momentum and at a time when many Aboriginal Australians were forced to live on reserves, when we had to work without pay and had absolutely none of the rights and privileges enjoyed by other Australians. Of course, it was also a time when Indigenous children were still being removed from their families because of their Aboriginality. It is important that we reflect that Lionel Rose brought Australia together when these things were still part of the narrative of this nation.

Key events in Aboriginal history at that time included the 1962 Commonwealth legislation that gave all Aboriginal Australians the right to vote; in 1965 Aboriginal Australians could vote, as I said; and in 1967, just one year before the Rose-Harada fight a referendum gave the Commonwealth the power to legislate for Aboriginal people. We should remind ourselves that in 1967 the wonderful Sir Douglas Nicholls became the first Aboriginal person to hold a vice-regal position when he became Governor of South Australia. Not long after, in 1972, the Tent Embassy was established in Canberra and the royal commission into Aboriginal land rights began. I wanted to paint the picture of how things looked at that time. I know that members in this Chamber understand that part of our history.

I did not want to make a long speech today. I just wanted to say that Lionel Rose was a remarkable Australian. He was a unifying figure, a hero for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australia. That is the most remarkable aspect. Lionel Rose was a talented sportsman, and so many members have spoken about his story. In 1968 he made boxing history when he won a world title. He remains one of only four Australian-born boxers to win a title overseas. In the same year Lionel achieved another first: he became the first Aboriginal Australian to be named Australian of the Year. A number of Aboriginal people since Lionel Rose have been named Australian of the Year, but in 1968, set against the backdrop of Aboriginal history and the happenings I outlined to the House, the idea that an Aboriginal could be named Australian of the Year is absolutely remarkable. While he is recognised as having remarkable talent as a sportsman and as an excellent ambassador for Australian, he is recognised also in the most significant way possible for any Australian.

As many members have highlighted, his boxing career included 42 matches, of which he lost only 11. Of course, he was much more than a boxer. He was a businessman and a philanthropist. He also had a beautiful singing voice, as other members have said. The statements of the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition yesterday highlighted just how generous Lionel Rose was. We all remember that terrible school yard incident when young Tjandamurra O'Shane was burnt so horrifically, and we remember also Lionel's generosity and his gift to Tjandamurra to encourage him to fight on—as he did—and to survive his appalling injuries.

Lionel Rose himself struggled with several problems in the last years of his life, including a stroke in 2007. He was generous, a great Australian and a talented sportsperson. I join with others today to thank him for the inspiration he gave everyone, but in particular for the inspiration he gave to so many Aboriginal people at a time when things were pretty tough. We talk about Reconciliation as a decade in the 1990s. Lionel Rose displayed all the things that are important about Reconciliation and about who we are as a nation, and I stand here as an Aboriginal person and a member of this House to say that we will be indebted forever as a nation to Lionel Rose.

**Mr JOHN WILLIAMS** (Murray-Darling) [10.15 a.m.]: I experienced a sinking feeling when I read the notice of the death of Lionel Rose in a newspaper the other day, and I was taken back to my early memories of this great person. Like many others in this House have observed, I can recall sitting with my family listening to the call of a fight in Tokyo in which a young Aboriginal boy was taking on the world. In that fight he made many Australians proud. My mother, who had a close association with Aboriginal people—she was born and raised in Western Australia, nursed Aborigines and had a great respect for Aboriginal people—was pretty much brought to tears by that event. Emotions ran very high in support of this great man.

What I probably was not aware of at that time, however, was that Lionel Rose was a humble man, a man who never professed to be any more than what he said he was. Obviously he could have let all the accolades go to his head and lead a different life. He was humble in his birth and humble in his death. He came from what in American terms would be said to be a dirt poor background, and I think that was his greatest attribute. This guy believed in himself. His father obviously believed in him, as did those who became his cohorts. He was a great example of what anyone can achieve—not just Aborigines, but anyone of any race—when one decides to make his or her mark.

Looking back to that time, I think that our relationship with Aborigines then was better than it is today. I am saddened to think that we have not done a good job of breaching the gap. I do not know the formula for success in that endeavour, and it really frustrates me. I hate it when I see Aboriginal kids denied opportunities that Anglo-Saxon children enjoy. It is an ongoing battle, and it was outstanding that a role model such as Lionel Rose was around in those days. No mention has been made of that great Aboriginal tennis star, Evonne Goolagong. My mum is 90 years old and if I said to her today, "Where is Evonne Goolagong?" she could tell me. She loved Evonne. Lionel and Evonne are great Aboriginal people who have done so much for their race and for Aboriginal recognition.

With the passing of Lionel Rose we acknowledge a great man who put Australia on the map. In my mind, Lionel Rose's victory in Tokyo was as important to Australia as our victory in the America's Cup. I was inspired just as much by Lionel's outstanding victory. Members have spoken about the relationship that formed between Elvis Presley and Lionel Rose. Elvis Presley also grew up in a dirt poor environment, in Tupelo Mississippi. He too did it tough. Lionel and Elvis certainly had a lot in common. Both individuals, who came from similar backgrounds, succeeded in putting themselves on the world stage. Without a doubt, when I was a young person boxing was certainly leading the way. I must admit that on the occasion that I got involved in it I was that scared I could hardly walk across the canvas to shake hands with my opponent who hit me about eight times before I realised what was going on. Boxing was not something that I engaged in but I loved to see a great man such as Lionel Rose with all his great attributes. Vale Lionel Rose.

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN** (Cronulla) [10.20 a.m.]: We are here today to celebrate the life of Lionel Rose, to celebrate Lionel Rose as a person and to celebrate the contribution that he has made to Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australia. We are also here to mourn both his passing and the circumstances of his passing. Many of us through our lives remember where we were when major events in history have taken place. Perhaps to the shock of those opposite I remember where I was in 1975 when Gough Whitlam was dismissed. I also remember where I was when Princess Dianna died. In the 1960s two great occasions were imprinted on the mind of a young primary school student at Caringbah North who was one year behind the member for Tweed. Those occasions were the landing of the first man on the moon in 1969—I recall watching that on a crackly, black and white television in the school library; and listening to the great fight between Lionel Rose and Fighting Harada in 1968, along with millions of other Australians. Those two iconic moments of the 1960s are imprinted on my mind, as they are, I suspect, on the minds of many of my generation.

We are here to celebrate Lionel Rose in two ways: Lionel Rose as a person and his contribution to Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australia. As a person Lionel Rose was a knockabout bloke. As The Nationals Whip said, he was a man of great humility, a man who made an extraordinary gesture and presentation to the severely burnt Tjandamurra in 1966. That shows the mark of a man with many of the attributes we would like to think reflect the Australian personality—the humility, the lack of self-importance and the caring and consciousness of our obligations to help others, particularly a little boy who had been badly burnt and in great need of encouragement and a boost. It is Australian mateship; something that crosses both Indigenous and non-Indigenous barriers. He was a great knockabout bloke, a man of great humility.

We also celebrate the contribution that Lionel Rose has made to the Australian community. For Aboriginal Australians, the world in 1960s was a very different place from the way it is today, and what Lionel Rose achieved in that context was truly outstanding. He was not only a great sportsman, and arguably

Australia's greatest ever boxer; he also made an immense contribution, along with many others, to changing racial attitudes in Australia and to giving appropriate recognition to our first Australians. In the context of Aborigines being given the right to vote in the 1960s and the Constitutional Referenda in 1967 recognising Aborigines, Lionel's winning the world boxing bantamweight title in 1968 really put Aborigines on the map.

There are many ways in which we can improve the circumstances of Aborigines in Australia. Of course, government policy is very important in that regard, but in my view it is also important for Indigenous Australians to have great role models. More lately, there has been Cathy Freeman at the 2000 Olympics. Cathy winning the 400 metre final at the Sydney Olympics in 2000 is actually another occasion that is imprinted on my mind. It is very important when Indigenous Australians have suffered, and continue to suffer, significant disadvantages compared to the rest of the community in New South Wales and Australia, that people such as Lionel Rose can inspire Indigenous Australians to get up and go and make a mark for themselves. That is exactly what Lionel Rose did in the 1960s.

Indeed, it could be said that Lionel Rose was the face of Australia for the 1960s, so well recognised and well respected was he. He changed racial attitudes because of the sort of person he was, because of his sporting achievements in the boxing ring and because of the stand that he took on apartheid. As the Leader of the Opposition noted in his remarks, he was fairly isolated at the time he took a stand against apartheid and sporting links with South Africa. In those ways Lionel Rose was an inspiration for Indigenous Australians, and he helped in his own way to bring about change in racial attitudes in Australia.

As I said, in many ways Lionel Rose was the face of Australia for the 1960s. After he defeated Fighting Harada on 26 February 1968 in Tokyo he came back to Australia to a public reception at the Melbourne Town Hall that was witnessed by a crowd of more than 100,000 people. He said at the time that he thought it was a reception for the Beatles—but in fact it was for Lionel Rose. The London *Times* hailed Lionel Rose as Australia's first Aboriginal world champion since Albert Namatjira. As we know, he was later named Australian of the Year. He achieved celebratory status in the late 1960s, a great feat for an Indigenous Australian in circumstances of Indigenous disadvantage that was particularly severe in the 1960s. No other boxer has ever achieved the sort of popularity that greeted the world bantamweight title win of Lionel Rose in 1968.

We mourn the passing of Lionel Rose in two ways: as a great Australian, and also mourn the context in which he has passed. We talk frequently about closing the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians when it comes to health statistics, about closing the 17-year life expectancy gap between black and white Australia, but Lionel Rose missed out on the closure of that gap. The story of his passing reminds us how far we still need to go to close the gap of Indigenous health disadvantage in Australia and in New South Wales. Lionel Rose was a champion athlete—arguably Australia's greatest boxer—but he, like many other Australians, eventually was symptomatic of the health disadvantage that Indigenous Australians face. He suffered his first of many heart attacks at the age of 39. He told people that he expected to die young—perhaps not like James Dean—and as we know he suffered a long period of illness.

Here is a great indigenous Australian, a great athlete, yet he dies young after suffering many, many years of illness, symptomatic of the problems that we as a community need to overcome and symptomatic of the health disadvantage that indigenous Australians face. According to the report of the Chief Health Officer last year here in New South Wales Aborigines make up around 2 per cent of the total population but they are more likely to die at younger ages. So Aborigines represent 2 per cent of the New South Wales population but people aged less than 25 years make up 10 per cent of the deaths of Aboriginal people compared with 2 per cent of deaths among non-Aboriginal people.

The infant mortality rate for babies born to Aboriginal mothers is 7.7 per 1,000, twice the rate for New South Wales babies overall. Aboriginal people are more than three times more likely to die from diabetes than non-Aboriginal people and they are more than 1.5 times more likely to die from injury or poisoning than non-Aboriginal people. Aboriginal people are admitted to hospital at around 1.7 times the rate of non-Aboriginal people and renal dialysis accounts for the largest number of hospitalisations of Aboriginal people. According to the Chief Health Officer the hospitalisation rates for Aboriginal people compared with non-Aboriginal people are 200 per cent higher for diabetes, 70 per cent higher for cardiovascular diseases, 100 per cent higher for chronic respiratory diseases and 60 per cent higher for injury and smoking. The reported rates of smoking among Aboriginal adults are about twice those of the general population across the various age groups and the level of risk drinking is about 1.4 times that of the general population. They are sad statistics.

In mourning the passing of Lionel Rose we mourn that a great Australian and great athlete died prematurely against the backdrop of socioeconomic disadvantage. The great challenge for this Parliament and

for New South Wales and Australia in relation to Indigenous health is, over time, to close that gap with appropriate policies. We mourn the loss of a knockabout bloke, an iconic Australian. We regret the sad circumstances in which he passed but we celebrate the life of someone who has inspired so many and has made his contribution to the advancement of Indigenous Australians and reconciliation in the past and hopefully further in the years ahead.

**Ms PRU GOWARD** (Goulburn—Minister for Family and Community Services, and Minister for Women) [10.32 a.m.]: After so much has been said about Lionel Rose very little else can be said except to say I join with others in this place and the general community in thanking Lionel Rose for his great sportsmanship, his great achievements, his perseverance against many odds, his contribution as a singer and, overwhelmingly, the thoughtful leadership he provided to the Indigenous community. He did not hold an official position; that was not necessary for Lionel Rose. His leadership was leadership by example. He inspired and encouraged: he made Aboriginal people proud at a time when, as the member for Canterbury already observed, things were pretty tough for Aboriginal Australia, when in some States they did not have the vote and their children were still being removed. When Lionel Rose won that fight in 1968 there was no area of public administration and life where Aborigines were not severely disadvantaged and for his achievement we must always be thankful.

It is so important that leaders provide hope and aspiration to others, that they set a great example. His life story of perseverance against extraordinary odds should be an inspiration, not just to Aboriginal children but to all of us, that there is no need in this wonderful country of ours ever to say, "I can't do it: the system has beaten me." He had every reason to give up. As has been said, this was a guy who started off learning to box in a ring made of barbwire with rags on his hands. There is no reason in Australia why anybody cannot do anything. Lionel Rose was genetically gifted as a sportsman and, as it turned out, as a singer, but genetics is not everything. It is not necessary for people to be born just with good genes and even good luck; they must be born also into a country that somehow enables them to break through.

Lionel Rose did it the tough way, unnecessarily hard. Australia was still a deeply racist country, prejudiced against Aboriginal people in an era that as a child I recall was shameful. He had more to fight than most of us and he got there, and there is no reason why anybody else cannot do the same. He is an example to all of us, not just to Aboriginal Australia. We mourn his passing. As has already been observed, we mourn his premature death by modern-day standards and, of course, the links perhaps with early childhood disadvantages as a result of his Aboriginality. However, whilst we may mourn we must also celebrate his life with great pride. He was a great Australian. He represented all of us. He gave hope and inspiration to Aboriginal people and ultimately to all Australians.

**Mr DARYL MAGUIRE** (Wagga Wagga) [10.36 a.m.]: I make a contribution on the loss of a great Australian, Lionel Rose, MBE. Much has been said in this debate about the achievements of a wonderful Indigenous Australian who has done so much in the field of sport. He had a very humble beginning, being born in an Aboriginal settlement in Jacksons Track near the Victorian town of Warragul, rising to great heights as an international champion. I can well recall, as will many members, his great fight with Harada. I watched that fight as a young man and was so proud of Lionel Rose when he beat Fighting Harada.

In those days the community would have been rather split on the view that Indigenous Australians should be viewed—sadly, lesser than the majority of the population. Thankfully, that view is now changing. I think it is changing because of the likes of Lionel Rose and other great Indigenous Australians who have trailblazed in many ways through their sporting achievements, academic achievements or community leadership. In so many ways Indigenous Australians are making their mark, and rightly so. It gives us great reason to be proud but, more important, members of the Indigenous community look up to the likes of Lionel Rose and others: they admire their leadership and achievements.

The deeds of Lionel Rose have encouraged other sporting men and women of Indigenous descent to achieve, and we have so many. No matter the field, there are wonderful Indigenous sports men and women playing for our country and their States, and encouraging other young Aboriginal children to take an interest in sport. In Ivanhoe, where I was raised, our school always played sport with schoolchildren from the surrounding towns of Wilcannia, Menindee and Hillston. Being a rural community, there was a great population of terrific Indigenous families, people who have remained lifelong friends of mine. We played sport together. The gift for sport amongst those children was great—no-one could outrun the kids; no-one could out-bat them. It did not matter which sport it was, the talent of our Indigenous community was great. Many of those children went on to play for rugby league teams and to represent this State. In some way I think that people such as Lionel Rose encouraged participation in sport and encouraged people to do well.

It is with great sadness that we learnt of his early death. I say "early" because the life expectation of an Indigenous person is far less than for you and me, Mr Assistant-Speaker, and there is much more work that needs to be done with regard to Indigenous health. We know that the Indigenous community suffers greatly from the effects of diabetes and other types of chronic disease. Sadly, we have not been able to close the gap. Heart disease is another problem that afflicts our Indigenous community. We need to do more. We have agreed in debate many times in this place that more needs to be done. I know that members feel very strongly about the need for improved health. Sadly, health complaints have claimed Lionel Rose. He had a heart attack at a very young age, which is not uncommon and is treatable, but when heart disease is endemic in a community the chances of survival are far less.

It is appropriate that we acknowledge Lionel Rose in this House, which has led the way on many Indigenous issues, being the first State to do certain things. I am pleased that many people have spoken about his life and the things that he did. Whether it be in the entertainment or sporting industries, or in the area of reconciliation, Lionel Rose played his part and I think that our community, our State and our country will forever be grateful for having known him. We are saddened by the loss of Lionel Rose at a very young age. Some of the members who have risen to their feet would have personally known him and some—a little older than I am—would have a greater recollection, but there was great pride when Lionel Rose took on Fighting Harada and Australia really cheered for him. I cheered for him, as I am sure his family, friends and the Indigenous community cheered for him. We will continue to cheer for Aboriginal sports men and women as they do this country proud. Vale Lionel Rose.

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST** (Tweed) [10.43 a.m.]: I wish to make a brief contribution on what I consider a very important subject: the celebration of the life of Lionel Rose. As many previous speakers have indicated, he came from Jacksons Track, near the Victorian town of Warragul, having grown up there. He came from very humble beginnings. Obviously, the main achievement of his life was winning the world title in Tokyo on 26 February 1968. Unlike the previous speaker, I was very young at that time and watched it on a black and white television set in the southern suburb of Caringbah. The member for that area give his inaugural speech last night, which was very symbolic, I think. He rose up against great odds because, unfortunately, in those days, some Indigenous sports people needed a fair amount of resilience. Mr Assistant-Speaker, I was born in a town not far from your electorate—a little place called Bowraville, near Macksville—which had, and still has, a fairly large Indigenous population. I am sure you know it well. I can remember as a young boy playing a lot of sport with the Indigenous people of the town, and they were great athletes: they were really sensational.

I pay tribute to the life and achievements of Lionel Rose, in the sporting arena and on reconciliation. In my electorate the Indigenous population plays a fairly significant role. In any sport one can think of they are usually heavily involved. Apart from the sporting achievements of Lionel Rose, athletes such as Anthony Mundine and Cathy Freeman act as role models to many of our Indigenous youth, which I see as a big plus. They give them hope and give them the knowledge that anything is achievable providing you put enough effort and time into it. I have been very impressed by the lives of Lionel Rose and other Indigenous sportspeople and the amount that they give back to their communities. There are a number of great rugby league players, both past and present, who do a lot of work. I work heavily with Larry Corowa, who is a member of the Men of League, an organisation that assists past players. On most Saturday and Sunday mornings you will find them on sporting fields. As a by-product of that, my electorate of the Tweed has a great number of sporting people.

The Police Citizens Youth Club plays a significant role with Indigenous people in my community. Last year I was fortunate to be able to grant it money through the Premier's grants to expand its facilities, the gymnasium and boxing facilities. The youth of today are a little different from when I grew up. We looked up to our role models, whether they were sporting legends or other people of achievement, and tried to emulate them and model our lives on them. Lionel Rose should be applauded for what he put back into the sport.

I have been told that the member for Clarence was the sparring partner of another great Indigenous boxer, Tony Mundine. One evening here, with the member for Clarence, I had a fairly lengthy talk to Tony and I walked away really impressed by what a humble person he was. We talked about his commitment to his people and, more importantly, his commitment to youth, recognising that that was the key to the future. I know he was—and still is—involved in many youth programs. Tony Mundine also said that the member for Clarence, who was his ex-sparring partner, could improve in many areas of his boxing career—and undoubtedly, after I have said that, we will see him fly through the door.

The passing of Lionel Rose is a great loss. Australians—particularly Indigenous people—are very thankful for his involvement and commitment to them. I never had the privilege of meeting him, although

I knew the name. I watched him fight and felt very proud to call him a fellow Australian. I note that he had a small dabble in the musical world and one of his songs in 1970 was titled, *Please Remember Me*. Members from both sides of the House who have spoken about Lionel Rose over last few days have clearly remembered him. I think Lionel Rose is in a far better place at the moment, but that song *Please Remember Me* really stuck in my mind.

Lionel Rose was a tremendous Australian, rising from such humble beginnings to the peak of his chosen sport. He is missed by his close friends and family but we remember his important contribution to the Indigenous people of Australia. I think we can learn a lot from Lionel's battles in life and achievements, and we would do well to emulate him. The more we can invest in the future of Australia the better. The future of Australia rests in our hands and in the hands of our children. I, like all other members of this place, strive to improve Australia's future on a daily basis. Lionel Rose was a legend in Australia. He is a role model and we can learn a lot from him. He will be sadly missed by his family, especially, and his friends, the sporting community and our Indigenous people. I am proud to honour a true Australian in this place.

**Mr ROBERT FUROLO** (Lakemba) [10.51 a.m.]: My contribution to this condolence motion will be brief. Like many members of this place I want to place on record my respect and appreciation for the contribution of Lionel Edward Rose. Many people throughout history have been in the right place at the right time. Their opportunities to impact on their community and the country they represent can never be better explained or demonstrated than by someone like Lionel Rose. For a person who started out under true adversity to rise to the level that Lionel Rose did in his chosen sport is a mark of his hard work and talent and the support of those around him.

Lionel Rose was truly a remarkable Australian—not only for his feats in the boxing ring but also for the role he played in unifying a country that was coming to terms with a range of issues around recognition of Aboriginal people in this country. Lionel Rose went on to become a successful boxer, winning in Tokyo against the odds against Fighting Harada. As many members have identified, he remains one of only four Australian boxers to win an overseas title. In the same year Lionel Rose became the first Indigenous Australian to become Australian of the Year. Rose won a record 42 boxing matches, losing only 11.

I have heard many of the speeches on this condolence motion. Many members have recounted their recollections of the impact that Lionel had on Australia and Australians. While I was perhaps a little too young to remember his successes in the boxing field, the impact of his success, through the contribution he made to the sport of boxing and, more importantly, to the recognition of Aborigines in Australia, is something that I proudly acknowledge today in the House. Lionel Rose was a man of principle. He made the principled decision not to participate in a lucrative fight in South Africa, in protest against apartheid. From reports of those who have already made contributions to this condolence motion, Lionel perhaps would have been much in need of that fight: the lucrative offer that was made to him would have been very appealing. But, as I said, he made the principled decision not to take up the offer but to show his support for the South Africans who were suffering under the apartheid regime.

We have heard many stories about Lionel Rose's generosity following the tragedy to Tjandamurra O'Shane in 1996 when Lionel gave him perhaps his most significant possession, his world title belt, to encourage young Tjandamurra to continue fighting, as Lionel himself had done. A former speaker in this important condolence motion recounted the story about when Lionel returned to Australia after being overseas and winning the title fight and there were thousands of people crowded around waiting for him. He seemed to be bemused, and said, "Who are they here waiting to see? Who's here that's important? Has the Queen arrived or something?" His trainer turned to him and said, "No, Lionel, they're here to see you." I think that shows the humility of the man and the sort of person we honour here today with this condolence motion. To the family and friends of Lionel Rose I offer my condolences, as we honour the wonderful contribution of Lionel Edward Rose.

**Mr GREG APLIN** (Albury) [10.55 a.m.]: I thank the House for giving me the opportunity to speak on this condolence motion regarding Lionel Rose and to recognise the great contribution that that young Aboriginal man from humble beginnings made to the way of life in Australia and the inspiration he has given so many young Aboriginal people, as well as people from all walks of life across this country who aspire to achieve in whatever field. I had the privilege of meeting Lionel Rose when he was, admittedly, well beyond his prime, back in 1991. But a gentler, more enthusiastic and more inspirational man I have yet to meet.

I will reflect briefly on some of the records that have been cited in this place and across the media of the world upon the passing of Lionel Rose, because he was indeed recognised way beyond our country, across

the world, for his achievements. He managed during his lifetime to make contact and to initiate action with people such as Elvis Presley and many of the major players in the entertainment world in the United States, as well as in our country.

Born on 21 June 1948, Lionel Rose was raised in the bush settlement of Jacksons Track outside Melbourne, near Warragul as we have heard. He grew up with a large family that lived in a hut with a corrugated metal roof and packed dirt floor and without electricity or running water. Lionel was quoted as saying, "It was home, and I spent many happy years in those crude huts." He added that his upbringing "not only led me into boxing but also gave me something else that helped me to the world's title. It's like an outer shell that gives you resistance and immunity to many things, physical and mental." That quote from Lionel Rose is a message that could well be taken on board by many people in this life who think that life is tough—and indeed it can be. But, given those sentiments from Lionel, if you develop in the same way as Lionel did, with an aspiration, you can achieve anything.

As we know, Lionel Rose beat Japan's Masahiko "Fighting" Harada in Tokyo in February 1968 to win the world bantamweight title at the age of only 19. In December of that year at the Forum in Inglewood, in the United States, Rose was declared the victor in a split 15-round decision over Mexico's Jesus "Chucho" Castillo. An unruly mob among the more than 15,000 spectators at that venue rioted, throwing bottles, chairs and other debris into the ring and setting fires inside and outside the arena. Lionel Rose was trained by Jack Rennie after he left Frank Oaks in Drouin. He became the world bantamweight champion when he beat Fighting Harada, under the watchful eye of Rennie. As a result of Rennie's tutorage Rose became extremely popular in the United States. Rennie said:

Lionel was very special to the fans in the States as they liked his style. He had a go, and his skills were much appreciated by the American fans. Lionel drew capacity crowds at the [Inglewood] Forum against the leading Mexican fighters in the world at the time.

The one fight cemented in Rennie's mind as the most exciting fight where he was the trainer was Rose's bout with Chucho Castillo, a fight that ended in a close controversial decision win for Rose, leading the crowd to riot after the fight. The Americans were on the side of Lionel Rose, and the large crowd of Mexican supporters for Castillo were held largely responsible for the melee. The publications about Lionel Rose have traced his life from those humble beginnings through to the World Championship and the recognition he obtained, and his return from that bout in Japan. I want to go back to that fight. When Lionel Rose stepped into the ring for his world title bout against Japan's Fighting Harada, Jack Rennie believed that his boy, as he called him, would need to overcome a lot more than an unbeaten opponent.

Three of the judges for the fight in Tokyo were Japanese and Rennie hoped that they had not seen what had been written about the fight in Australia. As he said, "Australian newspapers were saying we'd get robbed." It turned out that the Japanese judges gave the verdict to Rose, making him the first Australian Aboriginal to win a world championship in any sport. For his efforts in that 1968 fight, however, Rose earned only \$7,500 compared to Harada's \$70,000. But for a kid from a Victorian bush settlement that barely existed, it was the beginning of a life that had almost everything, including a personal chat and conversations in general with Elvis Presley.

Rose started as an amateur at the age of 15 and turned professional after a couple of fights. He had trained at Rennie's gym in the backyard of his home in Marco Polo Street, Essendon. That was the venue for the launch of a TV miniseries, *Rose Against the Odds*, which I attended in 1991, taking several journalists there to meet Rose and Jack Rennie and to smell the leather and the sweat and everything that goes with boxing, and see the ring where this had all begun. As someone who had participated in boxing at an early age, lifted medicine balls and donned gloves and entered the ring it was fascinating to be in the same room as a world champion and to see how humble he was and how inspirational he was to young people. There were young people there upon whom he had had an effect and who looked up to him as virtually an idol in their particular sport.

Rennie was instrumental in taking Rose to that world championship. The most incredible thing about this humble man, as other speakers have said, was that when they returned to Melbourne there was a particular modesty about Rose's reaction. He saw all those people at the airport—there must have been about 500—and Rose asked the air hostess whether the Beatles were in the front of the plane. She said, "No, they are there to see you." The 500 who came to Essendon Airport to greet him proved to be only a small sample of what was to come because a crowd estimated at over 100,000 clogged the streets of Melbourne to cheer a man who had won a world boxing championship at a time when they were about as elusive as recognition for the Aboriginal people he represented.



The World Boxing Council bantamweight championship Rose took from Harada was one of only 16 world titles available in 1968. By comparison, the world championship that his countryman Daniel Geale won on the weekend is one of almost 70. That puts into perspective the achievements of Lionel Rose, from humble beginnings to world champion. Yes, he did encounter problems later in life, but he overcame those and was still an inspiration. His early love returned to him later in life. For those who are interested there are great publications available in print and video form on Lionel Rose. I recommend them to people at his passing and I recognise a great Australian who gave such an inspirational lead to many people who came afterwards. Long live the memory of Lionel Rose.

**Dr ANDREW McDONALD** (Macquarie Fields) [11.02 a.m.]: This is a very sad day for everyone in Australia. A day such as this gives us a chance to reflect on how far we have come towards equality of opportunity for our Indigenous brothers and sisters. It also reminds us that we still have some distance to go before we get the true equality that we all deserve. Lionel Rose came to prominence at a time of great change, the year after the 1967 referendum, but it was also a time of great change in society. Like every baby boomer in this place I remember where I was the day Lionel Rose beat Fighting Harada. Who could ever forget Ron Casey's maniacal ravings, in which he encapsulated the support that the Australian people felt for Lionel Rose. To beat Fighting Harada in Japan at that time must have been one of Australia's greatest ever sporting achievements, all by a shy 19-year-old boy.

I remember also the day that he was beaten by Rubén Olivares. I remember the interview afterwards, where Lionel Rose showed his true character, his decency, his dignity and his charity. Also, the interviewer showed him the enormous respect that every Australian felt for him. The major concern was not that Lionel had lost but that he was okay. That respect was also shown on a Saturday morning music show that I watched where he sang his song for the first time. He was surrounded by an adoring audience. Lionel had the respect of people across Australia in 1968, the year he became Australian of the Year, not just because he was a wonderful boxer but because he was a true leader.

As one who still works at Tharawal in Aboriginal health I know that we can never underestimate the enormous leadership that Lionel showed to everyone in indigenous Australia. He showed his leadership after his boxing career with his principled stand against apartheid at a time when that was still unpopular. The spontaneous and heartfelt offering of his belt to Tjandamurra O'Shane after such a brutal attack, which threatened to put back the cause of reconciliation, resonated with everybody in Australia. He was also a successful businessman who overcame adversity. At all times he showed himself to be a dignified, charitable and kind human being.

Lionel, tragically, died young. This reminds us of the gap in life expectancy between Indigenous and non-indigenous Australians, and not even the great and good like Lionel Rose are immune from that gap. It reminds us that it is up to everybody in this place to provide equality of opportunity for our young Indigenous Australians, many of whom have enormous talent across many fields, especially in sport. I regularly encourage some of my young Indigenous clients to pursue what they are good at, and for some of them boxing is the one thing they do best. Lionel made the world a better place for his passing. Few of us would be able to say we have done the same or contributed as much to Australia as Lionel Rose. I am honoured to pay tribute to such a great Australian and such a great role model.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD** (Wakehurst—Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Infrastructure NSW) [11.07 a.m.]: I stand to take part in what is a very significant debate in this place about a great Australian, a great Aboriginal Australian and a great sportsman, Lionel Rose, MBE. Lionel Rose has a place in the hearts of Australians for what he did but also for being the person he was. Australia has heroes from many parts of our community, but Lionel Rose was a hero at a time when Aboriginal people in this country did not even have the vote. In 1967 Aboriginal people were recognised as citizens of this nation. It is incredible to think that Lionel Rose achieved so much before Aboriginal people were even recognised in this country as citizens. He achieved a status broadly across Australia that I think impacted greatly not only on the Australian psyche but also perhaps on that 1967 referendum, which resulted in Aboriginal people being recognised, as they should have been much earlier, as citizens of this nation.

Having been brought up in an Aboriginal settlement in Warragul, Victoria, Lionel was a man who reflected all the greatness that can come from family support and a sense of knowing your own destiny. Lionel Rose learned the skill of fighting from his father. He did not have the advantages that so many young people enjoy currently. He did not come from an area where education was offered and generally accepted. He came from an Aboriginal settlement where the challenges were substantial. His father taught him to box using rags for boxing gloves. In contrast to those circumstances, young people these days are given so much and so many

opportunities. They have educational opportunities that many people in Lionel Rose's circumstances never dreamt of, and of course they have all the other options of the technological era, such as telephones and computers, as well as sporting opportunities. None of that was within the grasp of Lionel Rose, but Lionel Rose still managed to achieve greatness from a very poor and humble beginning.

Lionel Rose became an Australian hero. He was a great in the boxing arena but, more importantly, he was a great on the Australian stage. Despite setbacks and despite the disadvantage of his time—having been born an Aboriginal person from an Aboriginal community when Aborigines were not even entitled to vote—he found his way forward through support, as did many Aboriginal people at that time and currently do. We see greatness of Aboriginal people in many areas of endeavour, including sport and academic fields, but in Lionel Rose's day it was a far more challenging environment. Sadly for many Aboriginal people, it is still a challenging environment. At the age of 15, this young man won the Australian Bantamweight Title, which was an amazing achievement for a 15-year-old Aboriginal person at the time. In 1964 when the Australian Olympic squad was being announced, he missed out. If he had managed to be selected at that time, he would have joined three other Aborigines as the first Aboriginal Australians to represent this country at the Olympics.

It says a lot about the era that prior to 1967 Aboriginal people were not even entitled to vote in this country, and no Aboriginal sports person had represented Australia at the Olympics. In October 1966 Lionel Rose won another title belt. By 1967 he had won a total of eight title belts. I was at school at that time and I well recollect the name "Lionel Rose" bursting onto the scene. Suddenly there was this young man of Aboriginal background whom Australians everywhere were looking to. Australians were supporting him to ensure that he had the entire country behind him when he went to Tokyo in February 1968. That was the year before I undertook my Higher School Certificate, which is a long while ago. In those days, support was every bit as important to Australians as it is to young people now.

When I was a student in the year preceding the Higher School Certificate, I well recollect the high level of interest Australians had in this new young Aboriginal Australian hero. As Lionel Rose moved towards another great boxing opportunity in Tokyo in 1968, he went to that title match in Tokyo with the whole of Australia behind him. Those of us who follow sport and Australian challengers gathering international titles well recollect the name of "Fighting" Harada, who was the Japanese hero at that time. The fight took place with all the intensity of the spotlight on an international event. Right across Australia, we all wanted to see our young man, our Lionel Rose, win that fight. And Lionel Rose won that fight. Subsequently his name was writ large across Australia and throughout the world.

I welcome the young people from Willoughby Public School. I trust they are enjoying their day here and are learning a little bit about how Parliament works. Of course they have a wonderful local member of Parliament, Gladys Berejiklian, who I am sure visits their school as often as possible. But I digress: When Lionel Rose returned from Tokyo, he really came back as a hero for all Australians. Outside the Melbourne Town Hall, which is in an area I know well as a result of having spent some of my formative years living in Melbourne, Victoria, the road was lined with people. As other members have noted, up to a quarter of a million people came out to support and recognise their new great hero. Lionel Rose went on to have other successes, but most notably he had a very successful business career.

In the seventies he also had a substantial singing career. In the 1960s, to have somebody who had achieved everything Lionel Rose had achieved was instrumental in providing inspiration for many Australians, but particularly Indigenous Australians. Sadly, many of the issues remain and many Aboriginal young people feel they cannot achieve what others achieve. I say to them and to young people generally that Lionel Rose was a model of what can be achieved when a person puts their mind to it. Young people have opportunities and they have only to open their eyes to those opportunities and apply themselves 100 per cent to achieve the desired outcomes.

It is entirely appropriate that a State funeral has been offered to the family of Lionel Rose. The offer of a State funeral is rare. On behalf of the Parliament and as Leader of this House, I state absolute support for the Victorian Government proffering and ensuring a State funeral is held for one of the great heroes of Australia. It is with sadness that we reflect on the fact that Lionel Rose passed away too young at 62 years of age, but what he packed into those 62 years was incredible. That he offered and gave so much to Australia, it is appropriate that this Parliament now thanks Lionel Rose for those 62 years and for what he did for this country.

**Question—That the motion be agreed to—put and resolved in the affirmative.**

**Motion agreed to.**

*Members and officers of the House stood in their places as a mark of respect.*

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

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD** (Wakehurst—Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Infrastructure NSW) [11.20 a.m.]: I move:

That standing orders and sessional orders be suspended:

- (1) To provide for the following routine of business at this sitting after the conclusion of the motion accorded priority:
  - (a) government business;
  - (b) notices of motions (general notices);
  - (c) order of the day (petitions);
  - (d) private members' statements;
  - (e) at 6.20 p.m., Address-in-Reply; and
  - (f) the House to adjourn without motion moved at the conclusion of debate on the Address-in-Reply.
- (2) On Thursday 12 May 2011, to permit general business to take precedence of the Address-in-Reply and to continue until 1.00 p.m., unless government business is called on.

By way of clarification of the Business of the House for members generally, I shall move shortly suspension of standing orders to make minor adjustments to the activities of the House for today and tomorrow. I have discussed this with the Opposition Whip, the member for Maroubra. The Opposition fully appreciates the need to suspend standing and sessional orders. In the normal course of this afternoon at 6.00 p.m. the House would deal with Notices of Motions, the matter of public importance and then private members' statements. Because of changes last week to the sessional orders regarding petitions presented with more than 10,000 signatures, today will be the first time a petition motion is dealt with in lieu of the matter of public importance. The other aspect of particular importance today is that the making of three inaugural speeches at 6.20 p.m. will require a slight variation to the schedule otherwise applicable to the third sitting day on our rotating cycle.

This afternoon at 6.20 p.m. business will be interrupted to allow the resumption of the Address-in-Reply to facilitate the inaugural speeches by the members representing the electorates of Fairfield, Strathfield and Granville respectively. For the benefit of members, the first speech will commence at approximately 6.20 p.m. from the member for Fairfield, the second speech will be at approximately 6.40 p.m. from the member for Strathfield, and the third speech will be at approximately 7.00 p.m. from the member for Granville. I encourage members to be available to listen to those speeches.

I indicate that tomorrow morning the normal procedure would be the introduction of private members' bills. The member for Northern Tablelands and the member for Lake Macquarie will indicate at some time whether those bills will proceed. The expectation is that they will; if not, the House will deal with the Notices of Motions listed in the program, commencing at either 10.00 a.m. or 10.30 a.m. The proposed suspension of standing and sessional orders enables flexibility in the procedure. Of course, Government Business then will continue as per the program. As I have indicated already, I have discussed this with the Opposition Whip, the member for Maroubra. I am sure he understands that in the circumstances the suspension of standing and sessional orders is entirely appropriate. For the benefit of new members, I inform the House that once debate commences this evening on the motion regarding the Barangaroo petition, we do not anticipate any divisions being called thereafter.

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY** (Maroubra) [11.25 a.m.]: As I indicated to the House last week, we understand that a new Government has difficulties getting on with Government Business and other matters. We have done our best to cooperate with the Government to allow it to transact as much business as it could. We said we would and we have, but not simply in relation to the alteration of Government Business and bills but also with other Orders of the Day and business that needs to be transacted. In that spirit, we do not oppose the motion.

**Question—That the motion be agreed to—put and resolved in the affirmative.**

**Motion agreed to.**

**LOBBYING OF GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS BILL 2011****Consideration in Detail****Consideration of the Legislative Council amendments.***Schedule of amendment referred to in message of 10 May 2011*

No. 1 Page 4. Insert after line 31:

Part 3 Other restrictions on lobbying

8 Cooling-off period for ex-Ministers and ex-Parliamentary Secretaries

- (1) A Minister or Parliamentary Secretary who ceases to hold office as a Minister or Parliamentary Secretary must not, during the cooling-off period, engage in the lobbying of a Government official in relation to an official matter that was dealt with by the former Minister or Parliamentary Secretary in the course of carrying out portfolio responsibilities in the period of 18 months immediately before ceasing to hold office as a Minister or Parliamentary Secretary.

Maximum penalty: 200 penalty units.

- (2) This section does not apply to the lobbying of a Government official by a former Minister or Parliamentary Secretary who is lobbying as a Government official or as a member of Parliament.

- (3) In this section, the cooling-off period for a Minister or Parliamentary Secretary who ceases to hold office is the period of 18 months immediately after the Minister or Parliamentary Secretary ceases to hold office as a Minister or Parliamentary Secretary.

No. 2 Long title. Insert "; and to place other restrictions on the lobbying of Government officials" after "officials".

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD** (Wakehurst—Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Infrastructure NSW) [11.26 a.m.]: I have discussed this matter with the Opposition. This amendment to the Lobbying of Government Officials Bill 2011 came from the Legislative Council. I remind members that the object of the bill was to prohibit the giving or receipt of success fees for lobbying by lobbyists who lobby Ministers, parliamentary secretaries and other government officials. The Greens amendment moved in the upper House and not opposed by the Government or the Opposition referred to a time restriction on members who leave this place in respect to lobbying. The Government in this House will not oppose the amendment. I move:

That the House agree to the Legislative Council amendments.

**Question—That the motion be agreed to—put and resolved in the affirmative.**

**Motion agreed to.**

**Legislative Council amendments agreed to.**

**Message sent to the Legislative Council advising it of the resolution.**

**GOVERNOR'S SPEECH: ADDRESS-IN-REPLY****Fourth Day's Debate**

**Debate resumed from 10 May 2011.**

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD** (Myall Lakes) [11.28 a.m.] (Inaugural Speech): I speak in response to the Governor's Speech. I acknowledge the presence in the gallery of my partner, Sue, and my daughter Caroline. On 26 March I was privileged to be elected to represent the wonderful people of the Myall Lakes electorate on behalf of The Nationals. I will honour the trust that has been bestowed on me and will always put Myall Lakes first in my best endeavours for that electorate.

There are two people that I must acknowledge, John Turner and the late Bruce Cowan. My predecessor, John Turner, held the seat of Myall Lakes from its very inception—23 years of service to the people of Myall

Lakes and to this House. John Turner served his electorate and the House with integrity. He held a number of shadow ministries, was a member of a number of parliamentary committees and served the people of New South Wales and Myall Lakes well. The late Bruce Cowan was the member for Oxley before going on to represent the people of the electorate of Lyne. The seat of Oxley is now held by the Deputy Premier and Leader of The Nationals. Like sands on the coast, seats tend to drift north on the coast as demographics change. But, in his day, Bruce Cowan was the face of the National Party on the lower end of the mid North Coast. From Nelson Bay in the south to Port Macquarie in the north, he was the man who kept it all glued together for conservative politics and the National Party.

Though some say that Myall Lakes is a safe seat, John Turner always said, "There is no such thing as a safe seat. It takes a good local member to make a seat safe. Anyone who is not a good local member will soon lose the seat." Myall Lakes is the most beautiful region in Australia. Others here may disagree. I cannot turn to look at my colleagues as I would like to, but I imagine that the member for Port Macquarie, or the member for Oxley, or the member for Coffs Harbour, or the member for Lismore might disagree when I assure you, Mr Assistant-Speaker, that Myall Lakes comes out on top every time. Last night I heard the member for Cronulla talk about how good his electorate is. For the benefit of members present, I think a good place and good electorate in a metropolitan city is a contradiction in terms. So I invite him to come to Myall Lakes to see firsthand how good Myall Lakes is.

Myall Lakes is one of the fastest-growing areas in New South Wales. Projections for Myall Lakes have the population of the electorate increasing 45 per cent by the year 2031. The electorate is situated on the mid North Coast and, for the benefit of our city members including possibly the member for Mount Druitt, stretches from the Karuah bridge in the south, to the Coopernook bridge in the north, Mount George to the west, and the most perfect coastline to the east.

I think underneath, all in this House agree. Myall Lakes is unique, with approximately 200 kilometres of stunning coastline and the mighty Manning River meandering from the mountains to the sea. It is the only double delta system in the southern hemisphere with its numerous islands. It has 156 kilometres of navigable waterways. The Great Lakes region, consisting of the impressive Wallis, Smiths and Myall Lakes networks, makes the Great Lakes region, together with the Manning River, the New South Wales water playground. Myall Lakes has two major commercial centres, Taree and the twin towns of Forster-Tuncurry, together with numerous towns and villages—all unique—making for a wonderful environment in which to live. Myall Lakes is not just about beaches and boating; we also have the rural hinterland only minutes from those fabulous beaches. Tourism is extremely important to the electorate, but so too are the primary and agricultural industries. We have it all: beef, dairy, chickens, pigs, fish, oysters, timber, deer, alpacas, avocados, kiwifruits—I could go on and on. This shows that the people of Myall Lakes are willing to have a go. It is an area where the sun always shines and the sky is always blue—even on a rainy day, the ocean is blue.

I have painted a picture of an idyllic place. I call it heaven on earth. However, with all its natural beauty, promise and potential, there are a number of issues on which I will work with my colleagues to find answers. Some of those issues include unemployment, health, law and order, and infrastructure. After 16 years of Labor, the people of New South Wales voted for change, real change. The Nationals went to the elections with clear, positive and practical policies to improve the living standards of those residing in regional areas—one State, one standard, and policies aimed at regional New South Wales. Country and regional people now see that The Nationals is the party that best represents those living in regional New South Wales. People now understand more than ever that The Nationals are committed to rural and regional issues. It is the main party recognising and representing the interests of non-metropolitan New South Wales.

I come to this place with some life experiences. I am a registered nurse and former police officer. It was as a police officer on guard duty that I first came into this Chamber; that was back in the days of Neville Wran. Yesterday, the member for Campbelltown said he was the most senior officer elected to this House. I have to say that is only by rank, not by age. I am also a former grazier, solicitor and businessman. I am also a broken-down rugby player. I proudly wear the tie of the great rugby club of Forster-Tuncurry, which obviously is in my electorate.

That reminds me that on the first day of the sittings last week I thought I would try to get through the week on crutches. That was a mistake. But on the first day I was on crutches. Knowing where I would be sitting in this place, I came through the door on the Opposition side of the Chamber. As I crutched my way along the other side of the Chamber I bumped into the Leader of the Opposition, who was talking to one of the shadow Ministers. I gave them a big smile. They looked at me, as if to say, "What are you doing here?" I said, "I've been

told I've got to sit with you guys." They looked puzzled. I said, "Yes, I've been told I've got to sit over here with you." They looked at me again, still puzzled. I said, "You know, when you go to football, if one team's short the other team lends them a couple of players."

With the benefit of my background and experience, I look forward to working in government to bring the changes to New South Wales that I spoke of earlier. In my electorate, unemployment is an issue. Myall Lakes is one of the lowest socioeconomic regions in Australia, and it has one of the highest unemployment rates. Taree was once the largest industrial and manufacturing centre outside the metropolitan area, other than Albury. With 16 years of Labor neglect, we have seen businesses and industries close. Many of those industries came to the Manning through the previous Coalition policy of decentralisation. I look forward to working with the Minister and Deputy Premier to identify opportunities for Myall Lakes.

Health care in the Myall Lakes area is of major concern. I listened last week and on Monday of this week to the health matters raised and the funding for new hospitals in Tamworth, Bega and Wagga Wagga. I thought, "That's interesting." It was interesting that over the past few years \$150 million has been spent on redeveloping, refurbishing and extending the Manning Base Regional Hospital—the name by which it was known, until very recently. What did the Labor Government do after spending all that money? It downgraded the hospital to the Manning Rural Referral Hospital. With that downgrading came a reduction in services. Why should the people of Manning and Myall Lakes have to travel a minimum of 75 kilometres to the north for emergency care or 180 kilometres to the south to Newcastle when people living in metropolitan Sydney may have to travel only a suburb or two?

We need full-time oncology services and magnetic resonance imaging machines [MRI] for diagnoses. A friend of mine was seriously ill with prostate cancer and had to go to Port Macquarie to access a simple diagnostic tool such as an MRI. If he was in acute care he needed an acute ambulance to take him there. It took a week to get him from Taree to Port Macquarie. Ultimately, he passed away. Perhaps that week may have made a difference. We need facilities to provide radiotherapy. Another friend of mine had breast cancer. She had a breast removed; she waited five years and got the all clear. She then had a breast reconstruction. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

Only 12 months after she had a breast reconstruction she was diagnosed with cancer in the other breast. She chose not to travel to Sydney again for radiotherapy, as she had after the removal of her first breast. She did not want to leave her family or support network. We need a stroke unit. Thirty-five per cent of our population is over the age of 65 years. We need emergency specialists and more nurses. The health Minister is an exceptional Minister for Health. She is a great advocate for health and I know she will be sympathetic to the needs of the Myall Lakes electorate.

Law and order is an issue throughout the electorate that needs our help. The local police are doing a fantastic job but they are doing it understrength and under-resourced in the Manning-Great Lakes Local Area Command. A recent report shows that the local police command is 49 officers understrength when comparing command strength to workload and then comparing it to the metropolitan area. The report further shows that regional police area commands have been discriminated against by the Labor Government over the past 16 years in that they are vastly understrength when compared to Labor-held electorates in Sydney, where commands are vastly overstrength when looking at workload. Nothing can be more equitable than to have a police strength based on workload.

Those 49 officers do not include the 30-odd police who are on permanent sick report or leave and so on. Imagine the police having to work under those conditions. It is like the chicken and the egg: so many police must work harder because they are understrength. As a result they suffer from stress and they go off on long sick report. I look forward to working with the Minister for Police to obtain equity for regional New South Wales. Infrastructure such as roads and bridges has been sadly neglected over the past 16 years. The Liberal-Nationals, through Infrastructure NSW, will spend approximately \$5 billion on infrastructure, \$1.6 billion of which has been quarantined for regional New South Wales.

During the campaign we announced funding for Main Road 90, the Nabitac to Krambach road, which is the top priority for Greater Taree City Council. We also announced funding for two sections of The Lakes Way. Ironically, two weeks later I was injured on one section of The Lakes Way. I will ensure that Myall Lakes obtains its fair share of the funding. I will talk to the Minister for Roads and Ports about extra funding. Not only was my accident on the Lakes Way at Hallidays Point but the police prosecutor's wife had been involved in an

accident at that intersection a month before, and there was another accident there two weeks later. Indeed, I have represented a husband and father in a matter in which he was the driver when his wife and child were killed on that section of road. I will see the Minister about getting some of the black spot funding for a roundabout.

In conclusion, I thank my campaign team, particularly Dick and Helen Quinn, Katrina Carlon and the hundreds of volunteers. I also thank Ben Franklin, who is sitting in the gallery, together with Douglas Martin, who was in charge of my area and the rest of The Nationals team. I thank my partner, Sue, and daughter, Kathryn, who worked tirelessly during the campaign. Thank you to my daughters, Nicole, Caroline and Victoria, and to family and friends who travelled from Sydney to assist. I thank also the many helpers at the markets and the booth workers. I thank the House for the courtesy and attention afforded to me today.

**Dr GEOFF LEE** (Parramatta) [11.50 a.m.] (Inaugural Speech): I will speak in the right of reply to Her Excellency the Governor Marie Bashir's opening address to the Fifty-fifth Parliament of New South Wales. It is an honour and privilege to address the Chamber today as the member for Parramatta. The first people of Parramatta were the Burramattagal people, a clan of the Darug. They lived along the upper reaches of the Parramatta River and can be traced back some 60,000 years. The river was their focus of daily life, as it was during colonisation, for food, fresh water and transport. Anyone who has visited the electorate of Parramatta knows of its beauty and bounty. However, I am not going to talk about the beauty and bounty of Parramatta. Instead, I will talk about the conundrum that is Parramatta. Perhaps the title of my first speech should be "What to do with Parramatta?"

To address that question, I will talk about Parramatta as the future powerhouse of New South Wales. Sydney's central business district is almost full and future growth will be in Sydney's western suburbs. The need to integrate the Parramatta central business district with the Sydney central business district will entail decentralising business activities and services. My speech will answer three questions: first, what is the importance of Parramatta as an integrated part of the Sydney central business district; second, what is my motivation to lead the electorate of Parramatta; and, third, what I am going to do? There is a saying, "The more things change the more they stay the same" Quite frankly, Sydney does not know what to do with Parramatta. I say this because from the first days of colonisation, Parramatta was set up to be the capital. However, it became obvious that Sydney Cove was the hub of commercial activity. But the conundrum still exists: what will be the relationship between Parramatta and Sydney? How can the tensions be resolved for the betterment of all New South Wales?

In 1788, the British colony arrived in Sydney Cove and soon faced starvation. Governor Arthur Phillip selected Parramatta to grow food to feed the colony. Without Parramatta, the colony would certainly have starved and failed. Arthur Phillip was instrumental in establishing Parramatta's first hospital and barracks to maintain law and order. He laid out the town plan and built the first Government House, which is located in Parramatta Park. It is of note that until the 1850s many governors chose to rule from Parramatta rather than Sydney. Arthur Phillip began the city, and today, whilst it has changed from agriculture to industry, the legacy of health, law and order, and the focus on productivity remains.

The local government area of Parramatta has grown to 170,000 residents and 90,000 jobs. It has vibrant retail, entertainment and leisure, education and business service precincts. It is an economic zone estimated to be worth \$10 billion per annum to the State's economy. It is home to the mighty Parramatta Eels. To test the hypothesis that Parramatta will become integrated into the Sydney central business district, just look at New York. The original city of New York began at the southern end of Manhattan, expanded northwards and then, between 1874 and 1898, incorporated land from surrounding counties. When Central Park was built, it was seen as a remote parkland in the middle of nowhere. Now it is central. The unified whole of Manhattan is now a major commercial, financial, and cultural centre of both the United States of America and the world.

The central business district is just one part of the Parramatta electorate. The electorate is made up of the suburbs of Wentworthville, Westmead, North Parramatta, Oatlands, Telopea, Dundas, Ermington, Rydalmere, Harris Park, Rosehill and Parramatta, where I live. Those suburbs offer the choice of city living or leafy green suburban streets, ideal for singles, couples bringing up a family or those retiring to enjoy life. With such opportunity, it is no wonder that people from around the world choose to make Parramatta their home. In fact, 44 per cent of Parramatta residents were born overseas, and two-thirds of those have at least one parent born overseas. We are home to large and active communities from nations in North-East Asia and the Middle-East, as well the largest South-Asian community in New South Wales.

As a community and as a society, we are richer for the presence of such a diverse mix of cultures and the contribution that they make to modern, multicultural Australia. People seeking opportunity come to

Parramatta—just as my ancestors came from the United Kingdom with some arriving on the Second Fleet and some from southern China up to 140 years ago. They contributed to the growth of Parramatta where they worked as carpenters and bricklayers in the early days, and later in the building of the railway to the west. My Chinese great-grandfather had a market garden on the banks of Duck Creek at Guildford, where he provided food for many of his neighbours during the Great Depression

People often ask me why I entered politics. I had built a successful small business and I held a senior role at the University of Western Sydney, so I wanted the opportunity to use my skills and experience to enable Parramatta to realise its potential. Parramatta is not just the second central business district, it is the capital of Western Sydney. We have established finance, insurance and business service sectors, the second-largest legal precinct in New South Wales, and the largest health precinct in Australia at Westmead. Parramatta has the opportunity to service the whole of Western Sydney, the future growth areas of Sydney. Parramatta has yet to realise its full potential and I will be the leader of change. Clearly, I am not the first to recognise Parramatta's potential: the Darug clan recognised it and Arthur Phillip recognised it. I recognised it in 1991.

In 1991, I sold everything I had, and borrowed money from my mum and dad to start a garden centre and landscaping business in Parramatta; a business that would grow over the next 10 years to employ many locals and serve the community. Along the way we were fortunate to win some awards. Those who have been involved in small business would know that having a business is rewarding when times are good, but when times are tough it is very difficult. Working seven days a week for 10 years of my life and being responsible for the livelihood of staff gave me an appreciation of the pressures of small business. Today, New South Wales relies on its 640,000 small businesses as employers and innovators and for their significant economic contribution. A business community that must be encouraged to prosper fuels our economy. Small business is in my DNA as it is in the Liberal DNA.

Whilst working for myself, I studied part-time for an MBA and started my doctorate. I have always been passionate about life-long learning and passionate about education. After selling my business I was fortunate to join the University of Western Sydney. Working at the University of Western Sydney enabled me to contribute to the advancement of thousands of students. It is clear that the economic prosperity of a nation is closely linked to educational attainment. In other words, the more educated people are, the more wealth is created. Increased education equals increased gross domestic product. As a Government our imperative is to ensure that New South Wales has the best education system, with the best schools, vocational education and training [VET] providers and universities.

People also ask me what I am going to do. As Parramatta's leader of change my vision for Parramatta is a place where we can work and live in a safe environment. Parramatta must seize the opportunity to become the engine room of the New South Wales economy, to become the economic food bowl for New South Wales as the centre of commerce and employment for Western Sydney. To do this we must plan for the unification of Sydney's central business district and Parramatta's central business district—it is inevitable with the growth of Sydney's western suburbs. We have started decentralisation of some government departments, such as the law courts, the NSW Police Force and Sydney Water. We already are a hub for financial services, accounting firms and business services, but we need to do more.

We must maintain the balance between sustainable development and the preservation of our suburbs. We must create local jobs by removing barriers to private and public investment. We must preserve our historic buildings and sites and celebrate diverse cultural heritage. As Parramatta's member of the Legislative Assembly I am going to enlist the support of the people of the seat. They are the ones who understand; they are the ones who are at the coalface; and they are the ones who know how best to deal with local issues. I will work with those people who are just as passionate as I am, that is, the people of Parramatta, to meet the challenges of building a city. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

Great cities provide an integrated, accessible and convenient public transport system; develop vibrant arts, food, theatre and cultural precincts; and have great universities where students are part of the town and the university is an integral part of the local community. Such vision needs a plan, a roadmap for the next 20 years, and I will be listening to and working with people from all sections of the community to inform on that plan. As Parramatta's leader of change I will fight for a greater share of resources, Ministers—greater, because Parramatta is not just a suburb; it is a metropolis that services the whole of western Sydney. Western Sydney is already home to 1.8 million people: that is, close to one in 10 people in Australia live in western Sydney. It is an \$80 billion economy. It is predicted that western Sydney will grow by another 2 million people over the next 50 years. It is inevitable that Sydney's expansion will be west of Parramatta.



I need to acknowledge and say thank you to many people: Premier Barry O'Farrell, for his constant support of Parramatta, for choosing to hold the election night event at Parramatta and for choosing to be Minister for Western Sydney, and the many then shadow Ministers who made the trip to Parramatta to support my campaign—Jillian Skinner, Adrian Piccoli, Mike Gallacher, Brad Hazzard, Chris Hartcher, Gladys Berejiklian, Mike Baird, Greg Smith, Greg Pearce, Pru Goward, Rob Stokes and Anthony Roberts. The fact that so many members were willing to take the trip to Parramatta speaks volumes about the new Government's commitment to Parramatta and western Sydney.

I also thank the Liberal Party for its unwavering assistance at some difficult times throughout the campaign. I acknowledge the work of the previous member Tanya Gadiel in the seat of Parramatta. I do not think any new member of Parliament could have been treated as well in the handover of what used to be her electorate office. I wish her well in her new role with Parramatta Mission. I am indebted to Charles Camenzuli as campaign director and Team Camenzuli. I see Charles in the gallery. He and his family put their lives on hold to dedicate themselves to a Liberal win in Parramatta. Likewise, the campaign volunteers did a massive job, day and night, and of course on the day.

Thanks go to James Wallace, Mitchell Potts, Kevin Costello and Darren Klower, as well as the many local party members who lent their support—Chris With, Andrew Bide, Mary Mackman, Therese Camenzuli, Colin Robinson, Kate Geddes, Stuart Mead, Lorraine Doyle, Linda Durrant, Vale Sloane, David Swift, Amanda Rose, and so many others whose support I acknowledge. I also acknowledge the support of Damien Jones, and the Wakehurst conference, who went above and beyond in providing carloads of willing campaign workers weekend after weekend. And, of course, there is my mum and dad, who are in the top gallery, who have always supported me in my endeavours and continue to be an important part of my life. I wish them well. Finally, to the people of Parramatta, those people that have entrusted me to represent them: I will listen to them and make decisions based upon common sense, fairness and equity.

In conclusion, they say that the more things change the more they stay the same. Today we face similar challenges to those of Arthur Phillip over 200 years ago—law and order, health, planning and governance. I started this address by asking the question of what to do with Parramatta. The conundrum still exists. Parramatta has been treated as the little brother of Sydney's central business district and sibling rivalry has been rife. How can we take advantage of the opportunities that Parramatta affords? Sydney has only one way to grow, and that is west. Sydney's central business district is virtually full. Expansion of jobs will come from the west; new homes will be developed in the north-west and south-western sectors of Sydney.

It is inevitable that Sydney's central business district will one day stretch to Parramatta, just as what is today the unified island of Manhattan started at the entry to New York harbour and then grew north. I want to see Parramatta akin to Manhattan and New York City's Central Park. I want to see Parramatta as the western centre of tomorrow's Sydney city. When I think about Parramatta, I think about opportunity. Arthur Phillip recognised that opportunity. Thousands of residents and businesses have recognised that opportunity. I will be knocking on Ministers' doors to get our fair share of resources and infrastructure to provide Sydney with a powerhouse to drive New South Wales' growth to be the number one State in Australia. I will be knocking on Ministers' doors and asking for more.

**Mrs ROZA SAGE** (Blue Mountains) [12.09 p.m.] (Inaugural Speech): In giving my inaugural speech I congratulate the other newly elected members who join me in this the Fifty-fifth Parliament of New South Wales. As I stand here today I feel overwhelming humility and honour on being elected the seventh, and the first female, member for Blue Mountains in this historic first term of the O'Farrell-led Liberal and Nationals Coalition Government. In this respect I acknowledge the previous member for Blue Mountains, the Hon. Phil Koperberg. On the day I moved into the electorate office he was very gracious and visited, wishing me well. We had a smooth transition, thanks to Phil's honourable stand in keeping the interests of the Blue Mountains electorate and constituents to the fore. For this I give him my sincere gratitude and wish him well in his new endeavours as Chair of the State Emergency Management Committee, a position for which he is eminently qualified.

I believe that the person I am today is the result of the sum total of my life experiences. Real life experience and skills from someone who has been connected with the community for a long time give me a good understanding of what my community wants and what they expect of their elected representative. My story begins with my parents. My parents came to Australia separately from war-torn Europe, from Hungary, as displaced persons. They were fleeing the ultimate failed socialist experiment, communism. They met and

married in Australia and had me and my sister, who has come from Queensland and is in the gallery. My father passed away a few years ago but he and my mother always expressed their gratitude and thanks for coming to such a wonderful free country and became proud Australians.

My parents were hard workers, a quality I learned from them. My mother had come to Australia with her parents and siblings. My grandfather was a hairdresser and barber, a trade he taught my mother. They owned a hairdressing shop in Petersham and saved enough money to buy a small farm in Riverstone. Some of my earliest memories were of staying at my grandfather's farm. My dad had many jobs, from cane cutting in North Queensland to carpentry in Alice Springs before he married, and also worked on the construction of the Sydney Opera House, believe it or not, but he always dreamed of farming. My parents bought a hairdressing shop of their own in Marrickville. This is where I started my school life—Marrickville West Public School, the home of bitumen playgrounds. After a few years my parents saved enough money to buy a large acreage in south-east Queensland at Carbrook, where my father fulfilled his dream of running his own farm.

Moving from inner city Sydney to the wide expanse of country living was a defining period in my life. I thrived. I love the bush and the space to this day. That is why I love living in the Blue Mountains. I attended a small country school which had grass in the playground—Redland Bay State School on beautiful Moreton Bay. I excelled at school, thanks to the influence of some very inspirational teachers. Inspirational and dedicated teaching staff, I believe, make all the difference to lifetime learning. I then went to Cleveland and District State High School, an hour's bus trip away. I did well at high school and was the recipient of a Commonwealth scholarship. I take time here to acknowledge the dedication of the teachers in the Blue Mountains electorate. My electorate in fact has the highest numbers of teachers in the State.

Since childhood I had always been fascinated by science and especially the workings of the human body so I set my goal to do something in the medical sphere. A chance appointment with the visiting school careers adviser steered my thinking to studying dentistry. And dentistry is what I was accepted into at the University of Queensland, a choice I never regretted. I relished the academic rigors that university and dental school offered. Dentistry then was a full-time, five-year course. Then, as now, I believe that a love of learning and exploring life keeps the mind sharp and life interesting. Then, as now, I always do my utmost: I give my full energies to every task I undertake. This promise I give the people of the Blue Mountains.

Whilst at uni I met my first husband, also a dental student at the time. The opportunity to secure our dental careers in the Australian Defence Force through the defence force undergraduate scholarship scheme was available so we joined the Royal Australian Air Force. After graduation we were posted to RAAF Richmond. Then I was posted to Operational Command Glenbrook as the officer in charge of the medical-dental unit. My time in the RAAF was another defining period in my life's journey. I was able to hone my skills as a dental practitioner as well as learn discipline, order and duty. When you have served in the Defence Force you share a special bond with others who have served of another way of life.

It is the RAAF that brought me to the mountains but it was the lifestyle and the surrounds that made me stay. I left the RAAF as I was having my first child. In those days it was an all-or-none deal—you worked full-time or you were out. On leaving the RAAF we bought a house in Mount Riverview, where I lived for the next 18½ years. I worked on a casual basis as a dentist in local private dental practices, including the practice in Springwood which we were to later buy. My husband and I bought the Springwood practice in 1988 during the "recession we had to have". Tragically, not long after, my husband unexpectedly passed away. I was left with two little girls, a dental practice to run, a home-based model railway business and a very hefty provisional tax bill. I overcame these adversities with the help of my wonderful family in Sydney, my uncle Frank and aunt Rosa, and my church family. I know what it is like to be a single mum; I know what it takes to build a small business; I know how to manage finances, all qualities and skills which give me a good grounding for my new vocation.

A little while after, the new love of my life entered the picture. Ted and I were married in 1991 and two years later I had my third beautiful daughter, Isobel. I soon discovered I had married another train tragic—sorry Ted, rail enthusiast. For the last 22 years I have been practising dentistry in Springwood. As such I have a particular interest in health issues and particularly dental health, to which I look forward to contributing. To my previous patients: I am sorry that you have lost a dentist as I will now be committing myself full-time to my new role; however, my new office is always open to anyone in need of assistance.

For those members not familiar with the Blue Mountains, it is a unique area—neither rural nor metropolitan, but I believe a unique region in its own right. The Blue Mountains electorate takes in most of the

City of Blue Mountains, stretching from Mount Tomah to Blaxland. Indeed, the Premier announced that entry to the Mount Tomah Botanic Gardens is now free, a promise delivered in the first weeks of the Liberal-Nationals Government, of which I am proud to be part. This is encouraging news for the community and local tourism. The Blue Mountains is a city within a national park: indeed, it is part of the world heritage listed Greater Blue Mountains National Park. It is a place of great natural beauty and of rare flora, being home of the Wollemi pine. It also has a long history of Aboriginal occupation in the custody of the Darug and Gundungurra peoples. It is an area that is also steeped in colonial history. Who has not heard of the crossing of the Blue Mountains by Blaxland, Lawson and Wentworth in 1813?

The crossing was an event that opened the new colony to the central west and ultimately led to the development of the rest of Australia. Subsequently William Cox was commissioned to build a road over the mountains. It was completed in 1815 by convict labour in a period of six months—a fact that is often brought to attention by Blue Mountains residents when comparing the upgrade of the Great Western Highway, which has taken decades. I would like to bring to the attention of the Parliament that the bicentenary of the crossings of the Blue Mountains will occur in 2013. Preparations for events have already started by a very dedicated and enthusiastic team. I am very excited to be the member at this time and able to be involved in such a historic anniversary.

The Blue Mountains is a linear city that is divided east-west by the two transport corridors of the Great Western Highway and Blue Mountains rail line. Having 16 train stations to visit during the election campaign—which I do not think my opposition did—I learned a thing or two about our train line. Members may not be aware that one of the biggest issues for the Blue Mountains was the deplorable state of the passenger services and increased travelling time. Some commuters travel for over two hours each way to work in Sydney. Our very capable Minister for Transport has recognised this and has committed to improving these services. The Blue Mountains comprises 28 separate townships, unique in their own right, placed along the highway and railway like a string of pearls—none standing out more than any other but together forming what I consider is the most beautiful electorate in this great State of ours. Already I have heard the point debated, but I think my electorate is the best.

Blue Mountains residents are very parochial and have a strong sense of community. Each township and village has its own character, which is one of the reasons the Blue Mountains is such a popular tourist destination. The Blue Mountains is a wonderful place to raise a family and a wonderful place to visit. Each of its towns and villages deserves the attention of a hardworking, honest and enthusiastic member of Parliament, which I strive to be. The Blue Mountains provided a natural wall for the early settlement of Sydney to keep the convicts in. A way around the Blue Mountains was discovered by John Wilson 16 years earlier than the famous Blaxland, Lawson and Wentworth crossing—a little-known fact. John Wilson was a convict who made an expedition, knowledge of which was suppressed by Governor Hunter for fear of the convicts finding a way out of Sydney. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

Can I say that, 200 years on, I am sure the Governor would not mind my informing Parliament that there is a way through the Blue Mountains out of Sydney, but may I encourage all members present and all of the public to come and visit our beautiful city and enjoy the World Heritage listed area. Visit the Three Sisters rock formation, the waterfalls at Wentworth Falls and ride the cable car across Jamieson Valley at Scenic World, Katoomba, or enjoy a leisurely lunch or coffee at the many great cafés and restaurants. There are so many other jewels to explore that I do not have time to mention them all. The announcement of an extra \$5 million for regional tourism is certainly welcome among Blue Mountains tourist operators.

The Blue Mountains is also a city of the arts, with many renowned painters, performers, musicians and writers calling it home. There are the heritage-listed properties of Sir Henry Parkes, the father of federation, Norman Lindsay, the famous artist and author of the loved children's book *The Magic Pudding*, and the former home of Eleanor Dark, the novelist, which is now used as a writers' retreat for writers from around the world. There is such a richness of culture and natural attractions it is little wonder that the residents of the Blue Mountains are very protective of and parochial toward their area. But it is foremost the people who make the Blue Mountains what it is. There is a strong emphasis on volunteering in the community, and I acknowledge all these dedicated people. In particular, I mention emergency services volunteers.

The Rural Fire Service branches are of vital importance in my electorate, which is the most bushfire-prone area in the State. They are the nucleus of many communities. We also have a very active State Emergency Service [SES]. I have personally been on the receiving end of both services. I also acknowledge the many Bushcare and Landcare groups that volunteer their time to restore degraded bush areas. I confess to a

particular interest as I am a member of my local Warrimoo Reserve Bushcare group. I have met with the Blue Mountains Bushcare committee and I must report that they are very, very excited about the Liberal-Nationals statewide commitment of \$10 million for these groups.

It is precisely for that reason I stepped forward to nominate as the candidate for Blue Mountains. I felt that after 16 years of hard Labor we in the Blue Mountains had been neglected long enough. There was a strong feeling among the people that change was needed. After a hard-fought campaign, during which I went doorknocking in 40 degree heat and in rain at street stalls in Blackheath in five degree cold, the people of the Blue Mountains cast their vote and cast aside a tired, scandal-ridden Labor Government for a fresh, energetic Liberal-Nationals Government that will make New South Wales the number one State again.

No man is an island. I wish to take a few moments to thank the hardworking, dedicated team that assisted in my election to this great place. Firstly, I thank my long-suffering family—my husband, Ted, my daughter, Emma, and her husband, Stewart, my grandson, Archie, and my daughters, Charlotte and Isobel, for their love, support, encouragement and patience. I know the corflute in the living room was not a good substitute for all those months of campaigning, but it was worth it in the end.

I thank Diane Marris, my campaign director, who supported me through thick and thin—and there was a lot of the latter. To Jeff Egan for the brilliant media campaign; to Councillor Chris Van Der Kley whose help was invaluable—I see them in the gallery; to those volunteers who manned our campaign office, Betty Smith, Jim Keane, Dorothy Brandley, Cliff Newman, Christine Bartlett and Peter Olsen; to our catering crew on the day—an army cannot march without food—to Caroline Newman, my mother, who has come from Queensland to be here, and my daughter, Isobel; and to all those who stood at polling booths on election day and at pre-poll: thank you.

I especially thank my hardworking local Young Liberal team of Brendan Christie, Alex McDonald, Dylan Barnes, Rhyce Gawronski, James Beckett, Shaun Stoneman, Elliot Ryan, Tim Robinson, Tiarne Wadi and Amy Richards, and our Flying Squad, who were a tremendous help. I give special thanks to my wonderful mentors, Michael Richardson, who is the retired member for Castle Hill and who also was our duty member of Parliament, and our fantastic former Federal member, Kerry Bartlett. To all my Federal and now State parliamentary colleagues who came out to the Blue Mountains to doorknock with me, stand at street stalls and train stations: your generosity in giving up your time from already busy schedules, your support, and your confidence in me was very sincerely appreciated.

I feel a need to make very special mention of Senator Concetta Fierravanti-Wells, who managed to break her arm all in the line of duty while door knocking with me. We spent many hours testing the health system at Nepean Hospital, and I am pleased to report that her arm is healing very nicely. It may seem to be a stretch of the friendship to ask the Senator to revisit the streets of Winmalee at the next election, but to her credit she has graciously promised to return. I must say that one of the best experiences of the campaign was in the last week when energies were flagging. To see that big Start the Change bus come through the Blue Mountains and stop at Springwood and to see our State parliamentary representatives, both Liberal and Nationals—many of them are in this Chamber—was such an encouragement.

Finally, I must thank the people of the Blue Mountains, who supported me and placed their faith in me on 26 March. I will always strive to represent you with integrity and compassion and, above all, never take you for granted. For 16 years those opposite squandered our once premier State. This was felt hard in the Blue Mountains, along with the rest of New South Wales. The election result last month demonstrates that the public viewed the Labor Government with its revolving doors of premiers and Ministers as having lost its way. As a dentist, I am proud to be part of the extraction of a rotten, inept and tired Labor Government. I do not take my election to this place lightly. I will always strive to work hard for the people of the Blue Mountains electorate. Already my office is assisting with a constant stream of constituents who are in need. Time is not on our side and I will not waste one moment in fighting for the best results for the people of the Blue Mountains.

**Mr RYAN PARK** (Keira) [12.33 p.m.] (Inaugural Speech): I acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we are gathered, the Gadigal people of the Eora nation, and pay my respects to them and their elders, past and present. This place, the oldest Parliament in our nation is special. It is special for so many reasons to so many people, and it means different things to different people. Today I shall use my first speech in this Chamber to outline to the House and those in the gallery why it is such a special place to a working class boy born back in 1977. That same year as a country we decided that our national song will be *Advance Australia*

*Fair.* It was a year when we mourned the loss of 83 people in our worst ever rail disaster at Granville. It was also a time when St George won another premiership but had not realised how much better they would be until almost two decades down the track they combined with the almighty Illawarra Steelers.

Affectionately known as the bear pit, this place is special because it is one of the forums in which the concerns, struggles and ideas of those in the Keira electorate can be listened to by all and advanced through determination and commitment by all sides. The Keira electorate is known for its natural beauty. Nestled between our great Illawarra escarpment and the clear waters of the Pacific Ocean, it is home to approximately 65,000 people from all different social and ethnic backgrounds. Whilst its natural beauty has remained relatively unchanged, it is its economic and social development that I am particularly fond of as it mirrors my own life experiences in many ways. As a child of a family who earned its weekly income from the steel and mining industries, both of which still play a key role in the electorate and broader region, I remember with great fondness the contributions that these industries made, whether through the employment of young people as apprentices or the assistance and sponsorship they gave local sporting teams and community groups.

But the electorate and the Illawarra have undergone significant changes. As I progressed through childhood the community became geared around education with a world-class university and TAFE institute that other regions could only dream about. This change meant that those of us who had interests and skills outside of the traditional heavy industries were now able to apply them and gain qualifications at tertiary institutions that carried out leading-edge research and training and have made the Illawarra an education city as much as a steel city. This change has not been easy and the evolution of the electorate has not been without its difficulties. We still have a higher than average unemployment rate, particularly for young people, an issue that all governments at all levels must actively work to address. We have witnessed natural disasters through flood and fire that have changed the way we live, and we have focussed on mitigating these events as well protecting against their occurrence.

But what has not changed is Keira's people—their kindness, their down to earth approach and their parochial affection for the Illawarra. In Keira people tell you how it is. From Woonona in the north down to Figtree in the south one message came through very clearly in this election: people want results, not rhetoric. They expect commitment not cowardice, and they are interested in integrity, not ideologies. I have heard that message loud and clear. To me this place is special because of those men and women who have gone before me and paced the corridors and halls of power with a fierce determination and passion, and who have represented their communities and advocated to make this great State of ours even better—whether it be the iconic Sir Henry Parkes whose image is adorned throughout this wonderful building, Millicent Preston-Stanley, the first woman ever to be elected to this New South Wales Legislative Assembly, or the greats of Wran and Carr, who dominated the political landscape of New South Wales during the past three decades.

And, of course, it is the place where the Hon. Linda Burney, the first Aboriginal to be elected to the New South Wales Parliament, still carries out her duties as Deputy Leader of the Opposition. It is not simply the individuals themselves who have served as role models and heroes; it is the debates they have endured, the fights they have won, the victories they have celebrated and the defeats they have witnessed all in cause of making our community better tomorrow than it is today. It is a special place because these battles and debates, carried out in this very Chamber, have shaped who I am and why I was so determined to one day take a seat in this wonderful theatre of democracy.

This place needs people with the passion, commitment and vision to debate ideas and bring about substantial reform that has a positive impact on the community and who we represent. As a child I remember well my father talking fondly about Wran, who oversaw the redevelopment of Darling Harbour to make a place that families from out of town, like mine, in places like the Illawarra, could come to, walk around and visit the cultural attractions, many that we had not seen before, free of charge. It was in this Chamber that we witnessed Wran and his team electrify the railway to areas that had never been serviced, by a faster, cleaner and more reliable mode of public transport. In later years the Chamber became the place where Carr's leadership shone, as he and his team went about improving the State's literacy and numeracy levels to standards above many other countries in the world, a place where he legislated the establishment of more than 400 national parks to be enjoyed and explored by generations to come.

The lessons that new members like myself must take from the reforms and changes that have been made in the past is a simple one: the community demands that we put their interests first, second and third, and anyone or any party who decides that they will take an alternative approach will be doomed when individuals cast their vote in March 2015. The reforms I have touched on have not come about because we carry out our

business in the beautiful surrounds of this Chamber. They have come about because people, individuals and parties had ideas, stayed the course, and had such strength in their convictions that they could bring the community along and make New South Wales a better place. This Chamber should never play host to fence sitters, to those who see their role as a path to personal benefit, to those who lack the ticker and fight to take up issues on behalf of their community, no matter how many times they get knocked down or criticised. This place is for reformers, for doers and for courageous individuals who put their community first, second and third.

In 2011, it is time for conviction politicians to lead our community. Just because a policy idea is perhaps a little too complex or difficult for Twitter or Facebook does not mean that we should not be pursuing it. Just because the issue may take time and perseverance, more than the 10-second news grabs allow, does not make it less worthwhile. At the heart of everything we do in this place should be the development of sound and robust policy that inspires communities—not because of the pictures that can be broadcast about it or the tweets that can be sent but because it means an improvement to the lives of people like those in the electorate Keira and every other seat represented in this historic place.

Those of us in Opposition know all too well that the community will not and should not put up with individuals or parties who feel their own interests come before those of the people they represent. I know that this Chamber, under the leadership of John Robertson, a Labor man to the core, will see a renewed Australian Labor Party, one where people's ideas, policies and convictions reflect the communities they serve and a party that will once again be given the confidence of the people to serve those less fortunate, those workers and their families and small business owners who in many cases have risked their life savings in the pursuit of free enterprise, as well as those who come from distant lands to be their representatives.

But this trust will not come overnight. Like any relationship that has experienced difficulties, it will need to be continually worked on and it will need to be transparent in its approach. As a party, we will need to demonstrate that we have listened by focusing on policies and reforms that help restore confidence in our principles of social justice, a fair go for all, and equal rights and access to employment, education, information and housing. These are Labor values and they are my values. They will be the values that will guide me as I fight for a new library at Figtree High School, policies and initiatives that encourage jobs and investment in the electorate, a MetroBus to ease congestion around our world-class university, improvements to Bulli Hospital, and funding for walking tracks along our escarpment. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

What makes this Chamber so special to me are those who are not actually with us here today—in fact, many of them may never even have visited this Parliament, or may even see this place as foreign to their daily lives—the people of Keira. Each and every one of them, through me, will have their concerns, grievances, issues and aspirations reflected in this very special place. They include people like Robyn Alderton from the Bellambi Neighbourhood Centre, who with her team of volunteers support, care for and listen to the stories of some of the most disadvantaged people in our community, and do it with a spring in their step and smile on their face that makes helping them out a pleasure not a chore. It is individuals like Dave, a man I met recently when I was helping out with Mission Australia in the electorate. Dave has been unemployed for over 15 years, but week in and week out he volunteers his time to assist others with clothes and food in the colder winter months.

It is those organisations, like the Illawarra Forum and Southern Youth and Family Services, which support and provide a second chance to our homeless, those with a disability, those who have suffered abuse, and those struggling with mental health issues, especially our young people. It is the people I meet at my local coffee shop over a cappuccino made by Netty the barista, who make sure I know what ordinary people are concerned about—their interests, their concerns, their frustrations and their hopes, all of which contribute to ensuring that, no matter where I am, the decisions I make will always be based on my desire to improve the communities in which these people live and work, and which they contribute to.

Finally, all of us who have an opportunity to represent do so only because of the support and encouragement from those closest to them. To my campaign team, led by Gino Mandarino, can I say a big thank you for the 7,000 doors we knocked on, for the more than 110 telephone calls we made every day, standing out in hot, wet and windy conditions to show your support for me and to affirm your beliefs in the Australian Labor Party. My thanks especially to Neil Barnett, Tania Brown, Ian Hunt, Chris Lacey, Liz Hilton, Chris Monnox, Cathy Haney, Alison and Paul Scully and Sara Howson. To Gino in particular, a big thanks for your support, advice and encouragement even when things didn't look too good or the road ahead seemed fraught with danger. To the branch members, the trade union movement, my fellow Labor MPs and supporters who, under the most difficult of circumstances, went out there and stood at polling booths on election day and supported the Labor cause.

My thanks to the New South Wales Labor Party and its officials, in particular George Houssos, who took time away from his own family to help and support me and the team during a very difficult and hard fought election campaign. To friends, many of whom have no interest in politics but rolled up their sleeves to support me, I will never forget this and I am truly grateful. To my electorate staff, Jenelle Rimmer, Judy Hunt, Jess Sparks and Amy Langston, a big thanks for your energy and enthusiasm over the last few months. That has meant we have hit the ground running, as the community would expect. Thanks to elder statesman in our great party that have provided me throughout my career with the support and belief in myself to take on this task, in particular, Bob Carr, Carl Scully and former Premiers Kristina Keneally, Nathan Rees and Morris Iemma, who can hold their heads high for the contribution they made to New South Wales, particularly in the important areas of mental health reform, disability support and local and regional infrastructure.

I thank my great friend, David Campbell, who has made an enormous contribution to the electorate of Keira. I am forever grateful to him. His hard work and efforts will live on in our local community for years to come. To Philip and Robyn, thanks for your support and good humour over many years. To my two sisters Lisa and Kylie, thanks for being, without a doubt, the best sisters a brother could ask for in his journey through life. To my parents, thank you for the foundation you provided me—a foundation that taught me about caring for others and believing in myself.

I thank the two most important people in my life, my wife, Kara, and my son, Preston, who I hope is having a sleep now. Both of them make me a better person every day because of who they are. My wife has been through more struggles than I could ever fathom and more heartache than one deserves to go through at her age but her strength, determination and grace make her the very best life partner someone could ask for and the best mother to my little angel Preston.

Finally, I again thank the community of Keira. You have given me, through the most sacred of our democratic freedoms—that is, the right to vote in the privacy and security of the ballot box—your trust to serve you in this place, to advocate and argue on your behalf, and to keep up the fight even if that fight seems overwhelming. To all of you I say simply this: I will not let you down. I end my first speech in this Chamber with the words adapted from the George Banks lyrical titled *What I live for*—words that will guide me on my journey in this very special place:

For the poor and for the slighted.  
For the wrongs that must be righted  
For the cause that needs assistance  
For the foe that needs resistance  
For the future in the distance.  
... And the Good that I can do

I thank the House.

*[Business interrupted.]*

### DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

**The SPEAKER:** Before I call the member for Cessnock I welcome the former member for Keira, the Hon. David Campbell, to the gallery.

### GOVERNOR'S SPEECH: ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

#### Fourth Day's Debate

*[Business resumed.]*

**Mr CLAYTON BARR** (Cessnock) [12.54 p.m.] (Inaugural Speech): It is a pleasure to follow the contribution of the member for Keira. I am excited by the history and the future of this great State. I stand proudly in the Chamber today as the new member for Cessnock. Congratulations to the Coalition Government on its success at the recent election. I think the message from the New South Wales electorate was clear: We do not mind giving a good kick in the backside to a government. Brace yourselves—it hurts! I am brimming with optimism for the potential of governments to make a real difference to the people, and to provide the tools for communities to build their own prosperity. I suspect that this optimism is true of most politicians across the land, and I suggest that pessimistic politicians leave it to others.

First, I congratulate and thank the former member for Cessnock, Mr Kerry Hickey. One generally hears Kerry's laughter long before one sees him, and he has an in-your-face honesty that sometimes makes people a little uncomfortable and causes a little chaos. But I suspect that Kerry likes the chaos. Kerry served his constituency without fear and favour, and undoubtedly made the electorate of Cessnock a better place to live. Congratulations are extended to the other six candidates who ran for the seat of Cessnock: Wayne Riley, Alison

Davey, Alan Stapleford, Alan McCudden, Dale Troy and James Ryan. Everyone in this House knows that running an election campaign takes a lot of energy and emotion. It is the most public of all job applications. We have 50,000 people interviewing us, and unfortunately only one person can win.

The people of the electorate of Cessnock have given me an amazing opportunity. They have pride in their hearts and stars in their eyes. They expect that life will be hard—hard but fair—and they send their member off to Parliament to make sure of the fairness. It is difficult to think of an electorate that has such diverse competing interests. We have coalmines beside vineyards, farmland beside world-class hospitality and tourism, and new industry beside heritage villages, and we have a population explosion amidst failing infrastructure, obsolete to the extreme. The electorate is 70 kilometres from east to west and 50 kilometres from north to south, and I touch base with five local council areas. It is by no means the State's largest electorate, but I mention this point to help the House understand that members from country and regional areas bring a diverse set of issues to the Chamber.

So what can this great House do for the people in the State seat of Cessnock? I start with education. There is an unfortunate set of statistics about education levels in the seat of Cessnock. They are the lowest in the State—lowest completion of secondary education and post-school education. This House is asked to understand that the people of Cessnock need opportunity—opportunity for education in the earliest years of preschool and childhood through existing schools, new schools, intervention programs, career guidance, access to TAFE and university outreach. With regard to health, the electorate has one of the State's fastest growing populations, yet we have two hospitals with their best years well and truly behind them.

With ongoing and considerable investment, these two hospitals will suffice for the coming decade but not beyond. The Government of today must continue the work of the former member and the former Government to plan for a new hospital in the future—a hospital that will service a community of, by then, almost 100,000 people. In industry, we are fortunate to have thriving industrial estates to the east in the electorate—Beresfield and Cameron Park—but we have yet to achieve similar success in the suburbs to the west. We must continue to find ways to allow mining to co-exist with wine and farming, but we must ensure that wine and tourism are protected from coal gas extraction.

The building industry must be supported by intelligent planning and approval processes. We must make the most of the opportunities provided by the new Hunter Expressway—the region will boom. And Hydro must achieve a guaranteed supply of electricity to save crucial jobs in my electorate. We are 45 days into the first 100 days of this new Government and during campaigning I was happy to hear that it would be an immediate "fix priority" for the Coalition, and I implore it now to do that.

Unfortunately, while famous for its wines, the electorate of Cessnock is also infamous for its roads. We had the misfortune of Oprah criticising those roads to a worldwide audience—thank you very much, Oprah. The previous Labor Government invested heavily in the roads in Cessnock. It was fixing the State's roads, and we need to finish that job. The election promise of the Coalition to deliver \$5 million per annum for regional roads, particularly in the vineyards, is a welcome announcement. But there is much, much more to be done. State roads such as Main Road at Edgeworth, the Newcastle Link Road, Weakleys Drive at Beresfield, Wine Country Drive in North Rothbury and Maitland Road at Abermain all require finishing. Regional roads such as Carrington Street in West Wallsend, Minmi Road in Cameron Park and Wollombi Road in Cessnock all require solutions for the future too—solutions that are beyond the capacity of local councils.

It is crucial that I state the importance of the train line into Newcastle for constituents of Branxton, Greta and Beresfield—the young and the elderly rely on those trains as their only means of transport. And public transport will be a crucial link in empowering the residents of West Wallsend, Edgeworth and Cameron Park in accessing the neighbouring suburbs of Lake Macquarie and Newcastle. Meanwhile, the people of Cessnock will continue to be the least educated in the State while transport barriers prevent them from accessing institutions such as the University of Newcastle, and Glendale and Tighes Hill TAFEs. The people of our communities right across this State are entitled to an expectation of safety. Economic drivers have seen the closure and scaling back of many police stations in the electorate of Cessnock. In particular, that has left the people of Beresfield exposed and afraid. Beresfield station stands idle unless graffiti artists turn their attention to it, just as they have done to the rest of the business district in this community. So much crime goes unreported while the Neighbourhood Watch group works tirelessly.

The Beresfield story can be repeated for Edgeworth and West Wallsend—both communities crying out for an ongoing commitment to the Glendale superstation. The community of Kurri Kurri is awaiting the finalisation of works for the reopening of its station as a regional highway patrol base, and the people of Cessnock are looking for the construction of a new police station to replace the hopelessly outdated building in which they operate. I implore the Coalition Government to expand investment in policing, to make our community safe and to increase the number of officers on patrol, please. And our families must once again



ingrain in their children that the police are our protectors and friends. Stop telling them that they are our enemy. That message has been lost in just a single generation.

Our greatest asset is our people, a resource of unlimited potential. But as we strive more than ever before to realise wealth and capital assets, have we lost our willingness to commit to the smaller gift of time? Sporting groups rely increasingly on a small core of volunteers. School canteens cannot open because not enough people are available to man—or person—them. Service clubs such as Rotary and Lions have rapidly declining memberships. Where will we be in the future? This is National Volunteer Week. Governments have a role to play. The Community Building Partnership program was one of the most empowering initiatives for small and localised community groups in the past 50 years. It must continue. So, too, we must continue to partner with all levels of government to build greater community-focused infrastructure: sporting facilities, libraries, galleries, museums, parks, police and community youth clubs, playgrounds and cycle paths. We must get people out of their lounge rooms and put them into spaces where they meet and mix and create opportunities to build relationships, build communities and build healthy lifestyles. This will cost money up-front but the return will be a reduction in ill health, both mental and physical, and a more prosperous society.

My journey through life has been a fortunate and fruitful one, not always full of sunny days but a life that has shown me considerable love and care. I reflect happily on a childhood full of friends and sport, holidays and adventure, winning and losing, learning graciousness in both victory and defeat. The member that stands before this House grew up since birth with a mother and a father who gave willingly and abundantly to their community. I reflect on a childhood at school where I met with both challenge and success, but a time that had teachers so willing to offer support, encouragement and opportunity for growth. A school, and teachers, should be valued for much more than an academic score. They should be valued for the individuals that they produce—individuals who come with respect, manners, discipline and dreams. I hope that the students who were in the public gallery earlier sat there and dreamed big dreams. We must recognise that mainstream schooling is not a perfect fit for all. Education will require ongoing innovation.

In speaking so highly of education, it will come as no surprise that this inaugural speech will recognise several teachers of significant note who have surely shaped the hearts and minds of thousands of students in my electorate. Brian Davey, the husband of one of my adversaries at the recent election, was a primary school teacher who taught students the foundation lessons in reading, writing, arithmetic and, importantly, that success was being the best that you could be. John Tobin was a secondary school teacher, and now principal, who would accept nothing but students who were well mannered, rippling with confidence, showing pride in their appearance and offering respect to all others. John taught students that they always represented more than just themselves; they represented a family, a school, a culture, a team, a larger group, and that a person had to think beyond their own needs and think instead of the needs of the many. Frank Connell taught, and still teaches, students to cut to the core of the topic, know your content and deliver with conviction. Frank was a "no-nonsense" man. I take this time to pay tribute to all teachers in this State and country and around the globe.

My working life has been full of people willing to give me a go—opportunity repaid with loyal service, a willingness to learn and dedication to the task. I make mention of Phil Papworth at Mount View High School, Jolanda Horsburgh at CanTeen and Jason Linnane at Port Stephens Council. I trust that each of those persons would willingly endorse that their trust and faith in this bloke from Cessnock was well founded, well served and repaid in full. And now I owe that debt and service to the people of Cessnock. If the House will indulge me, there is a crucial shaping of the member who now stands before it—lessons from seven years working at CanTeen, the Australian Organisation for Young People Living with Cancer. During this time, the wisdom and will of the young people was a constant source of learning. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

These young people, aged between 12 and 24, faced with cancer and faced with mortality, would face each day so bravely. The lesson to be learnt, and learnt well, was the lesson of the eternal fight between fear and courage. One young fellow with whom I worked required a second stem cell transplant. Things were dire. The stem cells were to be farmed from his sister. The lad was 13, his sister just 16. All preparations were made and the procedure began. Unfortunately, in the early stages, due to complications, it was recognised that the procedure would jeopardise the life of the sister if she were given anaesthetic. People need to understand that a stem cell transplant procedure is performed with a needle the size of a pen being drilled into the hip bone. The girl felt there was no choice. With great courage, she decided to go ahead with the procedure without anaesthetic—wide awake, alert and lucid. The needle was drilled into her hip and the marrow was farmed for her brother's survival—her courage, his life.

In essence, our decisions are all born out of this basic, natural state—driven by fear or driven by courage. Put simply, are we working to avoid something or to build something? Those who avoid are driven by fear. Those who build are driven by courage. Those who stood in this great House before us, and those who will stand here after us, most certainly encountered that same battle. Madam Speaker, you must have some fears

about that chair but at the same time you had the courage to accept the challenge. So what role do fear and courage play in this House? It would seem quite simple, and yet so elusive. This House, this Government—any government—must govern with courage. Too many governments have governed with fear: the fear of losing the next election, the fear of upsetting colleagues or the fear of standing against a media poll. Governments must govern with a courage that extends beyond the next election. I ask all members of this Fifty-fifth Parliament to share the spirit of this wonderful young girl and honour her courage with similar willingness.

And now to my thanks. To my campaign team, who in the face of defeat rescued victory, I salute you. As every member of Parliament would know, campaign teams give so willingly of their time. It is just incredible how hard they work. There is no personal gain for them, no elevation to office, no headlines and no paparazzi. Thank you so much to those who attended and participated: to my campaign manager, Kim Pagan, and her incredibly hardworking assistants and strategists, Jay, Jamie and Richard; and to Mark for all the media releases and doorknocking that he did with me—hopefully you shed a few kilos like me, my friend. I must make particular mention of Colleen and Arthur Hartcher, octogenarians, who made sure that the campaign office was open for business every day of the campaign—all eight long weeks of it.

To Catherine, Warren, John, Anne, Darrin, Phil, Perri, Morgan, Damien, Bob, Bob—that is not a stutter—and Mary, thank you for all your work and effort, wisdom, knowledge, insight, experience and belief. To the Labor head office, thanks for your time and conviction. To Andrew, our double-decker billboard was a crushing blow to our opponents every time it went out. To Kerry Hickey, Stan Neilly, Joel Fitzgibbon and Eric Fitzgibbon, who are former and current members, thanks for your wisdom and support. To Kristina Keneally and Tony Kelly, who took time out of their busy schedules to visit my electorate, thank you for your assistance. And to my lifelong mate Mark Trowbridge: Champion, I could never buy you enough beers for all that you did—and, remember, it is not polite to ask for them. You would think that this list is a long and comprehensive one, but the reality is that it is just the beginning. There were a hundred more people who helped me in the lead-up to the election and on the day. To everyone who helped, thank you. To my hardworking office staff, Perri and Anne: We are on this ride together. Thank you for the flying start that we have made. Your skills and knowledge will complement the community incredibly well. Thanks for joining me. Strap in!

And now for the family. I have a mother who, in spite of terrible life hardships, is the warmest, friendliest, most polite, loving and caring individual you could ever hope to meet. Right across my community people speak so highly of the woman called Margaret Barr—in fact, her reputation may well have gotten me across the line on the day. She had to be worth at least 2 or 3 percentage points! I salute my mother in this speech. My time on this planet has never known a moment when it was not shown great love, sacrifice and patience. To my brothers and sister, who have all been provided with a life of love, care and warmth from this same woman and have all found their own success on this planet, Leanne, Justin and Kipton; to my in-laws and out-laws; my extended family; and my friends and former work colleagues: Thank you for being all that you are and for doing so much to support.

And to my wife, my Lisa, where do I start? Perhaps with sorry—I won. We have been together since we were just children on this planet. You have grown with me and shaped me. You have let me run loose at times and reined me in at others. You have made space for me to chase my dreams. You have always shared me with the community, and you have been very supportive at every step—except my most recent surf trip to Papua New Guinea. You have now committed yourself to single parenting for the next four years, and possibly beyond. Why would you do this? Are you mad? No, you are not mad. You, like me, believe in the courage of dreams and a better place. You and I share a love for our children and for the community in which we would like them to grow up. You and I share a love for each other that has no boundaries but certainly has a homestead—and we always leave the light on.

To those who call me "Daddy"—Isla, Mali, Aubrey and Elsie—you are giving so much of your dad to this State, to the people. You are my life and, while I will undoubtedly miss so much of your growing, I want to model for you and shape for you a potential in life that has no bounds. Most importantly, I want to give to you the gifts of love and life that were so abundantly gifted to me by my mother. I want you to grow up in a home, in a family and in a world where your self-esteem and self-confidence will conquer any challenge, where manners and respect are things that you can offer anyone at any time, where you will smile far, far, far more than you will ever cry.

Today I have spoken of courage and fear, family and love, friends and foes. I look forward to my time in this Chamber. I commit to the people of New South Wales, my party and my peers that this House will get the best of me—but, like a good wine, I will undoubtedly get better with age. I acknowledge that in politics

things are not all black and white; there is a lot of grey. We will argue over the grey, but we must argue with passion. Passion shows a deep love and belief in a person's view. An argument without passion is really just blah, blah, and already in these first few weeks I have seen far too much of that.

**Debate adjourned on motion by Mr Victor Dominello and set down as an order of the day for a later hour.**

*[The Speaker left the chair at 1.15 p.m. The House resumed at 2.15 p.m.]*

## **DISTINGUISHED VISITORS**

**The SPEAKER:** I draw attention to the presence in the gallery of a delegation of the Electoral Matters Committee of Victoria.

## **BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

### **Notices of Motions**

**Government Business Notices of Motions given.**

*[During the giving of notices of motions.]*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Mount Druitt will come to order.

## **QUESTION TIME**

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*[Question time commenced at 2.17 p.m.]*

## **BLACKTOWN AND CAMPBELLTOWN HOSPITALS**

**Mr JOHN ROBERTSON:** My question is to the Minister for Health. When will the Minister sign off on the contracts for the redevelopment of Blacktown and Campbelltown hospitals, given that Health Infrastructure finalised the contracts prior to the election?

**Mr Chris Hartcher:** A parochial question.

**Mr JOHN ROBERTSON:** No, I am sure that Mr Doyle is interested as well.

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER:** I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question and for the opportunity to talk about the capital funding we have committed from this side of the House. I cannot even open my mouth without members opposite starting to interrupt. They asked a question and I am surprised they do not want to hear the answer. The Liberals and Nationals promised \$885 million of new funding for capital works on hospital facilities throughout the State prior to the election, including funding for both Blacktown Hospital and Campbelltown Hospital, and we will deliver. As to when the contracts will be signed, I will get on with the job much faster than the mob opposite did. This is the crowd that promised hospitals right across New South Wales time and again, and failed to deliver.

**Government members:** Name them!

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER:** I have been asked by my colleagues to name the hospitals. I have in the past but I will do it again. The hospitals that have been promised by the other side of Parliament are—let us start at the top—Port Macquarie. Did they deliver?

**Government members:** No.

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER:** Tamworth—did they deliver?

**Government members:** No.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Kogarah will come to order.

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER:** Did they deliver Dubbo?

**Government members:** No.

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER:** Parkes?

**Government members:** No.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Kogarah will come to order.

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER:** Forbes?

**Government members:** No.

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER:** Wagga Wagga?

**Government members:** No.

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER:** Bega?

**Government members:** No.

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER:** Northern beaches?

**Government members:** No.

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER:** Even where they have provided money—

**Mr Michael Daley:** Point of order: I refer you to previous rulings from the Chair that Ministers inciting members to interject is an act of disorder.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I do not recall such a ruling. However, I will look at previous rulings to determine whether the member is correct. The member for Maroubra will resume his seat.

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER:** As someone who has been a member of this House for the past 16 years I can say that a point of order like that is just plain laughable. I am not inciting Government members to do anything. They can respond in that way if they want to; they do not have to, but of course they are as angry as I am about Labor's broken promises. They know it is the communities in areas that have been promised hospitals that suffer because they have never been delivered. I assure members that the promises we have made to the community of Campbelltown—who won the seat of Campbelltown?—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Opposition members will come to order.

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER:** The community of Campbelltown believed our promise more than it believed the Opposition's. We have a wonderful new member for Campbelltown. He made an inaugural speech in this place last night and expounded the virtues of his community and how much residents rely on that hospital. It is terrific to have this new member. I visited that hospital on a number of occasions with the then candidates during the last election campaign. They included the member for Campbelltown, the member for Wollondilly and the member for Camden. On the last occasion, we stood outside that hospital with the general manager. If I recall rightly, he asked the Young Labor people with their big corflute banners to move on because their protest was nonsense. We were promising an upgrade of the hospital. Members of the community know that we deliver on our promises.

*[Interruption]*

The member for Canterbury loves to protest. She really will have to get used to being in opposition. All the whingeing and whining across the Chamber will not deliver services to the people of New South Wales.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Opposition members will come to order.

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER:** We reiterate what the Coalition promised before the recent election. I have mentioned hospitals in the country, but we also promised major hospital upgrades in Hornsby. I acknowledge my colleague and friend who is the new member for Hornsby.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Marrickville will come to order.

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER:** Hornsby hospital has been absolutely ignored by Labor for years and years. There will be a major upgrade of car parking at hospitals such as Sutherland and Nepean.

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

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER:** There are major upgrades for Maitland. Where is my friend the member for Maitland? I was thrilled to stand outside that hospital—

**Dr Andrew McDonald:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129, which states that an answer should be relevant to the question asked. The Minister has had five minutes to talk about the Blacktown and Campbelltown contracts that are ready to be signed. We need to know, yes or no, whether she will sign them.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! There is no point of order.

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER:** I answered that question. I said we will honour our commitment to upgrade both Campbelltown and Blacktown hospitals.

#### **FEDERAL BUDGET AND WESTERN SYDNEY**

**Mr TONY ISSA:** My question is directed to the Premier. What is the impact of last night's Federal budget on the motorists of western Sydney?

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** I thank the member for Granville for his question. I note the 13.8 per cent swing that he achieved in winning his seat. He won the seat from a former failed Labor Minister for Roads. One thing we can say with certainty about the Federal Budget is that Labor's pretence—that it cares about western Sydney—is dead; dead and buried. Labor has learnt nothing from the March election. The people of New South Wales, especially those in western Sydney, sent the strongest possible message that they were sick and tired of being denied basic services. Irrespective of what electorate one visited during the election campaign—Campbelltown, East Hills, Smithfield, Granville or Parramatta, or any of the areas that used to be Labor heartland—the single biggest issue was, "We need better transport services. We need better roads. We need better train services." They are the services that people desperately need to be able to get on with their lives—to get to university, to get to college, to get to school and to get to work.

Under Labor for 16 years, they were denied those services by members opposite. That was the single biggest message in Labor's heartland in western Sydney during the campaign. But did Federal Labor heed that message last night? No. Whack! Another \$270 million was ripped out of western Sydney roads and taken away from the people of western Sydney. That is funding that has been in the budget for three years. Neither State nor Federal Labor has done anything to get those vital works up and running. Labor members opposite did so little work and so little preparation on the M4 expansion that, after all their promises throughout all the years they held office, those works still are not shovel ready. I quote advice from the Department of Transport:

... the previous ... Government's position for the M4 East was without a funding solution for delivery ... [so] no further development work ... should proceed.

Labor's commitment to the people of western Sydney was: Ignore the problem, and it will go away! As we know, and as morning and afternoon peak hour motorists know, the problem simply got worse.

**Mr Michael Daley:** Who built it?

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** Half a million people use it, you dope! The department advised further that before widening could occur, the Government would need to finalise the route and the costings, undertake environmental assessment and consult with the community and other stakeholders.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call the member for Maroubra to order.

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** That work should have been done over the past decade, or at least over the past three years when that \$300 million was just sitting there. In other words, even if we had had time to spend the \$300 million, we could not have proceeded because the basic homework had not been done. Every time infrastructure discussions occur between State and Federal governments, a number of points come forward. Labor was so incompetent it could not put together a decent funding submission to attract funds. Labor is so lazy it could not get projects planned and ready for funding, even when the Federal Government had money available for infrastructure in Sydney. Time and time again people in western Sydney missed out on road and rail projects that they vitally needed. It is no wonder Labor members were tossed out in record numbers in March.

The Government's preference for that \$300 million would be to have it spent in western Sydney, to improve the M4 and ease horrific traffic congestion that people face every day as they try to drive to and from work. However, Federal Labor instead has opted to divert most of that money—\$270 million—to the Pacific Highway. I do not begrudge additional funding for the Pacific Highway. I will not do that, given my family circumstances. No-one doubts that the Pacific Highway is a worthy project. I am pleased we have been able to salvage something out of the wreck left by members opposite and keep the money in New South Wales. We will gladly use that money to upgrade the Pacific Highway because it is another example of neglect by members opposite. They took \$300 million away from the Pacific Highway in a mini-budget.

**Ms Linda Burney:** Time!

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** It is interesting to hear the member for Canterbury interjecting because usually she is not in the country in May. Normally she spends spring in Cannes in the south of France—a \$35,000 trip that included \$9,000 for accommodation for less than one week. I have some news for the member for Canterbury, which could provoke a fight. If she wants the best coffee, she need only catch a bus to Single Onion in Surry Hills; for the best patisserie, she need only catch a bus to Adriano Zumbo's in Balmain; for a decent bottle of red, she can go to any winery across New South Wales; and if she is interested in fashion, I know that the best fabric shops are in John Street Cabramatta. The member does not need to waste \$35,000. She needs to focus on the interests of the people of this State. Labor did not do that while in office and it is still not doing it during question time.

### SCHOOL PERFORMANCE LEAGUE TABLES

**Ms CARMEL TEBBUTT:** My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Education. What action has the Minister taken to implement his commitment to prevent newspapers from publishing league tables? Will the Government prosecute media outlets that publish league tables based on this week's National Assessment Program—Literacy and Numeracy results?

**Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI:** I thank the member for her question. I must say that it certainly is great to have staff—which has been made possible by the Coalition coming to government. Staff can conduct all kinds of research about the achievements of previous Ministers. And I have asked them to compile some information about the performance of the previous Minister. I have a selection from which to choose. Let me have a look: no, this one is definitely not an achievement, this one is an embarrassment.

**Ms Cherie Burton:** Point of order.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Minister has not even begun to answer the question. What is the member's point of order?

**Ms Cherie Burton:** My point of order is relevance. It has been almost one minute and the Minister is walking around showing documents to colleagues. Seriously—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I understand the point of order. The member will resume her seat. The Minister has the call.

**Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI:** If the member for Kogarah would like to ask me a question, we have a similar folder on her.

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

**Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI:** Fancy the Leader of the Opposition criticising me! During the election campaign I was doorknocking and I actually defended him, yet here he is attacking me. I remember when I knocked on one particular door a gentleman said, "That John Robertson is a liar and a fool." I said, "No, he's not. He's not a liar." The question by the member for Marrickville asked what the Government was doing. We heard many things about what the previous Government was going to do. Many of us here heard that it was going to oppose league tables and the misuse of the National Assessment Program—Literacy and Numeracy data because the publication of simplistic league tables was not what the National Assessment Program—Literacy and Numeracy tests were designed for.

I would suggest that this issue is perhaps one of the reasons that the former Minister is no longer a member of this Parliament and is perhaps why we have a new member for Balmain from The Greens. The Opposition did not take steps to protect schools. Its members mouthed it all here in Parliament, but took absolutely no steps. Their Federal colleagues now have the opportunity to take steps nationally. They have all said they would: Julia Gillard has said it, and Kevin Rudd when he was Prime Minister said it—that is before he was stabbed in the back the Labor way, straight out of the Labor playbook. And how do I know that? I have a copy of Labor's playbook. We will get to Nathan's chapter later. Members should not worry; we have four years to work our way through the Labor Party playbook.

**Dr Andrew McDonald:** Point of order: The Minister spent the last four years referring to Standing Order 129, stating that an answer should be relevant to the question asked. Four minutes has now passed and he has gone nowhere near even trying to answer the question on NAPLAN—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I understand the point of order. The member will resume his seat. The Minister will return to the leave of the question.

**Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI:** We ran a strong campaign of defending the integrity of schools, making sure that the national agenda was not going to adversely affect schools. As I was quoted today in the newspaper, the NAPLAN tests were designed for the benefit of students and as a diagnostic tool for students, not for schools, teachers or politicians. That is why we have taken a strong approach. We all know about the legislation that was introduced; there is no secret about it or no scandal about the fact that legislation was introduced in New South Wales. When we take measures to defend schools we want to make sure they are effective. That is what you will always get from the O'Farrell-Stoner Government.

### **PACIFIC HIGHWAY UPGRADE**

**Mr ANDREW FRASER:** My question is directed to the Deputy Premier. Can the Deputy Premier update the House on Federal budget funding for the Pacific Highway?

**Mr ANDREW STONER:** I thank the member for Coffs Harbour for his question. For many years he has campaigned for a safer Pacific Highway. He, along with many other North Coast Nationals members, has experienced tragedy regularly on one of Australia's busiest and certainly deadliest highways. Last night in the Federal budget we learnt of the allocation of \$1.02 billion towards continuing Pacific Highway upgrades, flowing through until 2014-15. Of course, the State Government welcomes any money, particularly new money, that might go towards upgrading the Pacific Highway. However, when the surface of this announcement is scratched, it can be seen that there actually is not a lot of new money. The Premier talked about \$270 million being reallocated from the M4 extension that was promised by this lot opposite on a number of occasions. That money was simply shifted across, as was another \$150 million, from the deferral of the M2 to F3 connection.

Of course, we would welcome any commitment to, and any continuing upgrade of, the Pacific Highway to make it safer. Recently my electorate on the mid North Coast was the scene of a number of tragedies at one spot near Worrall Creek. In a short period of time three people lost their lives. This road remains a national scandal. Clybucca, the site of Australia's worst road accident in 1999, which prompted the Coroner to recommend the highway's upgrade, still has not been fixed. In the past, Federal and State governments actually agreed on shared funding to upgrade the Pacific Highway. I am sorry to say that on this occasion the New South Wales Government was not consulted prior to Minister Anthony Albanese's announcement of this money regarding these shared arrangements. The current arrangement is a split of 80 per cent Federal Government funding and 20 per cent State Government funding.

*[Interruption]*

I hear the member for Heffron interjecting. The other day I told her that she should continue to suck on lemons. However, I have been given to understand that she has actually been sucking on limes, because she has had a limelight deprivation! The Pacific Highway is a national highway, and the Federal Government ought to contribute the lion's share of funding to upgrade it. We will examine the additional funding requirements as part of our budgetary process. Of course, we are committed to stopping the carnage on the Pacific Highway, so we will have a look at the funding required. And we will support the Prime Minister's target of 2016; a target she has spoken about on a number of occasions. But in this place today, in the middle of 2011, we are still talking about finishing the job on this national highway because of the failure of the lot opposite. Back in 1996 the then Minister for Roads, "Sparkles" Scully, told us that Labor was going to finish the job.

**Mr Barry O'Farrell:** What was he member for?

**Mr ANDREW STONER:** He was the member for Smithfield. Who is the member for Smithfield now? It is Andrew Rohan. Mr Scully promised us in 1996 that he would have the job finished by 2006. Well, that date came and passed. In 1998 Labor promised to have the job done by 2012, shifting the goal posts out by another four years. Well, here we are with the latest promise; to finish it in 2016. That reflects that Labor simply cannot deliver on infrastructure. It reflects that Labor had seven incompetent roads Ministers in just five years. That is why only 51 per cent of the job has been done in 2011, despite Labor promising to finish it in 2006. That was the Labor Government that, in its November 2008 mini-budget, slashed \$300 million from forward funding through to 2013-14—a 40 per cent cut in funding for the Pacific Highway. That is why we are still talking about this matter today. The O'Farrell-Stoner Government will get the job done.

### HOSPITAL REAL-TIME INFORMATION SYSTEM

**Ms LINDA BURNEY:** My question is directed to the Minister for Health. Can the Minister provide specific information on the date that a real-time information system will be available for the first emergency department when the system will be rolled out across the entire New South Wales health system, and an estimated cost for this initiative? Specific!

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER:** I thank the member for the question. I am really pleased that the member is looking forward to so much to real-time information. I remind the House what this is all about. During their election campaigns the New South Wales Liberals and The Nationals made several commitments in relation to emergency departments. We talked about funding for specific hospital upgrades, particularly at St George Hospital and Campbelltown Hospital, but we also promised to develop and publish real-time information about how many people are actually waiting right now in major metropolitan hospital emergency departments. I know this can be done because it is being done right now. I suggest to all members that when they return to their offices after question time they go to their computers and look up Western Australia Health. If they do, they will find out what is happening in the major hospitals in Western Australia.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members will allow the Minister to answer the question. The member for Maroubra will come to order.

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER:** I have asked the Department of Health to move on that. I asked it to do that on the very first day I met with departmental officers. I am told that that is well under way. I do not have the specific data, but I am happy to come back to the shadow Minister as she is so enthralled with this idea. Labor failed when in government. It could have done this, but no-one on that side of the Parliament thought of the idea. Labor failed emergency departments and the patients of this State, who waited much longer than they should have to be seen in our emergency departments. The last available figures indicate that something like 30 per cent of patients waited longer than eight hours before they could be found a bed in a ward. This is really how to judge whether a hospital is measuring up to meeting the needs of its patients. Emergency departments have been chock-a-block with people waiting behind doors even to see a doctor. This waiting-time information will be really useful for people. They will be able to determine whether they should go on to one of the health lines to seek this information.

**Mr Richard Amery:** Health lines that we set up.

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER:** I acknowledge that that was set up by the former Labor Government, using the private sector. That was a very good way to use the private sector to enhance public health services. This Government has made a commitment to extend that service, to look after people with chronic illnesses and so on. I believe what we can do when we publish this information—



[Interruption]

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Mount Druitt will come to order.

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER:** I am hoping that that will be done in the middle of this year. You can count on it.

**Ms Linda Burney:** That will be next month.

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER:** That would be next month, would it? I am glad the member can count. The middle of the year, in my opinion, is 1 July. It could be around about 1 July, or before that. By the way, the other thing we promised in that policy was that people who are locked up in their offices administering health and who are distant from the front line will actually work as volunteers and provide assistance in emergency departments. They could look after patients who might want information about how long they have to wait, help with settling young children, look after patients who might need a cup of tea or give them information or be a shoulder to cry on. I have indicated that I would volunteer.

I am happy that Liz Foschia of ABC Radio is coming with me on our first visit. I am thrilled that she has agreed to that because I think it sets an example to anyone who has previously worked on the front line, but who might have lost touch a bit with what happens, to see what the situation is like through the eyes of patients. They can see what it is like through the eyes of the very hardworking triage nurses, doctors and others working in the emergency departments, who are saying, "That is why I am working so hard to improve the emergency departments in our hospitals." Hospitals in the areas in which I have discussed this initiative are very much looking forward to this, just as they are looking forward to real-time information.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Maroubra will come to order.

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER:** I am astonished that members on the other side do not care about what happens in our emergency departments. They do not care about patients; they do not care about the doctors and nurses. Well, we do, and I look forward to coming forward with this information.

### FEDERAL BUDGET AND NEW SOUTH WALES

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN:** My question is directed to the Treasurer. Would the Treasurer update the House on the implications of the Federal Budget for New South Wales?

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** It is great to have the member for Cronulla in this House. We congratulate him on his inaugural speech last night. It is fantastic to have a lawyer in the House. I do not think that we have a lawyer in the House—

[Interruption]

I know we have a few lawyers. Many good speeches have been made by members from both sides of the House.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Opposition members will come to order. The member for Cabramatta will come to order.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** It is also important to bring to the attention of the House the consequences of the Federal Budget. It increases the cost of living for New South Wales families and fails to deliver a fair share for our State, particularly in relation to infrastructure. Obviously, we will go through the detail of the budget, but it is quite clear that overall New South Wales has not won.

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

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** What the Federal Treasurer did is disappointing. Last night's Federal Budget also includes an \$875 million deterioration in forecast GST payments to New South Wales. We know how Labor governments do budgets; they would not have included that. So, at least we give the Federal Treasurer credit for including a deterioration in GST payments, though that will mean less money for New South Wales. We understand that. Members opposite do not seem to understand that. Undoubtedly, that will put further pressure on the New South Wales budget position, and it will add to the task of dealing with the \$5.2 billion black hole left by the former New South Wales Labor Government.

**Mr Michael Daley:** You are making excuses already.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** If you don't have the money, you don't have the money, mate! Do you understand that?

**Mr Michael Daley:** You are already making excuses.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The shadow Treasurer and member for Maroubra will come to order.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** The Federal Budget does nothing to allay the cost of living pressures. Indeed, what has happened to electricity prices in this State over the past five years, under a Labor Government? Prices for electricity in every electorate in this State went up 64 per cent. At the same time, the consumer price index [CPI] went up by 16 per cent. So cost of living pressures increased under State Labor, but we heard nothing from Federal Labor last night about dealing with the cost of living. We know from the experience of the \$5.2 billion black hole that Labor likes to keep things out of its budgets. The Federal Treasurer, Wayne Swan, did the same last night; he failed to provide any detail on the proposed carbon tax that will hit families and businesses across the State and put pressure on households, jobs and investment in New South Wales. The Federal Treasurer did not even mention the words "carbon tax" in his speech, despite the fact that last time Labor proposed a price on carbon it was forecast to cost \$11.5 billion in its first year, rising to nearly \$16 billion. If Federal Labor thinks that will not adversely impact on families, it is not being honest with the people in this State and across the country. Today we call on the Federal Treasurer to be honest with the people of Australia.

What is the biggest savings item in Federal Labor's budget? It is a tax, because that is what Labor does—it taxes and spends. The flood levy will put pressure on every family in this State. Federal Labor's pea-and-thimble trick on infrastructure is reminiscent of some of the economic shenanigans of the former New South Wales Labor Government. We heard the Deputy Premier talk about the \$1 billion for the Pacific Highway. We welcome any new money that deals with this critical piece of infrastructure. It is about saving lives. But the budget shows that Labor has ripped \$270 million from the M4 extension and \$150 million will come from deferring the F3 to the Sydney orbital project. Treasury estimates showed that the Federal Government was expected to allocate \$400 million for the Pacific Highway, but the money is not there. So there is about \$100 million in new money.

When the gloss is removed, clearly there is less money. Notwithstanding that, we will examine the details and look at delivering on that critical piece of infrastructure. It is about looking after lives up and down the coast. We have heard the stories about the Pacific Highway. The decision to cancel almost all of the M4 East funding has more to do with shoring up the Federal transport Minister's inner-Sydney electorate of Grayndler than delivering for the people of western Sydney. Moving funds from a project because his electorate does not want to meet a government obligation is one feature of the Federal Budget. It is clear that Federal Labor has adopted the habits of the former State Labor Government. The message for the Federal Labor Government is clear: If it wants to understand what will happen if it ignores the people of this State or takes them for granted, the Federal Treasurer need only look back to 26 March, when the people of New South Wales said, "If you don't look after us, we won't look after you."

### HOSPITAL BEDS

**Dr ANDREW McDONALD:** My question is addressed to the Minister for Health and Minister for Medical Research. I refer to the Minister's election commitment to deliver 1,390 additional beds. Will the Minister confirm that these beds are additional to both the current bed numbers and the 488 Council of Australian Government [COAG] beds? Will the Minister guarantee that every one of the 1,390 additional beds will be opened, operational, staffed and recurrently funded during this term of office?

**Mr Brad Hazzard:** Are they the ones Labor closed?

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER:** The Minister for Planning and Infrastructure and Minister Assisting the Premier on Infrastructure NSW remembers how many beds were closed by the Labor Government. By the time Labor left office we were down 1,500 beds. Members opposite used to run the mantra, "We're increasing beds. We're opening new beds." At one time the former Labor Government announced the closure of 5,000 beds, but it managed to claw back that number. So it is absolute nonsense. Under Labor, hospital bed numbers included cots, bassinets, recliner chairs and beds in homes—beds that people had bought at Harvey Norman. If a nurse visited a person at home, that bed was counted as a hospital bed. It was a joke.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Heffron will come to order.

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER:** The Labor Government boasted about opening more hospital beds last winter as a result of the April 2010 Council of Australian Governments agreement. I think the shadow Minister referred to 480 beds. Some of those beds have been opened, and many more will be opened. I remember visiting a hospital with the member for Maitland during the election campaign. The hospital's general manager admitted to us, "Oh, no, these are just the winter surge beds. They're not new beds. They're just the beds that are always there and always opened at this time of the year." At Sutherland Hospital one doctor told us that some of the new beds were in fact recliner chairs in the emergency department. The member for Menai is nodding her head. We visited the hospital and heard that from the horse's mouth—the doctors themselves. This was the fraudulent claim of members opposite when they were in Government. The truth of the matter is that we promised 1,390 hospital beds. We deliver on our promises. Labor did not deliver on its promises.

**Mr John Robertson:** When?

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER:** It will be in the first term of our administration. That is our commitment. Members opposite are so used to making promises they never keep that they cannot believe we could ever be committed to keeping a promise. We will keep every commitment we made in the health sector before the election. We will keep them because we do not lie to people, as Labor did. Remember that famous promise in 1994: "We will halve hospital waiting lists. It is written in blood. I will resign if we don't keep it." Do members remember how many people were on the lists? I do—it was 44,707.

**Mr Barry O'Farrell:** What was it when they left office?

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER:** When Labor left office 65,000 people were on the waiting lists. The Labor Government made promises that it knew it would never keep. It was a case of doing whatever it takes—lie, treat people like fools and pretend that they will get a better deal when they did not. Perhaps that explains the handsome array of wonderful new faces on the Government benches. It is a pleasure to listen to them talk about their constituents, about how they intend to honour the commitments and to stand up for their electorates. That is the difference between us and them. When I visited the electorates with the then candidates, we stood outside hospitals and told the local press that a Coalition Government would open hospital beds. And we meant it. So the answer to the question is: We will open all of these beds in our first term. We are proud to honour that commitment.

### SYDNEY FERRIES

**Mr JOHN SIDOTI:** My question is directed to the Minister for Transport. Will the Minister explain what the Government is doing to fix Sydney Ferries?

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I thank the member for Drummoyne for his question, and I congratulate him on his outstanding election victory. Today is a great day for anyone who cares about the future of Sydney ferries. Over the past three years the Liberal-Nationals have outlined their plans to franchise Sydney ferries, and we are pleased to make this announcement today. We are turning our words into real action. But today we are announcing more than just franchising Sydney ferries. Unlike the previous Labor Government, which wasted millions of dollars on a franchise process and then backed away from it, slashed services on Sydney's ferries and planned for a decline in patronage, the O'Farrell Government's program to fix Sydney ferries will also restore those lost services and replace the ageing fleet.

I am pleased to advise the House that next week advertisements will run asking private sector companies to register their interest in providing ferry services not only on Sydney Harbour but also to the inner west and Parramatta. This is the first substantial step in the reform of Sydney Ferries—a reform that will deliver improved and expanded services. In line with the recommendations of the Walker inquiry, our program will see the State Government continue to own Sydney's ferries while allowing a non-government operator to lease, maintain and operate the fleet. The O'Farrell Government's Fixing the Ferries Program is great news for commuters because it will also mean the reinstatement of the hundreds of ferry services slashed by the Labor Government. To show the magnitude of the services that were slashed, Labor slashed services from the north side by 30 per cent—731 services were slashed to 498. That is a loss of 233 services every week.

**Mr John Robertson:** Where did they go? Parramatta or the inner west.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I will come back to the Leader of the Opposition. I remind the House that the Labor Government had nine transport plans.

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** The former Labor Government had nine transport plans but in Labor's most recent transport plan it predicted and planned for a 4.8 per cent decline in Sydney Ferries patronage over the next 10 years—a completely unacceptable position! Yet the experience of one of our private sector operators providing services between Manly and Circular Quay gave us an insight into what the private sector can provide. In the past 12 months, for example, one of those operators has had an increase in patronage of more than 300 per cent. I guarantee all members of this House that all skilled workers of Sydney Ferries will have a much brighter future under this Government than they had under the former Government.

Labor's flawed strategy to secure future employment of Sydney Ferries workers was fuel services, lower demand and no growth—that is what it promised. The record of those opposite, as we know, is one of flogging off public assets to the lowest bidder and then selling out the taxpayer and the customer. And who was one of Labor's energy Ministers during the process to sell off the State's electricity assets? It was Captain Solar, the Leader of the Opposition, a man with such strong principles that he helped knife the Premier at the time, No. 40, Morris Iemma. He took his place in Parliament and was made the Minister for Energy as the Labor Government pressed ahead with its dud deal of the century. That is the way Labor operates. Whatever it takes, is Labor's mantra.

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** As we know, in 2007 the former Labor Government initiated the Walker inquiry into Sydney Ferries, but it ignored all of the recommendations of the Walker report. We know, even though the Leader of the Opposition does not like to admit it, that he actually supports this Government's model, and I will explain why. When he wanted to increase private sector involvement at Parklea prison when he was the Minister for Corrective Services he wrote to the Labor Party to clarify its position on private sector involvement in the running of the State's prisons. In his letter to the Labor Party, which was documented in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on 9 April 2009 he said, "the beds, bricks and land will remain owned by NSW taxpayers". He said this was not privatisation. He went on to say, "The Government is of the view that it has not initiated 'private contract management' ... in a manner which would place us in breach of ALP policy." I am pleased to report the model to franchise ferry services should be welcomed by the Leader of the Opposition because he wrote to his own party supporting such a model. This demonstrates the hypocrisy of the Leader of the Opposition. Not only did they slash ferry services but they also support our model.

#### PRIVATE VEHICLE SALES ON PUBLIC ROADS

**Ms CLOVER MOORE:** My question is directed to the Premier. Will the Government amend the Local Government Act to enable councils to ban vehicle sales on public roads to prevent backpackers turning roads like Victoria and Brougham streets, Potts Point, into car sales yards, limiting road space for residents, businesses and visitors?

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** I recognise the problem. As a much younger person a quarter of a century ago I lived in one of those two streets. In those days they were not campervans they were kombi vans, which some of the older members of this House will remember, and I understand the frustration. I noted the private member's statement last week of the member for Sydney and the frustration this causes to local residents who are parked out. I know the cost it causes to council ratepayers, given I think the member for Sydney said last week that something like two council inspectors are employed almost full-time. Often it is backpackers who are engaged in these deals and they are smart enough to know to move the car when the inspector is on the way. The member for Sydney has done her best. I have to say that my memory is that Byron council has had more success in this area and I think also Clovelly council has had success.

**Ms Kristina Keneally:** It is Randwick council. What has Randwick done?

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** Not a lot of good for themselves on 26 March. It appears as though some councils have managed to use existing Roads and Traffic Authority legislation to stamp out the problem. I understand that the member for Sydney has written to the Minister for Local Government who is looking at the whole issue. It is interesting that a couple of councils have managed to deal with the problem but the City of

Sydney has not yet found a way through a problem that has been there as I know for at least two and a half decades. I will ignore the interjections from those opposite who suggest that the member for Sydney only wants these vehicles removed to put in another bike lane. I do understand the discomfort, discourtesy and the lack of parking that it causes residents. I know in a suburban council area, when these sorts of issues, particularly around commuters, have occurred well away from railway stations, that the introduction of three or four-hours timed parking restrictions which do not inconvenience residents quite as much has also been trialled. I am happy for the Minister for Local Government to provide the member for Sydney with a substantive reply. I understand that some councils have dealt with the issue. We are happy to work with the City of Sydney to try to find a solution.

### FOOD LABELLING

**Mr DARYL MAGUIRE:** My question is addressed to the Minister for Primary Industries. What inroads has the Government made to ensure that consumers of New South Wales can have faith in the labelling of fruit and vegetables in our supermarkets?

**Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON:** I am pleased to get this question from the member for Wagga Wagga—

**Mr Barry O'Farrell:** The apple-crunching member for Wagga Wagga.

**Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON:** The apple-crunching member for Wagga Wagga, indeed—Mr 77.8 per cent of the two-party preferred vote. He did very well in the last election. So much for that great threat! I recognise his interest in this area as a member of Parliament who represents a rural electorate, as many of us do on this side of the House. Wonderful product comes out of the Wagga Wagga electorate in the south, most particularly beef, apples and certainly a wide variety of cereal crops. The electorate of Mr Provest, 100 per cent for the Tweed, is the sub-tropical fruit bowl of the north. Farming across New South Wales is extremely important. I think everyone would agree that our farmers produce some of the world's very best fruit and vegetables. Making sure that labelling laws are complied with is crucial for the men and women on the land who rely on their produce to generate income. They do not want to be undercut by imports.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Canterbury will come to order. The Leader of the Opposition will come to order.

**Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON:** That is why today I am pleased to inform the House that the New South Wales Food Authority has caught two of Australia's biggest retailers in the act of falsely labelling the origin of fruit for sale in two of its Sydney stores. For the first time, both Coles and Woolworths have been caught red-handed by the Food Authority and they should be extremely embarrassed now to have been publicly humiliated by being placed on the name and shame register. It is significant because never before have these two large retailers been caught out like this. The value of our farmers to the economy of New South Wales cannot be overestimated. Fresh fruit and vegetables are grown every year in this great State of ours and they bring about \$1.2 billion into our economy. Our farmers deserve better than to have supermarkets trade on their clean, green reputation by labelling products that have been grown thousands of kilometres away as a product of Australia, and those products ending up on somebody's plate.

Quite often consumers go into a supermarket and look for something labelled "Made in Australia". I know I do and many members in this House and their families certainly would as well. It is extremely disappointing when consumers are misled in this way. I hope that Woolworths and Coles pick up their act. They are big enough to know better. They should exercise absolute vigilance in every single one of their stores so that consumers can maintain confidence in them. I am extremely disappointed with their behaviour. I know that consumers right across the State will be equally as disappointed. The breaches occurred at Coles in St. Marys where grapefruit was sold without a country-of-origin label. It only had a sticker that read "Jaffa". For those of us in the know, we understand that Jaffa is the sister Sydney for Tel Aviv in Israel, but the label did not specify that the product came from of Israel. For most Australians, "Jaffa" would indicate a chocolate-and-orange lolly to roll down aisles. The other example relates to Woolworths in Newington. Lemons that were labelled from Australia—

**Mr Barry O'Farrell:** Like the member for Heffron?

**Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON:** They were actually lemons from the United States of America, but the reason Woolworths breached the legislation is that they were actually labelled as being grown in Australia.

Those are two absolutely shocking examples of our major retailers misleading consumers who want to buy Australian. You could fine these organisations a lot of money. They can afford to pay. Would they learn a lesson from that? We do not know. The important thing is that they have been publicly humiliated throughout the media all day. I hope that having their name put on the name and shame register is a big wake-up call for both of those major retailers. They spend big bucks on marketing campaigns every year. This will be a big step backwards for them. I hope that they realise that they must maintain absolute vigilance in what they do and how they treat the consumers of New South Wales. We are not going to tolerate anything less.

**Question time concluded at 3.10 p.m.**

### **PETITIONS**

**The Clerk announced that the following petitions signed by fewer than 500 persons were lodged for presentation:**

#### **Oxford Street Traffic Arrangements**

Petition requesting the removal of the clearway and introduction of a 40 kilometres per hour speed limit in Oxford Street, received from **Ms Clover Moore**.

#### **Pet Shops**

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

#### **Daylight Saving**

Petition requesting that the daylight savings period be changed from the last Sunday in October to the first Sunday in March, received from **Mr Richard Torbay**.

#### **Public Housing**

Petition requesting that no inner city public housing stock be sold and that funding for public housing maintenance be increased, received from **Ms Clover Moore**.

#### **Mental Health Services**

Petition requesting increased funding for mental health services, received from **Ms Clover Moore**.

#### **National Parks Commercial Development**

Petition opposing proposals for commercial developments in national parks, received from **Ms Clover Moore**.

#### **Australian Military Troops in Afghanistan**

Petition requesting support for Australian troops on active duty in Afghanistan, received from **Mr Thomas George**.

### **PETITIONS**

**The Clerk announced that the following petition signed by more than 500 persons was lodged for presentation:**

#### **Princes Highway Upgrade**

Petition requesting the construction of a roundabout at Princes Highway, Moruya and South Head Road intersection, received from **Mr Andrew Constance**.

### **CONSIDERATION OF MOTIONS TO BE ACCORDED PRIORITY**

#### **Cost of Living**

**Mr STUART AYRES** (Penrith—) [3.12 p.m.]: My motion should be accorded priority for no other reason than the clear message that was sent to the Federal Government on 26 March. That election, without

doubt, was clearly the cost-of-living election. Something very special happened on that day in relation to how people conducted their vote. For the first time in a very long time, in seats right across western Sydney, in Riverstone, Londonderry, Mulgoa and Hawkesbury—right across the State—there was not the angst about a group of people who wanted to throw out a corrupt and old Government; there was a quiet group of people that slowly walked in and did not even bother to collect a how-to-vote slip because they already knew what they were doing.

That is the silent majority, which the Australian Labor Party at State and Federal levels has forgotten, and which it completely forgot in last night's budget. For example, the Federal Budget did away with the funding allocated to the M4 East extension. If you are thinking about cost of living, there is no more significant cost to a family than your ability to spend time with your family, and no M4 East extension ensures that people across western Sydney are spending less time with their family. It is a good opportunity to consider the cost of living over the past 16 years. Since 1995, the cumulative consumer price index has risen by about 46 per cent across the nation. In Sydney, electricity prices have risen by 127 per cent; water bills by 89 per cent; hospital and medical services by 99 per cent; and utilities by 120 per cent. That cost-of-living pressure is the reason why this motion should be given priority.

The other thing we heard last night is the fact that household income of \$150,000 is the new rich. The member for Heffron might have made some comments in the previous election about what was a reasonable amount of income to live on the city of Sydney and right across New South Wales. Only recently it has been identified that you need \$166,000 to be able to purchase a home in this city, and last night we got nothing from the Federal Government, nothing to ease the cost-of-living pressures that impact on families right across this State and, in particular, in western Sydney. In fact, all we got was the opposite. This country does not live on the sheep's back, it does not even live on mineral resources; what it lives on is the silent majority, those silent people in middle Australia who go about their lives day by day just to put bread on the family table and make sure that they can pay their electricity bills.

That is what this priority motion is all about, making sure that the cost of living is at the top of the agenda for the Federal Government, so that the people of New South Wales are no longer let down. The Federal Government is putting a tax on carbon—up to \$2,028 ripped out of the family budget to cover the carbon tax. If you are thinking about health insurance, or if you have decided that you are going to minimise the risk for your family and take out health insurance, and your family income happens to be more than \$150,000—just think about that, two parents, \$75,000 each. I reckon every person in this House has families in their categories that fit into that category. If you earn more than \$150,000, you just miss out on the 30 per cent rebate for health insurance. The Federal Government is actually making it harder for people to look after their families. Those opposite are sitting there, not even thinking about it—even the former health Minister. The Federal Budget will put more pressure on the New South Wales health system because it will take people out of health insurance. Fair dinkum!

And what can be said about the flood tax? The Federal Government is going to tax middle Australia again. Why? Because it could not manage its own budget because it is focusing on taxing middle Australians to cover its costs rather than having suitable expenses and tightening its own belt. The Federal Government should not ask families in western Sydney, on the Central Coast or on the south coast, or struggling families in regional New South Wales to pay for it—they should tighten their own belts! One thing that is pretty clear to me is that Federal Labor has learned how to manage its finances and economy here in New South Wales. They got 16 years of it here and they have taken it to the Federal agenda. Right now this House needs to make sure that this motion is accorded priority because the cost of living for people in New South Wales is out of control and last night's Federal Budget has done absolutely nothing—

**Ms Linda Burney:** What are you going to do about it?

**Mr STUART AYRES:** The member should hang around and listen, because we have a few plans. We are actually debating priority right now. If she stays around to listen, we will give her some plans. State Labor never had any!

*[Interruption]*

That is true. When was the last time the member travelled along the M4? Maybe she has not upgraded her GPS. The motion for priority is to ensure that the cost-of-living pressures on families— *[Time expired.]*

### Parliamentary Budget Office

**Mr JOHN ROBERTSON** (Blacktown) [3.17 p.m.]: My motion for priority reads:

That this House:

- (1) commends the work of the independent Parliamentary Budget Office in scrutinising the financial commitments of both sides of this House; and
- (2) notes that as of today, the Parliamentary Budget Office is no longer staffed, thus further reducing the accountability of this Government.

I speak to this with a sense of *deja vu*, and the reason should be pretty self-evident because, unlike the other motion, this motion actually relates to New South Wales and to this Government. Here we are again witnessing yet another act of vandalism against the accountability of this Government. As you know, Madam Speaker, the Parliamentary Budget Office reports to you, but as it was established under predecessors I believe it is timely to remind the House how and why it was established. The Parliamentary Budget Office was initially a suggestion of the then Opposition Leader, Barry O'Farrell. On 26 March 2010 in a televised debate he challenged the then Premier Kristina Keneally to establish the Parliamentary Budget Office and his exact words are worth recalling:

This issue is really about the costings of promises. And my challenge today is let's level with the public of New South Wales. Let's stop the "he said, she said" approach to scare campaigns that go in costings. Let's put in place an independent process.

The former Premier embraced the challenge. The Labor Government embraced the challenge and set up a genuinely independent source of scrutiny. The Parliament embraced the challenge as the Parliamentary Budget Officer Bill passed through this House and the other place with minor amendments. The member for Manly, No. 44, although he could get jumped and he might be No. 45—they are in discussion over there about who is 44 and who is 45—embraced the challenge, speaking in favour of the bill and the amendments. Most notably, Tony Abbott embraced the challenge. It is worth reminding members of his thoughts on this issue. In a public debate on 2 September 2010 Mr Abbott stated:

It is very important that we have a Parliamentary Budget Office so that means that these issues... [of competing costings] ... are avoided in the future.

Most importantly, in response to the question—

Would you insist both parties have to be costed in the same way ... or would you be free to go your own way again if you didn't agree with it?

Mr Abbott's response was:

I think that if both parties have access to the same resource, then both parties should be costed and judged on the same basis.

Well, hear! Hear! But why did he not tell the Premier, Barry O'Farrell? On 26 October 2010, when this bill was in the middle of consideration—[*Time expired.*]

**Question—That the motion of the member for Penrith be accorded priority—put and resolved in the affirmative.**

### COST OF LIVING

#### Motion Accorded Priority

**Mr STUART AYRES** (Penrith) [3.21 p.m.]: I move:

That this House condemns the Federal Government for failing to use the budget to alleviate the cost of living pressures on the people of New South Wales, particularly those in western Sydney.

This is a very important matter for the people of New South Wales. There was a complete lack of consideration by the Federal Government in last night's budget to alleviate any of the cost of living pressures for families in New South Wales, and in particular those right across western Sydney. As I said earlier, since 1995 the consumer price index across the nation has risen cumulatively by 46.8 per cent. However, in Sydney the cost of living has increased by significantly more. Electricity costs have risen by 127 per cent.

**The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George):** Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber. Members wishing to carry on a conversation should do so outside the Chamber.



**Mr STUART AYRES:** Water bills have risen by 89 per cent, hospital and medical services have risen by 99 per cent and utilities by 120 per cent. Last night's Federal Labor budget did absolutely nothing to ease any of the pressure or the burden on families across western Sydney and, just as importantly, across the rest of this State. In fact, all the Federal Government has done is make it harder for this State and for New South Wales families to make ends meet.

The Federal Government has proposed a carbon tax but they will not tell us anything about it. All we know is that there is the potential for over \$2,000 to be ripped out of the back pockets of families across New South Wales and, from my point of focus, families across western Sydney. The Federal Government also had a good go at the goods and services tax [GST]. New South Wales lost more GST revenue last night because payments are down by \$1.7 billion. That is \$1.7 billion that could have gone to all the things we talk about in this place on a daily basis—roads, hospitals and those pieces of infrastructure that make our daily lives just a little bit better, including parks and improving the local environment and amenity.

Infrastructure spending is another area where the Federal Government decided to have a good old crack at western Sydney. Yes, we are quite happy to see the investment going into the Pacific Highway on the North Coast, but it is not acceptable if it comes at a cost to western Sydney residents. The M4 East is critical to ensuring that people in western Sydney can continue to access the Sydney central business district and the Parramatta region. I know residents of the inner west around Strathfield and Drummoyne and members who represent them also desperately need the M4 East extension. To see this money slip out of the Federal budget is nothing short of a disgrace. What about tax cuts? That is a novel idea, putting some money back into the pockets of families across western Sydney and throughout New South Wales.

**Mr Jai Rowell:** Hear! Hear!

**Mr STUART AYRES:** I acknowledge the interjection of the member for Wollondilly. I am sure some of the families in his electorate would love a tax cut. Last night, for the first time in eight years, we got nothing: no tax cut; no extra money going into the pockets of families across western Sydney. That is despite the fact that inflation is rising faster now than it has in recent times. The forecast inflation rate is up to 2.75 per cent and the Federal Government is doing nothing to relieve the burden on families in western Sydney, not even a small tax cut to make life a little bit easier. All that is happening is they are being asked to pay a little more. I refer to the category of taxpayers above \$150,000: they are the new rich in Sydney. How about that?

If people have a household income of \$150,000 they are the new rich. At that level family tax benefits are restricted. At \$150,000 the Federal Government is ripping out people's family tax benefits. Those people do not get access to the baby bonus, so there is no support from the Federal Government to make it a little easier to meet all the costs that are incurred when a new child arrives in the family. Where does that money come from? It has to come from people's pay packets. People are looking after their mortgages, their increased electricity and water bills and now they will have to dip into their pockets for one more thing because the government support has just been taken away.

The problem is that the Federal Government will not tighten its own belt. It will not look at its own waste and the dodgy projects we have seen—pink batts, the Building the Education Revolution school halls and all those areas where the Government could tighten its belt. That is not happening. The Federal Government is passing the buck to middle Australia, to the silent majority—those people who just get on with their daily lives. We are asking them to carry more and more of the burden. All they want is just a little bit of help, but they got nothing from the Federal Government in last night's budget because it learnt its politics and economics and how to look after families from the New South Wales Labor Party. That is exactly what we got last night, more of that treatment.

We can see that clearly in the spiralling debt. We have talked about house prices and housing affordability in this State. If people continue to spend money they do not have and continue to raise their debt levels they will find there is no free money anywhere. The money has to come from somewhere. When debts continue to mount people pay a price in higher interest rates. The only people whose interest rates are really hammering are families across western Sydney who had to borrow to the limit of their ability and sometimes beyond just to break into the housing market. The average price of a house in Sydney is \$628,000, and you have to have a household income of \$166,000 as a minimum to be able to afford an average house. Guess what? The Federal Government thinks people are rich if they earn that sort of money. In fact, if people earn \$16,000 less than that they are still classed as rich. Come on, Mr Swan, you have been listening to New South Wales Labor for just a little too long.

We on this side have a plan. There has been evidence of it already. Seven days into the parliamentary sitting and the New South Wales Government, led by that dynamic duo in the economic space, O'Farrell and Baird, is already saving money for people across New South Wales. It has got rid of the Torrens assurance levy that was introduced late at night, sucking away at the lifeblood of families like a vampire—a little money here, a little money there if people bought a house worth more than \$500,000. Do members remember that? The average price of a house is \$628,000. We are putting that money back into the pockets of families. For older people who are looking to downsize, those empty-nesters, we have also provided an incentive by reducing the age at which they can access the \$22,000 stamp duty reduction. They are just some of the things that the O'Farrell Government is doing to improve the cost of living for people in New South Wales.

*[Business interrupted.]*

## BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

### Order of Business

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD** (Wakehurst—Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Infrastructure NSW) [3.28 p.m.]: So that members are aware of the order of business this evening, I have just discussed with the Opposition that we will deal with notices of motions for general business at 5.45 p.m. Members who wish to give notices of motions will need to be in the Chamber at that time. At present notices of motions are shown on the order of business at 6.00 p.m., but because of various changes to facilitate the inaugural speeches that will be made tonight they will now be taken at 5.45 p.m. At 5.50 p.m., approximately, there will be a debate on a 10,000-person petition relating to Barangaroo. The member for Sydney will lead the debate on that matter. Other members may or may not be here at that time. That is the order of business for this evening.

**The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George)**: As the Leader of the House has stated, notices of motions for general notices will be taken at 5.45 p.m. and will be followed by the order of the day for discussion on a petition at 5.50 p.m.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD**: As the Clerk has reminded me, at 6.20 p.m. we will commence inaugural speeches and there will be no private members' statements.

## COST OF LIVING

### Motion Accorded Priority

*[Business resumed.]*

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY** (Maroubra) [3.30 p.m.]: I oppose the motion. I have to say that I have never heard such a load of old bunkum as in the speech made by the member for Penrith, who professes to know what hurts working families and what ordinary working families from western Sydney and other parts of the State want and need. If he examined Australian economics from Federation onwards and the ordinary fundamentals of economics and has regard to the way the Federal Government conducted itself throughout the global financial crisis in contrast to the rhetoric of John Howard and Peter Costello beforehand he would know the two things that hurt working families and damage the economy most are unemployment and inflation. Last night the Gillard Government's first Budget addressed inflation and unemployment big time. The Federal Budget will create 500,000 jobs over the next two years. Nothing is more important for working families than that they simply remain working. Nothing destroys societies, communities and families like unemployment—nothing! The creation of 500,000 jobs over the next two years is a very commendable policy. We should congratulate the Federal Government.

The Federal Budget will increase family payments over five years for 650,000 teenagers by up to \$4,200; ensure that low-income earners get more in their pay packets at the rate of \$300 a year instead of having to wait until the end of the year; deliver childcare payments fortnightly to help families with their cash flow; give small businesses a tax break so that they will get a \$5,000 instant write-off for cars, trucks and utes; and cut spending to take pressure off inflation to ensure that the budget does not add to price pressure. The Federal Budget is keeping people in jobs and addressing inflation. Those two priorities are the major features of the Federal Government's Budget, for which it should be commended. This debate provides us with a perfect illustration of the way in which the O'Farrell Government is more interested in pushing Tony Abbott's agenda

than its own. The very simple reason for that is that the O'Farrell Government has not yet worked out its own agenda. It is shackled to election promises and comes into this House to deliver them in dribs and drabs. The O'Farrell Government does not yet have an agenda for the economy of the State or for infrastructure spending.

Today I heard all the bunkum during Question Time from various Ministers, particularly from the Treasurer, about what this Government will do and how he will use his magic pudding in the first term of government to build the things the Government has promised. The Treasurer referred to a magic pudding during one of his more forgettable press conferences when prompted by Kevin Wilde from Channel 9. It is obvious the O'Farrell Government does not have an agenda other than crowing about bogus budget black holes, cutting jobs and privatising. It is becoming clearer every day that the Coalition would still prefer to be in opposition. Coalition members are still acting as though they are in opposition. In contrast to that, Labor members welcome the Gillard Government's Federal Budget, which outlines a pathway that will lead more Australians back to work. Five hundred thousand jobs is no laughing matter. The Federal Budget is good news for the people of New South Wales.

Families in this State will benefit from Commonwealth Government initiatives to move more people into employment and into 130,000 training places that are tailored to the skills shortage needs of industries in New South Wales and other areas in the nation. The Federal Budget is about jobs and leading people to work. I understand why the Federal Government's major jobs boost is not viewed favourably by the O'Farrell Government: the O'Farrell Government is about cutting jobs, not creating them, despite being embarrassed—"embarrassed" is as gentle a term as I can think of—by its fictitious assertion of a budget black hole being completely debunked by many esteemed journalists in New South Wales, such as Ross Gittins, Imre Salusinszky and others. Those journalists and others continue to debunk this lie. The fact is that while the Federal Labor Government is busy creating jobs and opportunities for New South Wales families the O'Farrell Government is softening the ground to prepare the people of New South Wales for massive job cuts in September when its first budget is presented.

The Federal budget includes \$100 million for the Sustainable Australia–Suburban Jobs initiative to create job opportunities in major suburban areas. The suburban jobs initiative is a huge boost for western Sydney. It will help to support and create new jobs in hubs such as Parramatta, Penrith and Blacktown. I am not sure that the member for Penrith understands that. He should thank the Federal Government for it. The program aims to boost employment, manufacturing and new business development in large residential areas such as western Sydney. It is an excellent opportunity for that region. We all want the option to work close to our home and family, and this initiative will provide employment centres so that more western Sydney residents will have the opportunity to do that.

The Federal budget includes a strong investment in regional New South Wales hospitals. The State Government can stop crowing about its infrastructure investment which is funded by Federal money. The Federal budget has provided \$160 million for the Bega Valley Health Service integrated healthcare facility; \$120 million for the Tamworth hospital upgrades; \$96 million for the Port Macquarie Base Hospital redevelopment; \$65 million for an Albury-Wodonga cancer centre; \$55 million for Wagga Wagga Base Hospital works; and \$7 million for the Dubbo Base Hospital redevelopment. We also welcome key aspects of the budget, which include \$1 billion for the Pacific Highway duplication.

Enough of the rubbish that Labor has contributed nothing to the Pacific Highway! In 10 years of the Howard Government it contributed a measly \$1.5 billion despite amassing surpluses of up to \$22 billion. In 10 years all the Howard Government could give this State for Liberal and Nationals electorates along the Pacific Highway was \$1.5 billion. Guess what? I have news for the Deputy Premier. That funding was matched dollar for dollar under the AusLink agreement by the previous Labor Government to the tune of \$1.5 billion. Since that time \$618 million has been provided for the Kempsey bypass and other projects. I could go on. The Government should stop making excuses in relation to the Pacific Highway.

**Mr BRYAN DOYLE** (Campbelltown) [3.37 p.m.]: I support the motion moved by my friend the member for Penrith. Budgets are about looking after families. They are about ensuring that people are able to buy a home, obtain health care, access transport, have children and feed their children. Nothing in the Federal budget helps Australian families. It seems the Federal Government is at war with middle Australia. The enemy has become those who get ahead through hard work. The Liberal Party encourages incentive and encourages people to work whereas Labor creates disincentives and taxes people out of existence. I do not know when having an income of \$150,000 made a family the enemy or a target. In 2008, \$150,000 was the salary level on which funding the purchase of a home in Sydney was based. Currently that figure is \$166,000.

People who receive that level of income are unable to purchase a home and have become the enemy. The member for Maroubra contends that the Federal budget creates jobs, but it is difficult to support the proposition when the proposed carbon tax is taken into account. That will rip \$2,000 from family incomes. There are not many families who can sustain that loss of income. The recent State election largely centred on the cost of living. The Federal budget takes away the family benefit. If couples decide to have a baby the Federal budget will take the baby bonus from them. It is as though the Federal Government does not want people having babies; rather, it wants people to work. What else can the Federal Government rip off families? What about a flood levy of \$750?

**Mr Stuart Ayres:** Taking away maternity leave provisions as well.

**Mr BRYAN DOYLE:** Taking leave provisions off them is not family friendly. The flood levy will rip another \$750 out of their pockets because the Federal Government's own budget would not fund the expenditure. It should be remembered also that the hardworking families of south-west Sydney donated a whole lot of money to the people devastated by those floods. Yet again the Federal Government rips into people's pockets for another \$750 million. Let us not forget other waste in which the Federal Government engaged: the Building the Education Revolution [BER] Program managed by our friends opposite. The pink bats episode not only wasted money but also actually resulted in deaths. What a shame. This budget is bad to families and targets them. This budget has the potential not only to make the economy worse but also to reduce jobs, making it difficult for average working families to get ahead. I commend the motion.

**Mr RYAN PARK** (Keira) [3.40 p.m.]: Here we have a newly elected Coalition Government that claimed urgent needs for State issues, such as roads and hospitals, yet for the second day we are taking up the time of this House to focus on Federal politics. Let us look first at the reaction to the budget from those who are not at the behest of Tony Abbott. Let us hear what the experts have to say. We see a solid report for a sound and balanced budget. We see good news also for the people of New South Wales, news that that lot opposite want to sweep under the rug. Jessica Wright from the *Sydney Morning Herald* wrote:

NSW has emerged as the big winner in Tuesday's budget, with an injection of \$2.2 billion to fix some of the state's most notorious road black spots and rail corridors.

I repeat: a \$2.2 billion injection. She continued:

The freight rail network through Sydney's northern suburbs to Newcastle will be upgraded, at a cost of \$840 million—

[Interruption]

**Mr RYAN PARK:** Be careful because she goes on to say:

—giving Barry O'Farrell his first major policy victory since taking office.

A great victory to Barry O'Farrell delivered by Federal Labor. He promised the people of New South Wales that he would be the man to get them a better deal from Canberra. I will return to that promise in a moment because all of us on this side remember him carping on about it. Let us hear more from the experts. Jennifer Westacott, chief executive, Business Council of Australia—I would say she is one of their lot—said:

This is a sound Budget to support a stronger future. It has the right mix of spending restraint and measures to support growth, such as the skills package and the focus on infrastructure.

Heather Ridout, chief executive, Australian Industry Group, said:

We believe this budget is very solid on the fundamentals. It makes a solid investment in skills, a really headline issue for the Australian Industry Group.

The budget fundamentals, in terms of responsibility, getting the budget back into surplus, I think will take pressure off interest rates in the longer term.

Steven Hess, vice president and senior credit officer, Moody's said:

We think return to a surplus by 2012/13 is still in place and it's a positive. This supports our triple A rating of the Australian government.

The lot opposite were left with a triple-A credit rating.

**Mr Michael Daley:** Say thank you again.

**Mr RYAN PARK:** As the member for Maroubra said, say thank you. Nailing the real purpose of this debate, respected economist Ross Gittens wrote:

Every budget contains things to criticise but, overall, this one is good.

He goes on:

It's tougher and more courageous than all but the first of the 12 budgets the now-sainted Peter Costello delivered.

That was one of the Coalition's budgets. Ross Gittens continued:

Tony Abbott will be righteous in his condemnation—but the man's so relentlessly negative he would have ripped into the budget whichever way Gillard jumped, adjusting his criticism to fit.

True to form, the Abbott line came out, and it bears remarkable similarity to the wording of the Government's motion. Either the member cut and pasted the words after reading today's news summaries or perhaps just let Canberra dictate the motion. Who knows? If the Government wants to ignore the views of those who are, quite frankly, in a better and less-partial position to judge this budget and if it wants to insist that the budget is a dud for western Sydney it should look to nowhere but its side because the Premier went to Canberra on 9 February and told the National Press Club that he would get a better deal for New South Wales. If this is not a better deal only one group should be blamed, which is that lot opposite. [*Time expired.*]

**Mr STUART AYRES** (Penrith) [3.45 p.m.], in reply: I thank members for their contributions to this debate. I am encouraged that at least someone in the leadership group on the other side of the House cares about western Sydney, because the Leader of the Opposition ignored any opportunity to talk about the cost of living pressures on western Sydney families. At least the member for Maroubra has shown more commitment to that part of Sydney than the current leader. In response to the comments of the member for Keira about Barry O'Farrell getting a better deal from the Federal Government, the first component of our roads investment clarifies that achievement already. We have been here only 50 days and already have plans in place to get better deals from the Federal Government than the previous Government did.

**Mr Nathan Rees:** You always blame this on public transport.

**Mr STUART AYRES:** Yes, that is right.

**Mr Nathan Rees:** You have nothing on trains.

**Mr STUART AYRES:** Welcome back! The member for Maroubra and the member for Toongabbie represent western Sydney much better than the member for Blacktown ever will. The impact of that \$750 on a two-parent household with a \$75,000 income, with the reduction of the health rebate from 30 per cent to 20 per cent, places more costs on families. Add to that the cost of raising a child with the loss of the baby bonus, family tax reductions, and reduced maternity leave provisions for families with two incomes of \$75,000. These additional cost burdens make it more difficult for families to meet living expenses. Menzies called them the forgotten people. They are now the silent majority who voted without doubt and without making a fuss on 26 March when they walked into the polling booths silently going about their business. They had been let down by the previous Government and were let down by the Federal Government in last night's budget.

The Federal Government budget contains absolutely nothing to give the people of western Sydney any opportunity to lower their cost of living pressures. They are struggling under mortgage stress. Nothing has been done across the Federal sphere to lower prices to make housing more affordable. This State Government has done something about that already: it started to put money back into the pockets of families across New South Wales and western Sydney by introducing bills to help empty-nesters and to remove the Torrens title levy. This Government will continue to find ways to put money back in the pockets of people across New South Wales. This State Government listened to the messages from people across western Sydney.

Finally, on 26 March the people of western Sydney had someone listening to them after 16 years of no listening, of neglect, of infrastructure shortfalls and nothingness, no extensions to the M4 east, nothing to make housing more affordable and nothing to reduce the cost of living pressures for anyone in that part of Sydney or across New South Wales. Last night, once again, the Federal budget has done absolutely nothing to ease cost of living pressures. All it is doing is increasing those costs by adding more taxes such as the flood tax, the carbon tax, removing the baby bonus, and reducing the family tax benefit and maternity leave provisions. Of all things, that is not a measure that one would want to attack.

We did not touch on the price of electricity and the price of water. Child care is another cost that the Federal Government did nothing about. It provided no support for families with child care costs. Last night's Federal Budget was a typical Labor budget—all about tax, tax, tax and spend, spend, spend. That is all Federal Labor is doing. That puts nothing but pressure on interest rates. Federal Labor cannot tighten its own belt, so it has shifted the pressure onto middle Australia and western Sydney—taxing, taxing, taxing and spending, spending, spending. I ask Mr Swan: why don't you tighten your own belt instead of asking middle Australia to do it for you?

**Question—That the motion be agreed to—put and resolved in the affirmative.**

**Motion agreed to.**

## **GOVERNOR'S SPEECH: ADDRESS-IN-REPLY**

### **Fourth Day's Debate**

**Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

**Ms PRU GOWARD** (Goulburn—Minister for Family and Community Services, and Minister for Women) [3.51 p.m.]: I am pleased to have this opportunity to respond to the Governor's Speech, which was so beautifully delivered a week ago and so overwhelmingly and comprehensively described the agenda of the new Government. As the member for Goulburn, I am particularly pleased to welcome the initiative to create 100,000 jobs in New South Wales, 40 per cent of which will be in regional New South Wales. Regional New South Wales has a great deal to offer people relocating from the overcrowded cities of the Newcastle-Sydney-Wollongong corridor, and it has a great deal to offer families who want to be confident that their children will grow up in safe surroundings.

Goulburn, for example, has one of the lowest crime rates in New South Wales. It is part of being in rural and regional New South Wales. It is one of the communities where people look out for each other, where people know each other, and where there is not such an intensity of living that people cease to care about one another. This is what rural and regional New South Wales can offer people from around Australia but in particular from other parts of this State. Undoubtedly, the 40 per cent of new jobs created in regional and rural New South Wales will be of particular benefit to the city of Goulburn and of course the beautiful Southern Highlands.

The stamp duty changes, which will encourage people to relocate to rural areas, will further augment the policy of promoting development in regional and rural New South Wales. As has previously been observed, the removal of the Torrens title levy for empty-nesters also will encourage people who, in thinking about retirement, might seek to shift to a safe, decent community such as the communities of Goulburn and the Southern Highlands. They will be able to do so with some change in their pockets to augment their standard of living, enabling them to buy in rural New South Wales what is invariably a very high quality of housing compared with the housing available for comparable money that they would be able to afford in metropolitan New South Wales and Sydney, particularly after years and years of under-delivery of new housing in metropolitan New South Wales.

Another issue that arises out of this regional and rural focus is that it is a deliberate part of Government considerations that regional and rural concerns should be reflected in government policy. As the education Minister has made clear on a number of occasions, including at his first Ministerial Council meeting, we are determined to close the gap between achievements of students in our regional and rural areas compared with those in metropolitan Sydney. It is a matter of shame that New South Wales should have such a significant gap in NAPLAN testing, and we need to address that as a matter of urgency. We need to see more tertiary education facilities and a substantial enhancement of TAFE facilities in regional and rural New South Wales—all of which is possible when the State has a Government that has a preponderance of rural and regional members, and a Cabinet that has a particularly regional and rural focus. I do not think that that means that metropolitan Sydney will be forgotten. It means that this is a Cabinet and a Government that understand that regional and remote development is important for two reasons. It is important for the areas themselves, but it is also important as a way of taking some of the living pressures off Sydney and providing the people of New South Wales with an expanded range of options on where they should live.

I move to the matter of transport. One cannot really talk about regional development if one is not able to ensure people can move around and from their areas to doctors' appointments in Sydney, or for that matter

Canberra. I was delighted that the transport Minister announced—as was subsequently confirmed—that there will be additional express trains from Campbelltown. That will mean that the Southern Highlands and Goulburn line will better serve people who need to move in and out of Sydney for appointments and even for work. There will be extra beds for the Sydney South Area Health Services as well as extra nurses. All of this contributes to enhancing the standard of living of people in the Goulburn electorate. Of course, there is much work left to be done by rural and regional members like myself. The lobbying never stops. But I think it is a very good start and a very refreshing change to have an emphasis and a focus on New South Wales as a whole and to recognise that the problems of metropolitan Sydney cannot be fixed without developing and addressing the problems of regional and remote New South Wales.

The people of Goulburn overwhelmingly will be assisted, not just by this but I believe by a Government that has come in with a particular focus on improved accountability, transparency and honesty. Any constituent and any elector in New South Wales would want to think that they can have confidence and trust in the government that runs the State. Overwhelmingly, the O'Farrell-Stoner Government was elected on a platform of restoring trust, and that is to the benefit of all members of the Parliament. It is of benefit to all members of every community in New South Wales, and the members of the communities of Goulburn and the Southern Highlands are no exception. They too will grow in confidence as they see the new Government delivering on its commitment to accountability, honesty and reform.

**Mr NATHAN REES** (Toongabbie) [3.57 p.m.]: I speak on the Address-in-Reply to the Governor's Speech on the Opening of the Fifty-fifth Parliament on Tuesday 3 May 2011. Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir continues to perform wonderfully in that role, and I warmly congratulate her. She is a jewel in the New South Wales crown. Her Excellency outlined in her Speech the O'Farrell Government's platform for this term of government of New South Wales. Regrettably, it is a platform that is long on motherhood statements of reform and very short on detail, in particular detail on the savage budget cuts to public services that will be needed to fund the so-called reform plan.

In particular, the Government has outlined addressing the cost of living as a key part of its platform. This is a feeble attempt by the Liberal wets to water down the scorched earth economic policy of this deeply conservative Government. In fact, the plan to address the cost of living consists simply of a rebate to families to address the rising cost of electricity, which will be funded by restructure of the electricity industry. Only after this process is undertaken will any savings be directed to rebate measures. This process will fund a rebate of up to \$150 for families receiving family tax benefit part A or part B, and a low-income household rebate of up to \$235. So it is typical of the wishy-washy commitments and undertakings given by the Government, dangling what appear to be carrots but upon closer inspection identified more as peas.

I contrast this with the proposal that Labor took to the election, which was to provide a \$250 energy rebate to households with incomes under \$150,000; to cap transport fares for this year and a commitment to increases no higher than the consumer price index; to cap a range of government fees and charges, including stamp duties, land tax, motor vehicle tax and car registration fees, among others; and a promise to keep Sydney Water in public hands. What the Premier has previously called "class warfare", we call it simply a fair go for working people. I compare that with the policy and program on which the Coalition is seeking to congratulate itself: the Coalition's energy rebate will leave 1.7 million households worse off than the energy rebate that would have been delivered if Labor had been returned.

Hundreds of families will miss out on valuable financial support. All working families will be worse off under the Government's pale imitation of Labor's proposals. Those families are entitled to ask why the Government does not meet their need for assistance with their energy bills or believe that they deserve support. But they will not get any answers from the Government today; instead, they will get a self-congratulatory message of watered-down policy that simply will not offer the support that thousands of working families across New South Wales are entitled to and need.

**Mr Stephen Bromhead:** You sold the electricity.

**Mr NATHAN REES:** We will come to that later. In response to interjections about the Government's five-point plan, I ask: "What about it indeed?" Government members, especially the new ones, might believe that the five-point action plan will fix everything. But I will point out a couple of problems with it. Point one of the plan is to rebuild the New South Wales economy—a triple-A rated economy with an unemployment rate of less than 5 per cent. By any definition, that is a healthy economy. The 2010-11 budget was forecast to be \$773 million in surplus. The Government has repeatedly persisted with this fairytale. Every time the Treasurer

speaks he should say, "Once upon a time", because the fairytale of black holes to which he has alluded is nonsense, and it has been found to be nonsense by two independent reports by Michael Lambert and the Parliamentary Budget Office. Both of them are independent and one of them in particular is not aligned to Labor.

Coalition members had 16 years in Opposition to come up with something solid on economic reform to the finances of this State, and they wheeled out the tired, old black hole trick. It has been shown for what it is. The accounting does not add up. The Treasurer and the Premier have failed their first test and misled the people of New South Wales. They would be better served by being honest with the people of New South Wales and saying that they are committed to cutting the cost of living with public services and the availability of those public services.

Point two of the five-point plan is that the Government is committed to "return quality services in health, transport, education and community safety". I wonder what the good women and men of the New South Wales public service who are arresting people, teaching our children and administering to the ill in our hospital system have been doing to date. At the very least, it would be naïve for the Government to claim that public servants alone or government agencies alone could provide quality services without working together. Let us look at the independent and objective indicators of service delivery in New South Wales. For example, on-time running times for trains were at 96.4 per cent the last time I looked—the best it has been in more than a decade. So not a lot of improvement is required there.

We commenced construction of the south-west rail link and secured a commitment to the Parramatta to Epping rail link project with the Federal Government. We introduced MyZone—the first time in living memory that a government has reduced transport fares. I was proud to be chair of the budget committee that made that decision. We established the popular red metro bus services around Sydney, giving greatly improved network coverage, and free transport shuttle buses in New South Wales in Wollongong, Newcastle, Gosford and Sydney's suburbs. The New South Wales health system is the biggest in Australia and one of the best in the world, and provides service at a high level. But it will always have challenges. Those challenges will require much more than the glib answers and proposals we have been hearing from the health Minister.

I am confident of the excellent service provided in the New South Wales public education system as it was managed under Labor. I hope that the new Minister will continue that commitment. We applaud the Government's commitment to boost resources for a literacy and numeracy action plan by \$250 million. I hope that the system does not descend into a farce, as it did under Terry Metherell, when some 50,000 people protested only yards from this place. Community safety was greatly resourced under Labor. New South Wales has the fourth largest police force of any jurisdiction in the world—an authorised strength of some 16,000 officers—and crime statistics are either stable or falling. The Liberal-Nationals Government inherited a State in which crime was stable or falling in all 17 key categories, and it should be deeply grateful that the people of New South Wales live in a very safe State.

The Government's philosophical compass points in terms of law and order are unclear. Recently the Attorney General foreshadowed that he wants to close jails, reduce recidivism rates and increase rehabilitation. The police Minister is running around saying that people will be locked up, moved on and so on. We have yet to work out the Government's philosophy on law and order. The Government will continue services such as the excellent "Stronger Together" 10-year disability services plan, which was developed under Labor. If memory serves, the new Minister has committed to continuing that. Many good measures put in place by the Labor Government will be continued but there is not enough space to fit them into a five-point plan. There is no mention of the environment in the plan, yet New South Wales has a very proud record on that.

**Debate adjourned on motion by Mr Andrew Rohan and set down as an order of the day for a later hour.**

#### **REAL PROPERTY AMENDMENT (TORRENS ASSURANCE LEVY REPEAL) BILL 2011**

**Message received from the Legislative Council returning the bill with an amendment.**

**Consideration of Legislative Council's amendment set down as an order of the day for a future day.**

*[The Deputy-Speaker (Mr Thomas George) left the chair at 4.08 p.m. The House resumed at 5.45 p.m.]*



**OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR OF THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION****Report**

**The Speaker** tabled, pursuant to section 78 of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988, the report entitled "Report of an audit of applications for and execution of Surveillance Device Warrants and Retrieval Warrants by the Independent Commission Against Corruption", dated April 2011.

**Ordered to be printed.**

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

**General Business Notices of Motions (General Notices) given.**

*[During the giving of notices of motions.]*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I advise the member for Lakemba that while I accept the motion of which he has given notice, he should refer to instructions relating to framing notices of motions. Notices should not be lengthy.

**DUTIES AMENDMENT (SENIOR'S PRINCIPAL PLACE OF RESIDENCE DUTY EXEMPTION)  
BILL 2011**

**Message received from the Legislative Council returning the bill without amendment.**

**SYDNEY FORESHORE PLANNING****Discussion on Petition Signed by 10,000 or More Persons**

**Ms CLOVER MOORE** (Sydney) [5.53 p.m.]: Barangaroo is a unique harbour-side site adjacent to the city. It will provide a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to create new foreshore parks and walkways that integrate with the central business district as well as needed office accommodation, housing, shops and cultural venues. This project is Sydney's opportunity to lead the world in design excellence and in creating a sustainable low-carbon community. Last week I presented a petition to the House signed by over 11,000 people from my Sydney electorate and across the wider Sydney and New South Wales community. The petition expressed significant concern about process, consultation, design and environmental impacts that need to be addressed. I welcome Minister Hazzard's commitment to hear the community's views and to review the Barangaroo project to achieve a better outcome.

So far the project has been railroaded under a secretive planning process that has lacked accountability and transparency. Barangaroo should have been planned in an accountable and consultative way by the City of Sydney as the city planning authority, with public meetings and open debate, plans clearly explained and discussed, and public comment progressively documented and acted upon. Instead, decisions were made by successive Ministers under part 3A, which has been an ongoing abuse of our planning laws, promoting backroom dealing that excluded communities. I led opposition to part 3A in this House and have opposed it every step of the way.

**Mr Brad Hazzard:** I thought the Liberal Party did that.

**Ms CLOVER MOORE:** So I ask the new Government to act on its commitment to scrap part 3A. I call for a planning system overhaul that restores real community involvement, confidence and strong environmental and heritage protection. Equally, it is urgent that the Government publicly guarantee safe and effective site remediation for Barangaroo. The site is severely contaminated and existing project approvals do not ensure the harbour is protected from pollution, nor do they transparently provide for effective remediation to protect future workers, residents and visitors. Earlier this year the former Minister for Planning transferred control of Hickson Road from the City of Sydney to the Barangaroo Delivery Authority, removing council's oversight of the clean-up of contamination. The Minister also changed the law to overturn a court challenge so that normal contamination processes do not apply to the site.

I ask the Government to reinstate State Environmental Planning Policy 55 and require the proponent to demonstrate how remediation will comply with the Contaminated Land Management Act. Notwithstanding previous approvals and contracts, I call upon the Government to make changes to the project that will address significant impacts on Darling Harbour and adjacent city buildings. Currently the approved concept plan will result in a development that is too big and bulky, and will block winter sun to the King Street wharf waterfront promenade. While the proposed hotel in the water has significant and unsustainable impacts, including overshadowing the waterfront promenade during lunchtime in winter and increased wind effects along the foreshore, no project approval has been given and the City of Sydney's assessment has identified a location on land in block 3 that can accommodate the floor space approved for the hotel.

Two of the three commercial towers—C3 and C5—have not received detailed project approval and could be remodelled to significantly improve development outcomes. Industry and the wider community support the petitioners' call to retain the Cruise Passenger Terminal on the site. It is an appropriate use from both a heritage and a tourism perspective, and it can be achieved while providing extensive new open space and needed development. In contrast to decades of best practice in other world cities, Sydney has persisted in embarking on large urban renewal projects such as Barangaroo and Green Square without guaranteed delivery of public transport before new workers and residents move into the development. I ask the Government to commit to increasing public transport, including extending light rail to the site. The estimated 30,000 workers coming daily to Barangaroo will not be accommodated by existing road or public transport. It is essential that there are improved pedestrian links to heavy rail, as well as new ferry terminals and light rail integrated into the project's construction.

While I understand that the Government has indicated that it does not endorse the petition's proposed special commission of inquiry, I ask that it at least undertake an expert review of the project. A review by persons with relevant design, financial and administrative expertise, such as the New South Wales Government Architect, could identify further practical strategies to improve financial, design and sustainability outcomes. Significant opportunities remain for improvements, including renewed public engagement. I joined the Barangaroo Delivery Authority Board in 2009 to try to get better outcomes for the project using City of Sydney expertise. I left the board last year because the process had become unaccountable: it had lost transparency and was not consultative. The last straw was when basic financial information was hidden as commercial in confidence. I could not support this omission. My 2005 Freedom of Information (Open Government—Disclosure of Contracts) Bill required publication of government contracts with the private sector.

I ask the Government to release full financial and contractual information for the project and also ensure that the commitment that the site be carbon positive under the Clinton Climate Initiative Program is honoured. This means the development will be zero carbon and water positive and have zero waste. The City of Sydney has taken a strong position with the Barangaroo project with respect to transport, urban design, sustainability, connection with the central business district, an active waterfront and site remediation. Three community meetings were held in different parts of the city to explain the proposals and to document feedback. We used the expertise of our planning staff to make detailed submissions every step of the way and we developed an alternative proposal that would provide improved design and amenity without compromising the viability of the project. Barangaroo is public land. It abuts on an iconic waterway and significant public funding will be necessary to make it work and integrate with the rest of the city. Finally, I call upon the Government to get Barangaroo back on track and to make it the best it can be with transparency, accountability, public engagement and quality urban design that respects city surroundings and has high environmental standards.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD** (Wakehurst—Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Infrastructure NSW) [5.59 p.m.]: The O'Farrell Government acknowledges that this is the first debate in this Chamber initiated by a petition of more than 10,000 people. It is appropriate then to reflect on this debate as another clear indicator of the commitment of the O'Farrell Liberal-Nationals Government to transparency, to open debate, and to ensuring the community voice is heard at the very heart of government in this State. It did not happen under Labor. It would never happen under Labor because Labor in New South Wales is committed to backroom deals, and self-interest.

Some things in this State are too important to be tarnished with the stench that surrounds New South Wales Labor. Barangaroo is a project that deserves better than Labor has done to it. Barangaroo is a once in a generation opportunity for this State. Barangaroo offers so much to the people of New South Wales and the Government is determined to get it right. We will ensure that the citizens of New South Wales know that we are getting it right and that we have listened to their concerns over Barangaroo. In doing so, we will give business in Sydney, business in New South Wales, business in Australia and business across the world the confidence to want to do business in this State.

Let me make this very clear—Barangaroo is vitally important for this State. Its potential is to deliver private sector investment worth \$6 billion. When it opens it will ensure New South Wales is competing in the world financial market. We intend that Barangaroo will be the place where the world wants to come to do business. The O'Farrell Government anticipates that the stand-out companies of Australia, indeed the world, will take their place in the magnificent new financial-business sector that will be Barangaroo. But the O'Farrell Government is determined to ensure that Barangaroo will be much more. It will have the finest parklands, it will be a people place, and of course that it will be a magnet for business and the community.

What we now have to do as a Government is ensure that we consider closely what Labor has done, where Labor has failed, and where Labor has challenged the confidence of the community in the process. But the O'Farrell Government also understands that New South Wales, indeed Australia, needs the Barangaroo development to proceed expeditiously. The jobs that come with Barangaroo, the financial stimulus that comes with Barangaroo and the enhanced reputation of Sydney as a world financial capital are all critical to ensuring the people of New South Wales get value out of this magnificent 22-hectare site.

Whilst the Government recognises that citizens have the right to legally challenge aspects of the Barangaroo development approval process, we will explore all reasonable ways to offer the opportunity to mediate on concerns related to those proceedings. One issue that is of serious concern to the Government is that of the actions of the former Minister for Planning in belatedly removing the obligation of the applicant that was otherwise required under State Environmental Planning Policy 55—the contamination remediation SEPP. On 3 March 2011, months after the commencement of the Land and Environment Court proceedings by the group known as Australians for Sustainable Development, and just days before the conclusion of those court proceedings, the Minister unilaterally removed legal obligations to remediate the site, as required under State Environmental Planning Policy 55. This action was reminiscent of the former Premier's proroguing of Parliament to stop proper scrutiny of the sale of the electricity industry. It was an inappropriate use of ministerial power, and inappropriate in the context of ensuring that processes around the approval of Barangaroo are unassailable.

As a result I make clear that I have discussed with Lend Lease the Government's strong expectation that there will be full compliance with the normal cleanup criteria required under the State Environmental Planning Policy—as if it had not been amended. Lend Lease is a company of world-class reputation, one of the nation's business leaders. It is a leader in sustainability and innovation, and its contribution to the urban fabric of this State is valued by the New South Wales Government. Lend Lease has assured me that it will in all ways comply with the Government's requirement. Most importantly, it has confirmed to me that it was always Lend Lease's intention to comply.

This compliance will involve the preparation of a remediation action plan, and with it a human health and ecological risk assessment will also be completed, in the shortest possible time frame. Those two documents will then be audited by an independent, Environment Protection Authority accredited site remediation auditor. The auditor's assessment of these reports will then be forwarded to the Environment Protection Authority and then to me as Minister. The Government will ensure that there is absolute transparency about this process. Barangaroo is too important to New South Wales to slow the processes that are needed to bring it to reality—it is far too important to allow any doubts about the integrity of the process.

The Government is intent on working with the proponent to achieve the best outcome in the southern precinct. There is much more work to be done in the middle and northern precincts. We recognise that we are coming into this process after it is well advanced on the headland park, and we will work to ensure the best outcomes in that regard and in the middle precinct area. New South Wales, Sydney and the world can be assured Barangaroo will have a great outcome. It will be an incredible adornment to our great, international city of Sydney. This Government is absolutely determined to make sure it happens.

**Ms LINDA BURNEY** (Canterbury) [6.06 p.m.]: Barangaroo is a once in a century opportunity to reinvigorate Sydney's position as a city. It will strengthen our role in the Asia-Pacific by generating jobs, boosting the economy and creating a new place to live, work and visit. Early construction works at Barangaroo have already started and the project will support 3,000 construction jobs over the next decade. When it is complete more than 23,000 workers and residents and over 33,000 visitors are expected each day. The transformation of Barangaroo, including the creation of a new headland park, will be funded at no cost to the community or the Government. The total cost of generating a whole new headland for our spectacular harbour will be paid for by the development of Barangaroo South by Lend Lease.

More than 50 per cent of the entire Barangaroo site will be public open space, as will the entire foreshore of this section of Sydney that has been closed off from the public for over a century. It will fully remediate a polluted site and make it fit again for public use. Barangaroo will be one of the first districts in the world to be climate positive, which is defined as being carbon neutral, water positive and zero waste. It is one of only 17 projects in the world that are certified by the Clinton Climate Change Initiative. That is the outcome that the Labor Government has pursued at Barangaroo. And it is, I note, an outcome on which we had bipartisan support through the passage of the Barangaroo Delivery Authority Act.

As we would expect for such a significant project, the planning and consultation process has been extensive. In 2005 the Government announced an international urban design competition. Out of 137 entries from around the world one was awarded a winner's badge and another a high commendation. Significant to one of the issues now under debate is the fact that in awarding these prizes the jury members expressly noted that they wanted the Government to pursue ways to incorporate ideas from the commended scheme into the winning scheme. Following a public exhibition process a concept plan was approved by the planning Minister in February 2007 with conditions requiring that the creation of a headland park, a northern cove and a larger southern cove be part of the approval. In February 2009 a concept plan amendment was also approved, following public consultation, adding 120,000 square metres to four development blocks within the existing envelopes. The concept plan was further amended in November 2009 to further refine the headland park and northern cove. And there has been significant public consultation undertaken in relation to the project since then.

Since 20 December 2009 more than 13,000 people have viewed plans for Barangaroo either in person or online, attended community forums and participated in online discussion forums. There have been more than 100 meetings, briefings, presentations and discussions with many parts of the community, including, importantly, the business community. This was a milestone for public information on a development agreement of this kind. Those elements of the agreement that were excluded were in the overriding public interest to protect the competitiveness of tendering processes for future works.

The Barangaroo Delivery Authority has conducted research across greater Sydney showing a high level of public support and enthusiasm for this great new foreshore quarter. More than 2,200 people across Sydney were interviewed. The research demonstrates that 87 per cent felt that Barangaroo would provide new ways to enjoy the harbour, 85 per cent felt that the new parks would give them a chance to get closer to the water, and 80 per cent said that they would enjoy Barangaroo with their family. In addition to personal benefits, most people interviewed understood the economic imperatives in this project. Indeed, they are right. I think we all agree that it is a positive step for Sydney. The development has been seven years in the making.

The architect, Lord Richard Rogers, and the landscape architect, Peter Walker, are arguably the best in the world. This is a great green gift for Sydney and a boost to the careers and opportunities of our citizens, all at no cost to them. Of course, like any great undertaking, Barangaroo attracts controversy and critics, who are passionate people. That is a good thing. It shows the passion for Sydney and for our harbour. I welcome any such debate, and do so confidently knowing that the outcomes we have achieved at Barangaroo so far and the process by which we achieved them are both world class. Any large urban development is controversial, but in the end they mostly all work out.

**Mr CRAIG BAUMANN** (Port Stephens—Parliamentary Secretary) [6.11 p.m.]: As the Parliamentary Secretary Assisting the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, I am delighted to have this opportunity to take part in the first discussion in this Chamber on a petition presented by 10,000 or more people, which is another policy initiative of the O'Farrell-Stoner Coalition Government. It is particularly significant that this debate is about one of the most significant developments this State has seen in many years. Barangaroo is a name that was not well known just a few years ago. But it has been part of the history of this State and part of the birth of Sydney, and will soon be a major part of Sydney's future. Indeed, far more than just Sydney's future, it will be an integral part of the future for New South Wales, and moreover Australia.

It is sad to think that Labor's legacy is that more than 10,000 people felt it necessary to sign a petition and express concern about the future of Barangaroo. What they are concerned about though is the past. They are concerned about what has gone on under the State Labor Government that has just been removed from office. They are really saying that they do not trust Labor's various processes to date. I can say, however, that the reputation of Lend Lease is much more positive than that of State Labor. Lend Lease has been a world market leader in delivering the development that is necessary to provide jobs and a strong economy.

I understand that Lend Lease was founded in Sydney in 1958. What a great opportunity this great city has now to have a great Australian company establish a financial centre here, just a stone's throw away from this, the mother of parliaments in Australia. But there is no getting away from the concerns that have been created by Labor's too-smart-by-half, behind-closed-doors decisions, particularly around the recent changes to the contamination remediation State environmental planning policy [SEPP]. The Minister has delivered a very clear statement as to what the Government will expect in relation to compliance with the clean-up criteria of the SEPP—it is as though former Labor Minister Kelly had not removed the obligation to comply.

Labor does not understand business. It never has and it never will. Our great business enterprises require certainty. Lend Lease should have been given that certainty and should not have been left in the twilight zone about compliance. And what is good for business is generally good for the community. Communication, transparency and integrity are the hallmarks of successful governments and successful businesses, and are the absolute entitlement of the community. Labor has left us with a few challenges to sort out. The Minister has made it clear in the past few days that definitive decisions will be taken if there is any grey or a lack of preparedness to listen to all sides of the argument. We are a government that listens, but we are a government that is determined to deliver—and we will. Barangaroo will be a fantastic development for Sydney and for all of the residents of New South Wales and Australia. We are determined to get it right.

**Discussion concluded.**

### **GOVERNOR'S SPEECH: ADDRESS-IN-REPLY**

#### **Fourth Day's Debate**

**Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

**Mr GUY ZANGARI** (Fairfield) [6.17 p.m.] (Inaugural Speech): Mr Deputy-Speaker, I congratulate you on your election as the Deputy-Speaker. We look forward to your distinguished service to the House and to the people of New South Wales. It is a privilege to address the House this evening. It is a sincere honour to be elected to the oldest Parliament in the country and the Fifty-fifth Parliament of New South Wales. It is equally an honour to be the elected representative for Fairfield. Life's journey is characterised by the people you meet and the family you are part of. People are shaped and formed by their experiences throughout life, and I need to thank many people for shaping and moulding me into the person I am today.

My life has been an experience of two halves. The first is to have grown up in the inner-western suburbs of Sydney with my parents and siblings; the second is to have been tertiary educated and to work, live and raise a family in the outer-western Sydney suburbs. I am always a westie and proud of it. I begin by acknowledging the people who assisted the Fairfield Labor Party campaign. My campaign director, Adrian Boothman, is a former student of Patrician Brothers' College, Fairfield. His tireless efforts, constant support and advice were and remain invaluable. The Fairfield campaign benefitted from the assistance of many loyal local Labor Party branch members who put an enormous effort into achieving our Labor victory. A special thanks to the core volunteer group for their early starts in the sun and the rain throughout the electorate: Maria Boothman, Riccardo Tognini, Noel Rigney-Johnson, Johnson Hillaney, Emmanuel Sebastiao and Oscar Ramirez to mention some. Those branch members typified the Labor way by rolling up their sleeves and putting in the hard yards.

Since my endorsement by the Australian Labor Party in November 2010, the campaign team included Councillor Frank Carbone of Fairfield City Council, Tan Kien Ly, Rocco Leonello and Ian McNamarra. Those people were incredibly dedicated, spending hundreds of hours on the Fairfield campaign. I am compelled to thank the former Government Ministers and local members of Parliament who assisted during the campaign. Their endorsement was and is greatly appreciated. They were welcomed to Fairfield, and I thank John Robertson, Linda Burney, Barbara Perry, Frank Terenzini, Tony Kelly, Eric Roozendaal, Nick Lalich, Ninos Khoshaba and especially the wonderful and gracious and sincerely respected former Premier Kristina Keneally for their efforts. Kristina Keneally was an inspiration during the campaign. She provided guidance through her words of wisdom during numerous visits to the electorate. We remain deeply indebted to her. I thank her for the confidence and unrelenting support she extended to me. Thanks go also to the hardworking and professional team in the party office including Sam Dastyari, Chris Minns, Kayla Murnain and Courtney Roche for their guidance and support.

I have been a member of the Australian Labor Party since 1993. As the oldest son of a migrant family and through my education at De La Salle College, Ashfield, my political DNA was pretty much set by my

heritage. While growing up in the inner west I witnessed the work of several members of Parliament at both the State and Federal levels. My first contact was with the former State member for Drummoyne, the Hon John Murray, a former Speaker of this House. As a young boy I was amazed at the enthusiasm Mr Murray had for the constituents of Drummoyne. He was a quintessential Aussie, but with empathy for the needs of the large Italian and other migrant communities in his electorate. Mr Murray was a former teacher and inspired me to join the Labor Party and become a teacher. Not only did I witness the marvellous work of Mr Murray but there was also the work of Mr Michael Maher, the former Federal member for Lowe. Mr Maher and his family were parishioners at my local church of All Hallows in Five Dock. Both Mr Murray and Mr Maher were absolute gentlemen and a credit to our community. Mr Maher was a family man, a committed Catholic and a perfect community role model.

From a young age I was always eager to meet the Premier or the Prime Minister of the day. I recall meeting former Premiers Neville Wran and Barrie Unsworth at community events such as the annual Blessing of the Fishing Fleet during the Carnevale festivities in the 1980s. This was a special event for the fishing industry in Sydney Harbour. Local prawn trawler fishermen and deep sea fishermen would come to together to decorate their boats for the colourful parade on Sydney Harbour. This was a great occasion for the fishermen, with the Archbishop blessing the Sydney fleet for a safe and plentiful fishing season. Whilst most children at the event were busy boat hopping once the fleet had docked at Mrs Macquarie's Chair, I would sprint off my father's trawler onto the pontoon to be the first to shake hands with the Premier and local members of Parliament. I had the political bug early in life.

My father, Rosario Zangari, was born on 30 April 1946 in the town of Lingua Santa Marina on the island of Salina north of Sicily. Dad migrated to Australia as a 21-year-old on 24 September 1967 and his story has been an inspiration for me to achieve. He arrived in Sydney without any family support and as the sole member of his family to migrate to Australia. Although my father could not speak Australia's native language, it did not take long before he learned to read, write and speak English. His determination to make the most of life's opportunities got him through the early days. Like many migrants, he began to work in factories trying to find his feet. It was not long before he began to work in his much-beloved profession of fishing. Over the years he tried many different fishing methods in Sydney and on the New South Wales Central Coast. My father had an expression that summed up his values and beliefs:

If you want something you have to work hard for it, it's not going to fall out of the sky.

Those simple but powerful words constituted the values I have worked with my entire life. Those words helped my father achieve in his professional fishing life in Australia and has been my yardstick in life. My mother, Domenica Ilacqua, was born on 18 June 1948 on the island of Lipari north of Sicily. Her story is far more involved with a greater deal of detail and family complexity. My late maternal grandfather, Pietro Ilacqua, was a fisherman from Spadafora in Sicily. Life was not easy for him. He was not literate in his native Italian tongue, but his gift in life was fishing. This skill and passion had been handed down from generation to generation in the Ilacqua family. Pietro migrated to Australia in 1948. He commenced working in the fishing industry on the New South Wales coast. My grandmother provided for her children back in Sicily while her husband saved up to reunite the family. The family reunion occurred on 28 August 1952 with the arrival of my grandmother, Anna, her son, Francesco, and daughters Giuseppina, Anna, Gina and my mother, Domenica. There was joy, years later, with the birth of Nina, the youngest daughter.

My grandmother was privileged enough to have had a primary school education, and often wrote poetry and recited it to her family. She taught my grandfather how to write his name. The difficulties my grandparents had with literacy in Australia meant that during my childhood they encouraged me and my siblings to study and work hard. My grandparents and parents taught me that a hard day's labour is an honourable thing. They wanted me to be able to take advantage of opportunities in life not available to them. My parents married on 27 June 1970. They were always there for my siblings and me when we were children. While dad was working long hours fishing, mum was there helping with whatever was needed. She could always be counted on. The Australian education my mother received meant I had a parent who was well versed in English. We both possess a passion for the Balmain Tigers, now the Wests Tigers. We have shared many memories together over the game that we grew up following and supporting.

Life is about taking the best bits from those who have nurtured you throughout your journey. I acknowledge all my uncles, aunts and cousins for their guidance and care. My interest in politics began from a young age. When political conversations between family members occurred, I would sneak in and listen. The "bear pit" already existed at home during family gatherings. My education at De La Salle College, Ashfield,

contributed to the development of a strong sense of social conscience. The charism of St John the Baptist De La Salle, the Patron Saint of Educators, has been with me ever since. Whilst at De La Salle, I made lifelong friends from mentor teachers: Mr Michael Lewis, Mr Bernie McGuckin and Mr Joe Evans. Those teachers inspired me to take up the vocation of teaching and hence the passion for the Industrial Technology and Religious Education classes I have provided. I believe teachers make a difference.

Growing up in the inner west was memorable. There were family and friends giving me words of encouragement and support. Thank you to my brothers, Peter and Giuseppe, and my sister, Caterina, for sharing the great times. Like most Aussie kids we enjoyed our backyard and the games played, and we were lucky to have the holidays we spent fishing with our father on Sydney Harbour. I sincerely thank John and Adriana Murphy for their support and help over the years. As neighbours they were an extension to the family and excellent supporters. John Murphy was the secretary of the Abbotsford Branch of the Australian Labor Party and was instrumental in me becoming a member of the Labor Party. I was proud to witness John's political career evolve as a local councillor on Drummoyne council followed by his election to Federal Parliament as the representative for Lowe and now Reid.

My tertiary studies at the Australian Catholic University [ACU], Castle Hill, began my relationship with Western Sydney. It was at the ACU that I met a true Fairfield girl, Melissa Pellegrino. She was an aspiring mathematics and science teacher, born and raised in the heart of the electorate I now proudly represent. Melissa became a friend, my wife and the mother of our four children. I am very grateful to her and to both sides of her family, the Pellegrino and Favaloro families, in particular Melissa's parents, Franco and Giovanna Pellegrino. As local business people, they lived the migrant success story, running hairdressing salons while raising and educating Daniela, Melissa and Anthony. They are proud locals of the electorate. Working in western Sydney was the highlight of my teaching career. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

All the schools I taught in were in western Sydney and mostly in the local government areas of Holroyd, Fairfield and Parramatta, which I now represent. The school communities of Parramatta Marist High, Westmead, Patrician Brothers' College, Fairfield, St Pauls Catholic College, Greystanes, and Freeman Catholic College, Bonnyrigg Heights, gave me the privilege of educating young men and women. The cultural diversity of each school community broadened my understanding of the values and benefits of tolerance, and the acceptance of differences. Every cultural group enriches our communities; diversity has proven to be the strengthener of communities in all of my experiences.

Teaching enabled me to become involved in sporting curriculum and social justice organisations, and I had the honour of meeting many capable and effective teachers in both government and non-government schools, each committed to the cause of good quality teaching and student education. Through Higher School Certificate marking for Vocational Education and Training Construction, I witnessed the dedication of teachers across all systems of education. Sport forms part of the essential character of Australians. That is one of the reasons it is important to all of us. My time as a volunteer in the New South Wales Combined Catholic Colleges Soccer Committee enabled me to develop this appreciation.

On the social justice front, I supported many organisations during my time as a teacher. I was deeply moved by my experience as a St Vincent de Paul Vinnies Van volunteer at the Merrylands branch, which services the needs of the homeless in Parramatta and Penrith. Volunteering with senior boys and teachers from St Pauls taught us some of the realities of life about the harsh poverty and homelessness that exists right under our noses. It is through these experiences I came to value the opportunities most of us have taken for granted. These experiences will provide me with the moral compass necessary to be effective and compassionate in public life. Standing in this Chamber as the member for Fairfield I encourage the children of the electorate to consider the vocation of teaching. Teachers make the difference. Teachers not only instruct; they prepare students for their adult life. Well-grounded teachers provide students with a chance to succeed in life.

The electorate of Fairfield covers 30 square kilometres and takes in the local government areas of Holroyd, Fairfield and Bankstown. The cultural mix showcases multiculturalism in this country. If you were to take a walk in any of the shopping areas in the Fairfield electorate you would find a taste from every corner of the globe. The electorate supports and encourages the notion of "having a go". Migrants have welcomed the opportunities our country has bestowed upon them, thus choosing Fairfield to settle and raise a family. Fairfield is colourful and never dull. The people are proud and make real contributions to improving our local communities in many different ways. Children grow up with neighbours from many cultures. This provides them with the opportunity to understand and experience different cultures, and gives them the courage and reason to be tolerant and comfortable with diversity.

Fairfield has wide open spaces, parks and bike tracks, giving residents the chance to enjoy the great outdoors. Religious freedom is evident, with churches, mosques, temples and other places of worship all within a stone's throw of each other. Interfaith dialogue happens daily between constituents. Not only does Fairfield have one of the largest mixes of cultures in this country, it has many older Australians who have lived there for generations. From my chats with them I have taken away many great stories about how the electorate used to be and the colourful characters that made it what it is today. No matter where you come from, Fairfield has much to offer. This is why I am proud to be the representative of a place that lives and breathes the true essence of multiculturalism.

I acknowledge those members who have served the electorate well over the past 58 years: former Deputy Premier Jack Ferguson, former Wran Government Ministers Eric Bedford and Janice Crosio, Geoff Irwin and, most recently, the Hon. Joseph Tripodi. Each member has uniquely given to Fairfield in a very special way. As history writes, each member for Fairfield has come from the Australian Labor Party. It speaks volumes that during this election the electorate continued the tradition of having a Labor representative in State Parliament. Fairfield and Labor go hand in hand. The migrant roots deeply reflect the ideals and principles of the Labor Party—fairness and equality for all. I will continue this tradition and give the people of Fairfield my best. They have given me the greatest honour any man or woman can have.

The member for Fairfield from 1995 to 2011 was the Hon. Joseph Tripodi. Everything Joe did was a genuine reflection of Fairfield. He is a larger-than-life figure who was an able and talented advocate for the community he was raised in and genuinely loves. During my time campaigning I met many locals disappointed with Joe's announcement of retirement. Many constituents pointed out many of his achievements as a local member. Joe was a talented community leader who possessed an incredible grasp of public policy and held a strong commitment to reform. I wish Joe, Maria and Angelica well in his retirement from public life.

Stepping into the Fairfield shoes has been a big task. I thank my electorate staff for their support during the first few weeks since being elected. Stella Patane and Nancy Dalleore have made the transition into the electorate office a smooth one. As the representative of Fairfield, I will fight to ensure that the Government does not neglect the needs of Fairfield. The Government must honour its election promises to the final degree. The past six months have been very disruptive to the daily routine at home, especially for my children. I thank Tahlia, Christian, Lorida and Nicola for their patience, love and understanding during the campaign. Thanks kids; daddy loves you very much.

There is one final person who has lived this experience with me from the day I joined the Labor Party and began to help on various campaigns over the past 18 years, that is my wife, Melissa. She is the foundation of my success and a true believer. I share this role with her as she has provided me with the chance to succeed and never failed in her undying love. Melissa is an amazing wife and mum. I am glad to have her in my life. Honey, I love you. In conclusion, I thank the members for listening to my first address to this House and I look forward to working for the people of Fairfield.

**Mr CHARLES CASUSCELLI** (Strathfield) [6.40 p.m.] (Inaugural Speech): I am somewhat intimidated by the history of this place and humbled by the trust that the people of Strathfield have placed in me. Regardless of my personal feelings, here I stand like many before me, determined "to make a difference". The only promise I can make in good conscience, so early in my political career, is that I will try to be entertaining along the way.

I acknowledge that it is by the grace of God that I stand here before you, paying tribute to those who by their desire and efforts have put me in this place. The most precious of all commodities is time; it is fixed for all of us and all of the world's wealth cannot buy an extra second more than has been allotted to us. And yet many, some of whom I call family and friends, others that I call colleagues and yet others that until very recently I called strangers, saw fit to unselfishly give of their time to support my aspirations to serve in the Parliament of New South Wales. I owe each and every one of them a debt of gratitude, one that cannot be satisfied by words alone in this place, but try I must.

Tonight I can do no less than acknowledge those who most suffer from the vagary of my person—my wife, Maria, and my daughters, Eleisha and Bianca; the love, support and patience was plenty and all freely given. They are here tonight and they are easy to recognise: just look for three beautiful women that look like sisters. Just being in their presence elevates my spirits and reaffirms the reason that I find myself here in this place. In my family the women have been both a stimulus and a support to my aspirations. So much so that, in the future, should blame need to be apportioned to someone for my being involved in New South Wales politics,



whether it be for better or for worse, I can confidently and easily direct them to my wife, Maria. "It's all her doing", I will declare, and because of this I am so very grateful to her. I thank very much Charlie and Rosie, my brother and sister-in-law for their love and support during times that were challenging for them.

I am also thankful for the counsel and prayers of Pastor Anthony Shalala who convinced me that even though God may not be a Liberal, with prayer we could get him on our side just this once. I prayed for a miracle; I imagined a sea of Labor voters being parted for the Liberal candidate as countless conversions of political faith took place as I doorknocked amongst them. This did not quite work out as I had expected. And yet no prayer goes unanswered. Do members recall the last six months of the election campaign when the former Government was plagued by a series of misadventures? When I thought things could not possibly get any worse for them, it did. My confidence soared as I imagined supernatural providence. Through this providence I was surrounded by capable and committed people.

My success was driven by having the counsel and energy of the best election campaigners in the business: the Hon. Don Harwin MLC, President of the other place, and Mr Joe Tannous, a can-do man of enormous capacity. I was humbled by the support and friendship from many of my parliamentary colleagues, in particular the Hon. Gladys Berejiklian, the Hon. Andrew Stoner, the Hon. Michael Gallacher, the Hon. Chris Hartcher, the Hon. David Clarke, and my colleague from across Parramatta Road, Mr John Sidoti, MP. I give special acknowledgement to the Hon. Michael Photios, Fiona Long and Jaymes Boland-Rudder for their encouragement and suppressing their laughter when I told them of my intentions. To all the members of my campaign team, to the members of the Strathfield conference, to the Liberal faithful from other conferences, to my army colleagues and my professional colleagues from former lives, and to my church family, I extend my heartfelt gratitude.

The legacy of the former Labor Government of New South Wales, the very same one that had become an alien in its own State, is best summed up with one word, waste—wasted opportunities during a time that we had many, wasted resources that were scarce in themselves, wasted efforts that produced so few benefits, and wasted time that can never be replaced. We can now turn our back on this legacy of waste, the dark ages are behind us, and the renaissance of New South Wales has begun with its Fifty-fifth Parliament.

We are a Government that represents the best of our society; we value intelligent ambition, personal effort and readiness to serve as the essential conditions for success. We encourage independence, we reward effort and we promote innovation. It is these ideals and the policies that are birthed from them that differentiate us from those who have proven entirely incapable of addressing the most basic challenges of a modern society. Our priority must be to engender a new confidence towards our Government. We have a duty to those who elected us not to resile from the facts, not to underestimate the sacrifices nor to "spin" our way out of difficult situations.

The first few weeks of the Fifty-fifth Parliament have seen humour and wit reintroduced to this Parliament by my colleagues, replacing the sad jokes that had found a home in this Chamber. My military service taught me that confidence thrives on honesty and honour, and it thrives when we appreciate the sacredness of obligations and the unselfish performance of duty. This is not lost on my parliamentary colleagues. Today I am proud and delighted to report to this House that the Premier's leadership, characterised by frankness and vigour, and the immediate execution of our 100-day plan, are being acknowledged in our community with excitement.

In contrast, the Opposition seems bewildered; things are moving too fast, they complain in this Chamber. They still don't get it, do they? It must be an altogether amazing thing for our community to observe its Government moving from a circus of daily crisis management and replacing it with a regime of clear goals for the future. It has certainly confused the Opposition. Luckily for them they have at least four years to learn the concepts of planning and goal setting.

Never again should we neglect growing crises such as the generation and distribution of electricity and the neglect of transport and roads infrastructure, where delay always leads to more harsh and painful solutions. As in all things, balance is key. There is a need to maintain balance between the public and private economy, balance between the cost and hoped-for advantages, balance between the necessary and the desirable, and balance between our actions of the moment and planning for the future. For the first time in 16 years balance has been restored to the development of policy, to the allocation of resources and to the delivery of services.

Our Government will only be as good as the performance of the public service. The people of New South Wales demand reform in the administration of Government and the application of business principles to

public affairs. As a means to this end, public service reform should in good faith be enforced. Contrary to the Leader of the Opposition's mock defence of the New South Wales public service in this place just yesterday, the New South Wales public service had a genuine message for the former Government. On the very day that the 2011 State election results became obvious, a sigh of relief the likes of which has never been experienced in the history of this State went forth from the New South Wales public service and was felt in every electorate. Sir Humphrey Appleby would have been proud.

Let us now at every opportunity promote the ideals of public service; let us encourage those who worthily seek public employment by insisting that merit and competency shall be recognised above all else. Let those who execute our policies be encouraged to have a voice in the administration of government and let us honour them by freeing them from the shackles of unnecessary partisan interference. I do not believe that the current organisational structure of the New South Wales public service, which is essentially organised around the concept of super agencies, is the optimal model for our State. In effect, the previous Labor Government introduced another layer of management between its ministers and the public service. At the time the initiative was justified as delivering cost savings based on the concept of shared services and economies of scale. We should note that all these are back office functions. Very little was said about the direct improvement of services.

It is my view that the current super agency structures will continue to promote self-interest and institutional convenience to the detriment of our community. They will have less transparency and it is less likely that community interest will be championed by individual agencies. I have an alternative vision for the public service of New South Wales. It is simple in concept but requires daring in its execution. It is nothing more than achieving collaboration on a scale not previously attempted in our State. Collaboration demands a sharing of information, cooperation in planning, a consensus on goals and implementation of common systems. Increasing demand for services and costs of delivering these services will force us to action—sooner or later, whether we are ready or not, and whether we like it or not.

I believe that the Public Service Commission, which has been announced by our Government, should also provide leadership for the public service reform agenda. It could do so by sponsorship of the top 10 government initiatives that champion integration, interoperability and collaboration across the New South Wales economy. Our strength as a State is nourished by the strength of our communities. A community that through the leadership of its government finds a balance between sensitivities and expression, so that the term "political correctness" effectively is irrelevant, is a strong one. A community where the views of the minority are respected, and wherever possible noted without an undue imposition of minority views on the majority of the community, is a strong one. A community that has strong local support networks to look after its most vulnerable members, while being adequately resourced by government, is a strong one.

The trend that I have witnessed over the past decade, in which the dependency of our communities on government is increasing, disturbs me greatly. It is unrealistic because a government without the initiative and effort of its people is powerless. It is unnecessary because people, when provided with the right motivation and resources, will do things far more effectively for themselves and their families. And it is dangerous because at times of hardship or catastrophe, we as a community will be found wanting, regardless of the good intentions of government. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

"God helps those who help themselves" is not a sound bite but, rather, a fundamental mindset to guide our lives. It can be prudently replaced by "Governments helps those who most help themselves". I can guarantee, if nothing else, that the benefits to the community and its members will be immeasurably more than if we totally rely on government to relieve us of all hardship without personal contribution, depending of course on means and on circumstance. I deeply desire that my community develop more resilience by developing greater capability to look after itself with a fundamental change in this State's approach to emergency management. I am advocating far less emphasis on the response to emergencies where medals are won, and far more in the planning and preparation for emergencies where the real work is done.

We all start life belonging to a family. I believe that many of the challenges to the wellbeing of our society and our community have their roots in our diminishing appreciation of the contribution that strong families and strong local communities make to our very existence. Family environments are the breeding ground for selflessness, discipline, commitment and sacrifice. I want the family unit to have an enhanced status in our society. Laws should not compete with the status of the family unit but rather give it added authority and protection. I am a passionate advocate for individual responsibility and accountability. Blaming the system, the authorities, the law, the parents or the past does not sit well with me. I am sensitive to those who have suffered

and continue to suffer through the actions of others, and in me they will always—always—find a friend. Rather, my concerns find roots in the growing trend in our society whereby individual accountability is unreasonably diminished in preference to promoting excuses. We need to reverse this trend and hold to the idea that individual accountability is a pre-eminent consequence of all that we say and do.

People choose Australia for their home not because of what it may become but because of what it is—a young, confident and democratic nation that has been shaped by the Judaeo-Christian tradition. It is this tradition that has formed us as a people and as a nation. This is the basis for our laws and institutions, our values and customs. Confident of who we are, we must continue to extend our hand of friendship and invite others to contribute to our society and become part of who we are. On a lighter note, I have heard from my colleagues in the last couple of weeks claims to a number of firsts. Examples are Mr John Sidoti, who is the first Liberal State member for Drummoyne. Well done, John! Mr Bryan Doyle is the highest ranking police officer to enter this place. Well done, Bryan! I had intended to say, "Madam Speaker, I congratulate you on being the first female Speaker of this House", but that is obviously not you, Mr Deputy-Speaker.

**The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George):** I accept on Madam Speaker's behalf.

**Mr CHARLES CASUSCELLI:** Thank you very much. After a few days of reflection I too am able to claim a first in this Parliament. I am the first Italian bricklayer to represent the State seat of Strathfield who has also served as an officer in the Australian Army, who is a former senior executive in the New South Wales and Commonwealth public services and the private sector, and who has moved house 17 times in 31 years of married life and is still married to his first wife. That is my claim to fame!

Strathfield is one of the most ethnically diverse electorates in the State. I am proud of our country's acceptance of people from all cultures and traditions. It is with justifiable pride that I introduce my electorate office team of Miray, Michael and Christina, who are all younger, smarter and better looking than me. This team is able to communicate with its constituents in Arabic, Mandarin, Korean, Indonesian, Italian and of course English, such is the importance we have placed on the linguistic and cultural diversity of our electorate. I have heard some of my colleagues justifiably espouse the virtues of living in their electorates: serene rural areas, beautiful coastlines—I can conjure images of this—and majestic mountains. I too will be attracted to these areas in time—when my mind is dulled, my energy is depleted and when serenity takes the place of action and excitement. Right now I say to them, "Give me a life of action, excitement, energy, choices and entertainment!" This is why Strathfield should be the electorate of choice for the under nineties. It is a fact that people walk faster in Strathfield than in any other electorate in Australia.

Strathfield may or may not be the best place in which to live. I suspect that, just like many other electorates, it has its fair share of the good, the bad and the ugly. But I can confidently say that Strathfield is an amazing place that is steeped in history. It is the home of many notable families. It has community villages, modern commercial centres, grand and stately homes, an abundance of parks and beautiful tree-lined streets—and I am not describing Drummoyne. It is serviced by major transport hubs, enjoys many of the best schools in the State, and has a large number of churches reflecting the many faith traditions. It is also subject to the forces of progress, and progress demands change. Prudent change requires measured control and community-based planning. Strathfield is struggling under the weight of traffic congestion.

People do not feel safe on public transport or when moving about our community outside business hours. Development along the Parramatta Road and western rail corridor has the potential to dramatically change the quality of life for Strathfield residents, for better or for worse. I believe that the priority construction of the M4 East and the Strathfield town centre master plan, amongst others, will facilitate the changed process for the better. No, I have not given up on the M4 East simply because the Federal Government may have. Easing traffic congestion, as well as increasing the police presence on our streets, will be a priority in my first term. We need strong, vibrant local shopping centres such as the Homebush Village to encourage interaction and participation in the life of its local community.

As for me, I am an Australian and also an immigrant. In fact, I am a working class immigrant boy from Blacktown and I am a Liberal. I landed at Circular Quay in 1963 at age 5½ years. I lived through pre-multiculturalism—a period that I remember fondly as one of character building for the few ethnic children at Blacktown primary and Blacktown Boys High schools. We do not call it character building anymore, but I am fortunate in that instead of traumatising me it developed in me an independence of character and a sense of humour that has served me well to this day; whether it continues to do so in this place remains to be seen. I left school at age 16 and commenced a traineeship eager to make my mark in the world and help my parents, who had sacrificed all they had to sacrifice for the sake of their children. It was not easy for them.

My father sacrificed his health in service to the people of New South Wales working for the government railways as a rail welder—a hard job by any measure. My mother sacrificed her health in service to her family as mother and wife. Their names are Domenico and Maria Caterina Casuscelli. Today, not as a member of this Parliament but as a grateful son, I wish to honour them. My faith guides me and will continue to guide me. I am but a poor example of God's handiwork, yet he has seen fit to deliver me a number of messages. The uninitiated should know that God frequently speaks to me through my wife, as I am sure many members have experienced from time to time. I quote from the *Book of Wisdom* regarding authorities in this world,

If, then, you find pleasure in throne and scepter, you princes of the peoples, honor WISDOM, that you may reign as kings forever.

I take heart from that message. The other message given to me is how to conduct myself, and again I quote from the *Book of Wisdom*:

Because, though you were Ministers of his kingdom, you judged not rightly, and did not keep the law, nor walk according to the will of god! Terribly and swiftly shall he come against you because judgement is stern for the exalted—for the lowly may be pardoned out of mercy, but the mighty shall be mightily put to the test.

I aim to be pardoned out of mercy for my good intentions that may have gone wrong, but I need to find out if that premise will also hold true with Barry. My personal journey that has led me to this place is unremarkable, save for a number of surprises. Like many others, I have had instances of life throwing up opportunities to test my character. Some would call these life-defining moments, but I think it is being overly dramatic. They are not necessarily moments of great accomplishment but moments of doing the right thing in spite of personal costs. This leads me to the legacy that I wish to leave at the time I depart this place. I may or may not achieve great things, for it is in the nature of man to aspire to great things, even to a simple Italian with an ordinary record of achievement.

If, through circumstance or lack of talent, I achieve little, I will be pleased to hear others say, "At all times he did what he thought was right." That will be enough for me. To my parliamentary colleagues from my side of politics and others, I wish you all success in this place, good health to enjoy your endeavours and ample opportunity to nourish your souls through the love and support of your families. God Bless the Parliament of New South Wales, its Ministers, its members and all of its staff.

**The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George):** Ahla wa' sahla. I call the member for Granville.

**Mr TONY ISSA** (Granville) [7.10 p.m.] (Inaugural Speech): It is with great respect and honour that I address the House as the first Liberal member for Granville since 1938. I am deeply humbled by the responsibility with which the people of my community have entrusted me and I promise to repay their faith and goodwill by serving them to the very best of my abilities. I wish to congratulate all the recently elected members, particularly my fellow Liberals in western Sydney. I have every confidence that over the coming years we will achieve great things together. I would also like to congratulate our leader, the Hon. Barry O'Farrell, the Premier, and Minister for Western Sydney. I am honoured to be a member of his team. Our Premier's decision to retain the Western Sydney portfolio is a reflection of the importance of this region to our State and the size of the task ahead of us.

In Australian electoral history there has not been a bigger mandate than the one achieved by the Liberal-Nationals Coalition on 26 March 2011. Western Sydney threw its support behind the Liberal Party and I have no doubt that the region will be an important focus of our attention over the next four years and beyond. I believe this Government was elected because the community wants to see us focusing on the fundamentals: building infrastructure, providing services and upholding family values. I can assure the House that we will not take western Sydney for granted. We will work tirelessly to deliver the opportunities, infrastructure and services that our electorates deserve.

The people of Granville are warm and culturally diverse, they are hardworking and family-oriented, and I am so proud to represent them in the New South Wales Parliament. Granville is an electorate representing much of western Sydney, a region that contributes around \$80 billion to the State's gross domestic product. Western Sydney is Australia's third largest economy, behind Sydney and Melbourne, but it faces many challenges, including traffic and housing pressures and a transport system that does not efficiently integrate our communities within the region. Over 16 years the previous State Government promised 12 new rail lines, yet delivered only half of one, and unfortunately it was not in western Sydney.

Western Sydney's population of two million people do not have access to the same services and job opportunities as those living in other parts of the city. However, I know that we too will be judged on our achievements. A major task will be to break down social and economic barriers and ensure that the people of

western Sydney have ready access to employment and services within our local area. I would like to see a greater portion of the tens of thousands of people who commute past Granville every day using their skills and talents locally. More jobs in western Sydney means fewer people on our roads stuck in traffic trying to get into the Sydney central business district. And of course I will continue to lobby for the Granville car park to serve our community, an important piece of infrastructure that was promised by the previous Government but not delivered.

I am no longer a young man and I speak with an accent, but nobody could have more affection for their local community than I do. Granville has been my home since arriving in Sydney from Lebanon in 1973, leaving behind my village, my friends, my school books, my soccer fields and my childhood memories. I am proud of my Lebanese heritage, I am proud of my family, I am proud of who I am—an Australian first and foremost. I will always be grateful for the wonderful life Australia has given to me and thank God for the opportunity to serve my nation and my community with a clear conscience.

I have had a long and hard journey—I was born in a little town in north Lebanon in 1955, the fourth of seven surviving children to my father, Khalil, and my mother, Marina. My father started working as an 11-year-old after the passing of my grandfather and so did not have the opportunity to go to school, but he taught himself to read and write, the basics. At the age of 19 my father married and with Mum they raised seven children, who I can honestly say were their only investment in this world. With my brothers and sisters we grew up in a simple, loving, caring Catholic Maronite family—living according to basic principles, fearing God and respecting others.

Like many migrants I joined the workforce early to support my family and was soon employed at a factory. From there I joined the State Rail Authority as a station assistant and within two years became qualified as an Assistant Station Master. I then took on a new role managing the wool freight for New South Wales for the next 12 years of my life. During this time I married a decent, beautiful local girl, Susan, and we were blessed with four children—Tanya, Stephen, Natalie and Pierre. And now I have three beautiful grandchildren, Xavier, Lara and Sophia, and two son-in-laws, Chadi and Fadi, and a daughter-in-law, Jasmine.

In 1987 I was elected to Parramatta City Council as an alderman, where I have served continuously and continue to serve as a councillor for Woodville Ward. Over the past 24 years as a councillor I have chaired many committees and meetings and I have served as a representative on many advisory committees and boards such as the Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils [WSROC], the Riverside Theatres and the Bicentennial Committee, to name just a few. In 1995 and 1999 I was elected Deputy Lord Mayor and in 2008 I was elected as the first Liberal Lord Mayor of Parramatta, also becoming the first Liberal Lord Mayor in New South Wales. I am proud of my achievements as lord mayor, including removing parking metres from Harris Park, introducing 15 minutes of free parking in the Parramatta central business district, and refurbishing the Granville, Guildford and Harris Park town centres, as well as rejuvenating the Parramatta River foreshore.

I worked closely with the police and the community to bring about a peaceful resolution to the Harris Park riots. In this matter I acknowledge the leadership of Parramatta Local Area Commander, Superintendent Robert Redfern, APM, who is here this evening. During my time as lord mayor I worked hard to raise the profile of the position. I always made myself available to help people resolve their problems, and I was pleased to attend many community events, no matter how small or modest. I regularly held Meet the Lord Mayor barbecues around the local government area to raise money for local charities and to feed the homeless. For these services I earned the title of "the people's Lord Mayor".

I led delegations to China, Vietnam and Lebanon to establish friendship relationships and to encourage investment in the local area. In China I was pleased to sign a friendship city agreement in Beijing, and in Lebanon I was honoured to receive the President's award for services to the community. Throughout my public life I have always remained actively involved in my local community, and I founded many different organisations with the aim of assisting migrants settle in to their new homes. I was the president and treasurer of a multicultural organisation, and for many years I was responsible for more than 20 staff providing services such as family support, youth services, social workers, preschool, and before and after school care.

I was also the chair and member of many other organisations such as the Australian-Lebanese Association, the Australian Lebanese Welfare Group and my village association called Berkasha. I have served on my local school parents and citizens association, and I was a diocese representative for my children's schools. I also served for 36 years on the Our Lady of Lebanon stewardship committee coordinating fundraising. I have run neighbourhood advisory seminars in conjunction with local police, and I also served on local police consultative committees. I also founded youth organisations with the objective of guiding young people through a program to keep them away from drugs and alcohol and to encourage them to remain in school. I taught them to respect themselves and to have pride in their community, and I organised social activities to keep them occupied.

I am proud to say that all of the young people completed their studies and are now employed, and starting families and businesses of their own. For these services to the community and local government I received the Local Government Medal, and I was honoured to receive the Order of Australia Medal in 1995. My motivation has always been to give something back to the community, to listen and help those in need, and to give the youth a fair go. I am completely devoted to my community. I arrived in Sydney with no money and no university degrees, but I had ambition and dreams. I truly believe that all you need to serve the community is a good heart and a generous spirit. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

I thank God for my wonderful community full of friends who have kindly supported me and stood by me through the highs and lows of public life, especially my family for their continuous support, understanding and patience. I love you and I truly appreciate it. I acknowledge the presence here today of my family, who are my strength, my courage and my inspiration—my wife, Susan, and my children Tanya and her husband Chadi and my grandkids, Stephen and his wife Jasmine, Natalie and her husband Fadi and my son Pierre. I also acknowledge my brothers and sisters: Joseph, Venitta, Nabil, Antoinette, Michael, Peter and their families, my nieces and nephews—there are too many of them to name.

Allow me also to thank those who I do not see here today but who I know are watching me from heaven: my loving parents Khalil and Marina, who would be so proud of me today. I acknowledge the clergy and my fellow parishioners at Our Lady of Lebanon, and my many friends in the community from so many different backgrounds, cultures, languages, religions and beliefs. I thank the Liberal Party for the honour and trust it placed in me. I place on record my gratitude to all the councillors and staff at Parramatta City Council with whom I have worked, in particular my former senior adviser, Justin Mulder. I thank them all for their friendship and support. I am proud of my achievements in local government and I look forward to the new challenges of representing my community in the New South Wales Parliament. As a member of this Parliament I will work to fulfil my role and earn the trust the people have placed in me. I will always uphold my values and beliefs, and I promise to work with devotion and integrity.

In conclusion, I will take a few moments to acknowledge the contribution of my amazing and hardworking campaign team and supporters, including my eldest son, Steven Issa, who did a superb job as my campaign director, assisted by my younger son, Pierre Issa; Steven's wife, Jasmine Issa, my daughters Tania Chahine and her husband Chady Chahine, and Natalie Bushara and her husband Fadi Bushara; all my brothers and sisters and nieces and nephews, especially Michael Issa; my parents in-law Joseph and Mary Gallas; my brother-in-law Bill and his family; Odette Farah; Elias Youssef, whom I thank for his support; Fred Frangie; Joe Boumelhem; Councillor Nasr Kafrouni and his family; Martin Zaiter; Joe Kaltoum; Joe Rahme; Tony Khattar; Tony Draybi; Tom Kudinar; George Coorey; Ray Touma; Jim Carol and his sons Ian and Craig.

I also acknowledge Tania Raffoul; Nemer Elias and his family; Simon Sabet and his family; Phillip Issa and Joe Issa and family; Elias Batty; George Dib and his family; George Mourched and his family; Tony Bousaaid; Tony Batty; Sarkis Vagi; Claude Bou-Georges and her friend Zoe; Rabi Akl; Salah Noumair; Samir Dandan; Mouhtaz Zeriaka; Bishop Abikaram, Bishop Saliba and Bishop Drawish; Father Maroon Moussa, Father George Saab, Monsignor Shora, Father Dr Antoine Tarabay, Sheikh Azzam, Sheikh Taleb, Sheikh Safi, Hajj Hawchar, Hajj Hamad, Hajj Zeriaka and Samir el Sag; all the local Arabic and ethnic newspapers and radio stations; the many mayors and councillors from different cities, whom I am proud to call my friends, as well as all the Afghan, Chinese, Greek, Indian, Maltese and Lebanese community leaders.

I warmly thank the army of more than 200 volunteers who went into battle with me on 26 March. Without all of you I would not be standing here today. We are all on the same road and I know you will travel this new journey with me. I thank the current and former members of the Parliament who kindly supported me in my election campaign: our Premier, Barry O'Farrell, John Ajaka, David Clarke, Gladys Berejiklian, Marie Ficarra, Mike Gallacher, Chris Hartcher, Matthew Mason-Cox, Adrian Piccoli, Michael Photios, Jillian Skinner, Greg Smith, Ray Williams and all the others who generously offered their support. I thank you, Mr Deputy-Speaker, and all honourable members for the warm welcome they have extended to me, and I thank all the parliamentary electorate staff for their kind support and assistance. Finally, I thank the people of Granville for their trust. I am honoured to represent them and I look forward to serving them. Thank you.

**Debate adjourned on motion by Mr Mike Baird and set down as an order of the day for a future day.**

**The House adjourned, pursuant to resolution, at 7.31 p.m. until  
Thursday 12 May 2011 at 10.00 a.m.**

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