

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Tuesday 31 May 2011

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

The Speaker read the Prayer and acknowledgement of country.

LAW ENFORCEMENT (POWERS AND RESPONSIBILITIES) AMENDMENT (MOVE ON DIRECTIONS) BILL 2011

Agreement in Principle

Debate resumed from 27 May 2011.

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) [10.00 a.m.]: I lead for the Opposition in debate on the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Amendment (Move On Directions) Bill 2011. The Opposition does not oppose the bill because, frankly, it does not do very much at all.

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind members that interjections are disorderly at all times. The member for Liverpool will be heard in silence.

Mr PAUL LYNCH: We have just spent days debating a 52-word Library Amendment Bill 2011 and now we have this offering. After 16 years in opposition one would have expected this Government to have had a bit more than the Library Amendment Bill 2011 and the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Amendment (Move On Directions) Bill 2011 to put before the House. This Government is the most woefully underprepared government in this history of this State. If any criticism is to be directed at the bill that criticism is that it is unnecessarily cluttering up the statute books with amendments of little import.

This make-work bill is an attempt at persuading the unwitting to believe that the Government is doing something in this area. I do not know what the Government did in opposition for the past 16 years, but preparing legislation certainly was not one of those things. The bill is expressed to be for an Act to amend the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibility) Act 2007 relating to move-on directions to intoxicated persons in public spaces. It is worth setting out explicitly the relevant legislative provisions to show exactly what is proposed and why it means and matters so little. Section 198 (1) of the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibility) Act provides:

- (1) A police officer may give a direction to an intoxicated person who is in a group of 3 or more intoxicated persons in a public place to leave the place and not return for a specified period if the police officer believes on reasonable grounds that the person's behaviour in the place as a result of the intoxication (referred to in this Part as *relevant conduct*):
 - (a) is likely to cause injury to any other person or persons or damage to property, or
 - (b) otherwise gives rise to a risk to public safety.

This legislation proposes to omit the words, "in a group of 3 or more intoxicated persons" so that the power can then be directed to just one person. It is instructive to look at another section of that same Act. Section 197 provides as follows:

- (1) A police officer may give a direction to a person in a public place if the police officer believes on reasonable grounds that the person's behaviour or presence in the place (referred to in this Part as *relevant conduct*):
 - (a) is obstructing another person or persons or traffic, or
 - (b) constitutes harassment or intimidation of another person or persons, or
 - (c) is causing or likely to cause fear to another person or persons, so long as the relevant conduct would be such as to cause fear to a person of reasonable firmness, or ...

In practical terms it is difficult to establish whether the proposed amendment to section 198 will result in a substantial difference to existing provisions in section 197—an issue that was not addressed by the mover of this

legislation in the Legislative Council or by the mover of the legislation in this Chamber. In introducing the bill in the Legislative Council and in this Chamber the Minister for Police and Emergency Services and the Attorney General referred to issues relating to alcohol-related violence and the costs that they impose on the health system.

Anyone reading the speeches of the Minister for Police and Emergency Services and the Attorney General would realise that the first two paragraphs of their speeches are identical. That is not a criticism of the Ministers; I just think their staff should check what bits of paper they are giving to them. In reality those issues—the alcohol-related violence and the costs that they impose on the health system—are significant but it is hard to establish whether the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Amendment (Move On Directions) Bill 2011 will make any difference.

Mr Steve Cansdell: Watch *Days of our Lives*; that's about the level of your excitement.

Mr PAUL LYNCH: There is a veterinarian who can deal with the member for Clarence. However, that has not prevented over-heated rhetoric from Government members about the dramatic nature of this bill. Government members' press releases are full of rhetoric about crackdowns and about stamping out antisocial behaviour—a triumph of spin over substance. The same could be said of The Greens opposition to the legislation. It suits both the Government and The Greens to pretend that this legislation is more substantial than it is. The Government supports it but The Greens oppose it. Both parties are doing the same thing: they are elevating a bit of nonsense into something of substance but they are doing it for opposite reasons. There are legitimate concerns about the practical application of move-on powers generally.

In 1999 the New South Wales Ombudsman investigated the use of police move-on powers. The Ombudsman's report concluded that young people and Indigenous people are more likely to be moved on than other community members. During the period under review, 22 per cent of move-on directions were issued to Indigenous people—an overrepresentation by a factor of 11. The Ombudsman's report indicated that at that stage four police commands—Darling River, Castlereagh, Barwon and Barrier—had a dramatically higher percentage use of move-on powers than police commands anywhere else in the State. An issue of significance is how those move-on powers are used and when they are used. According to the Ombudsman's report, just over half the directions were issued to people aged 14 to 19 years. Likewise, powers were used to deal in effect with homelessness. This type of occurrence with move-on powers is not confined to New South Wales.

For example, academics Tamara Walsh and Monica Taylor have pointed to the differential impact of police move-on powers to marginalised groups throughout the country although, as at 2007, they acknowledge that New South Wales had the most protections for public space users. I think these are important considerations in the context of move-on powers generally, especially in the context of the present incarceration rates for Aboriginal people. The difficulty is that, whilst that is an important and significant issue, it has nothing to do with this bill, as this bill does nothing at all. This make-work bill, a triumph of spin over substance, is a tragic reflection of what 16 years in opposition has done to members on the other side of the Chamber.

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) [10.09 a.m.]: I speak in support of the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Amendment (Move On Directions) Bill 2011, which essentially makes a simple change to an existing police power. But it is an important change. It will allow police to give a move-on direction to intoxicated persons whether they be an individual or a crowd of hundreds. Under the existing law, there must be a group of at least three people before the power can be exercised. Some members may ask: Why is this change needed? In my view, a better question is: Why was the power ever limited to groups of three or more in the first place? The answer is that this is a classic example of how previous Labor governments just did not understand policing.

Throughout the terms of those Labor governments, whenever police appeared to "get a win" in relation to improved powers, there was nearly always a sting in the tail. Maybe it was an attempt to satisfy both left and right factions within the Australian Labor Party; I do not know. But what was given to police with one hand was usually half taken away with the other. A new power would be conferred, but at the same time conditions would be imposed making the power difficult to use in practice. Labor Attorneys General specialised in this—claiming they were getting tough on crime, then putting so much bureaucracy or legal constraints around police powers as to make them almost unworkable. These alcohol move-on powers are a perfect case study. They were introduced in December 2007 with a great flourish by the then Attorney General, who told us:

These powers will allow police to take a proactive approach to the problem by defusing potentially volatile situations before they get out of hand.

The then Opposition supported the bill, but the shadow police Minister registered his concern about how effective it would be in practice. He was particularly worried about the fact that the power to move on could be used only if the three or more persons were "seriously affected" by drugs or alcohol. As it turned out, police on the street patrolling near licensed premises were expected to apply two different definitions of "intoxicated". Under the Liquor Act, a person was intoxicated if he or she was "noticeably affected" by alcohol. But under the move-on powers in the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act they had to be "seriously affected". Even the Labor Government finally recognised this absurdity and had to amend the move-on provisions—only 18 months after they were introduced—to change the definition to be consistent with the Liquor Act. Now we are remedying another Labor absurdity: limiting exercise of the power to groups of three or more people.

Under our changes, a move-on direction may be given to an individual, a pair or a whole group of intoxicated persons who are acting in a way that endangers them or others, or other people's property. In my electorate, people from outside my community visit pubs and clubs in the Hurstville and Oatley area. In other cases people travel to local pubs in my electorate already affected by alcohol. These amendments go some way towards delivering safer streets and communities, and that is a win for my electorate. This delivers on one of our election commitments to be tough on crime and antisocial behaviour—yet another delivery on our 100 Day Action Plan.

Over the course of the election campaign and now as the local member, members of my community have raised their concerns with me in relation to alcohol-related violence and antisocial behaviour. All of us in this place are aware of the toll that excessive use of alcohol has on our communities. Binge-drinking is a significant health and social problem. No-one should feel unsafe in his or her community, and police should be appropriately empowered to make sure our streets are safe and they are able to protect the community and private property. These amendments provide the capacity.

The Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research identified a significant increase in alcohol-related incidents of offensive behaviour for the period 2005 to 2009. The statistic was documented in the policy document titled "Making Our Streets Safe Again". The Making Our Streets Safe Again policy included a number of commitments to address drunk and antisocial behaviour. These were to strengthen existing move-on powers to apply to individuals rather than merely groups of three or more; reintroduce an offence of drunk and disorderly conduct; and pilot three sobering-up centres across New South Wales.

Move-on powers enable police to prevent or reduce antisocial behaviour without drawing people into the criminal justice system. Using move-on powers as an enforcement tool against antisocial behaviour is cost effective and low intensity, so that police can ensure public safety without being tied up in paperwork. As a result of this bill police will be able to apply move-on powers to intoxicated persons whether or not they are part of a group and whether or not other persons in the group are intoxicated. The cost of antisocial behaviour is not limited to legal enforcement. The cost of dealing with injuries caused by intoxicated persons engaging in antisocial behaviour is borne by emergency departments across New South Wales. This is a small but important change, and I commend the bill to the House.

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

Mr NATHAN REES (Toongabbie) [10.15 a.m.]: I speak in debate on the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Amendment (Move On Directions) Bill 2011 having barely recovered from the intellectual exercise of Coalition members going through the Libraries Act for almost three days non-stop. After 16 years in opposition, in week three of the new Parliament, the Coalition was into the 52-word Library Amendment Bill 2011 and today we have its latest exercise in narrowing the awful gap between its legislative program and the Magna Carta: the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Amendment (Move On Directions) Bill 2011. Whenever police want powers to identify, lock up, detain or convict villains, they will have my support. But I look across the Chamber at a sea of disappointed faces—new members who have come into this place charged with the same zeal with which everyone comes into this place: to make the world a better place and to engage in serious reform, and we have a law enforcement move-on bill. Move on, indeed.

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

Mr NATHAN REES: Last weekend I attended the ninetieth birthday of Tom Uren, who some members may recall was responsible for the development of the Albury-Wodonga Development Corporation. Some time on from that, one would think that would be due for an update. One would think that the local member might be interested in refreshing those arrangements. I welcome the new member for Monaro to the

Chamber. I think he might have something to say about State roads. I note the presence in the Chamber of the member for Myall Lakes. From memory, his electorate has the tallest tree in New South Wales. He might want to protect that. I note also the presence of the member for Gosford, who is new to this place. He might want to have something to say about the merger of the two councils that is proposed by the locals in his electorate.

Mr Mark Coure: What about Oatley?

Mr NATHAN REES: And the member for Oatley. He might want to return oyster farming to the Georges River in his electorate. But what do we get from the Coalition? We get a move-on bill. I quote from an authoritative document, the Attorney General's briefing note to the Coalition's caucus, which states, "The amendment in the bill omits 'in a group of three or more intoxicated persons' from section 198 (1)." So there it is. After 16 years in opposition the Coalition has exceeded itself. After the Library Amendment Bill I thought there was nowhere it could go, but clearly that is not the case. This bill is extraordinary and its content is minimal.

In Tom Uren's day there was the Red Scheme. The Coalition is the parliamentary equivalent of the Red Scheme and this bill is its white rock: it is painting it. This bill is the Coalition's legislation—that is it—after 16 years in opposition. The Coalition has put nothing of substance to this Parliament yet, despite 16 years in opposition. I would have thought Coalition members would have been champing at the bit, rather than being content to serve up this embarrassing nonsense. The amendments to the Act do not add anything of substance to the law; they simply clutter the statute books. At present police have the powers to move people on as individuals. They have said that to me so they do not need this reform. I understand and support the sentiment behind the bill, but it is a make-work exercise that I know embarrasses not only some of the members of the Coalition—

Mr Mark Coure: Then speak against it.

Mr NATHAN REES: The substance of this bill is not the issue. The issue is that the bill is insubstantial compared with the work program the Coalition put to the people of New South Wales—which was substantial and the Coalition got a mandate to do it. But here we are in week four of the new Parliament and we are still dealing with this sort of nonsense. The bill is an embarrassment not only to the Coalition but to the New South Wales Parliament.

Mr STEVE CANSDELL (Clarence—Parliamentary Secretary) [10.18 a.m.]: I am happy to support the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Amendment (Move On Directions) Bill 2011. One could be forgiven for thinking that these move-on laws were introduced on 26 March, because 31 Labor members were moved on then. But we have to move on people in other areas.

[*Interruption*]

I know it is an old one but we keep moving them along. I listened to and was amused by the contribution of the member for Liverpool. I do not think he has been to a pub after 9 o'clock, past the time Big Dog goes to bed, because the trouble starts when drunk and disorderly people are out on the streets. One person can cause as much trouble as two, three or four; in fact, one turns into two, three and four later on. If the police have power to move on one person, that not only gets that person off the street and saves harm for the person, and others later on; it also saves that person from putting himself or herself at risk of ending up in hospital or having a criminal record. So it is important for this law to be introduced.

The Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research identified a significant increase in alcohol-related incidents of offensive behaviour between 2005 and 2009. This Government's policy Making Our Streets Safe Again, which was announced during the election, identified many of the problems not dealt with under the Summary Offences Act, which had basically been torn apart, gutted and sanitised by Labor to the point that it was totally ineffectual for police to use; in fact, the Act disempowered police. When I was younger and hanging round Newtown—when Mad Dog was not even born—police had move-on powers; they moved one on with a size 10. I will not go there; I copped plenty of them. But police then had move-on powers, and the Summary Offences Act gave them power to arrest drunk and disorderly people, lock them up for the night and let them out next day when they were sober. That way, no-one got hurt or got a police record—and that protected the drunk and disorderly individual and also the community.

Something had to be done to bring the pendulum at least back to the centre; right now, it is way to the left because police do not have the powers that they need to deal with the drunk and disorderly. Labor had to

pander to the extreme left Greens just to hold its seats. Mind you, that did not help Verity Firth. The other day I said that the man who fed the crocodile was the last man eaten. There is a crocodile on the Opposition benches, and if those opposite keep feeding him they will suffer the consequences. Carmel Tebbutt nearly lost her seat as well, but she hung on, thank goodness. To be quite honest, I would rather that Verity were here.

Mr Stuart Ayres: Who is the crocodile?

Mr STEVE CANSDELL: He is more of a tadpole, but that is beside the point. The Making Our Streets Safe Again policy included a number of commitments to address drunken and antisocial behaviour. One was to expand existing move-on powers to apply to individuals rather than merely groups of three or more. We read in the paper about people being king-hit in the streets, or outside pubs and clubs, or when they are just walking home. Mostly, the incident is not started by three or more people, but just one drunken person who picks someone who is an easy mark to belt. When I was younger—once again, before Mad Dog was born—I worked in plenty of pubs and clubs round the place. Then, when police turned up, they had authority to move people on or lock them up. Today, when they turn up to deal with the same sorts of idiots who hang around pubs and clubs they are met with abuse and the antisocial persons giving them cheek. We needed to restore powers to police.

Recently this Government introduced a bill to provide mandatory life sentences for anyone who murders police. That gives some power and affords some protection to police officers. I would like the law to go further and to provide mandatory sentences for anyone who assaults a police officer. That might make these idiots on our streets wake up and think twice before they spit on, push or punch a police officer. That is especially so today, when many of the officers in our force doing a good job are females, who must deal with some bulky idiot. If they know that they will end up in jail if they touch an officer, I think that would be a positive. I would like to see the enforcement of that provision.

Ms Robyn Parker: Life sentences?

Mr STEVE CANSDELL: Get out of here.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr STEVE CANSDELL: Move-on powers enable police to prevent or reduce antisocial behaviour without drawing people into the criminal justice system. I would not like to see Mad Dog on the drink: he would be a problem; they could forget about moving him on, just lock him up straight away—or get the pound vehicle out to take him away and lock him up. Using move-on powers as an enforcement tool against antisocial behaviour is cost effective and low intensity, so that police can ensure public safety without being tied up in paperwork. Ask any cop and they will say that one of the biggest headaches they have when they make an arrest or bring anyone back to the station is the paperwork that they have to do—well, not paperwork anymore. They used to have a red charge book and they nailed them or bailed them. The next day they would catch up with sorting out the paperwork. Now they spend half an hour at the computer typing up the case. Of course, that takes them off the streets. If they lock someone up, they must have a custody officer present to make sure everything is done according to procedure.

As a result of this bill, police will be able to apply move-on powers to intoxicated persons, whether or not they are part of a group, or whether or not other persons in the group are intoxicated. The cost of antisocial behaviour is not limited to legal enforcement. The cost of dealing with injuries caused by intoxicated persons engaging in antisocial behaviour is borne by emergency departments across New South Wales. Talk to any of the paramedics or medicos in emergency departments and they will say that the problems they have late at night are caused by antisocial behaviour. In the past two months two people who were walking home in Grafton were accosted by one, two or even three drunken people who just kicked the hell out of them. Both victims ended up in hospital with serious injuries, through no fault of their own. Paramedics picked them up and treated them. A large number of people are killed each year as a result of drunken assaults. Some people, when they are drunk, think they are six foot tall and bulletproof. Mad Dog might think he is bulletproof, but he will never be six foot tall.

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind members that the use of nicknames is disorderly, regardless of whether they are appropriate.

Mr STEVE CANSDELL: Thank you, Madam Speaker. We must do everything we can to protect antisocial people from themselves. If they get into trouble we must lock them up to prevent them from getting so drunk that they end up in an altercation and are put in hospital. We must protect community members who fall victim to the idiots who play up and get out of control by getting them off the streets before they get too drunk and cause trouble. I commend the bill to the House. I thought that some Opposition members were a little streetwise, but I am starting to think otherwise because they are still pandering to the 16 years of Labor. If they remain in that 16-year vacuum Labor's 20 seats in this place could be whittled down to five or six and they will not even have a quorum. They should start listening to people, get out on the streets and see what is going on. If they do they will recognise and support these bills as good laws—laws that had been taken away after 16 years of Labor. They need to think about restoring some sanity back to government in New South Wales.

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) [10.27 a.m.]: This is unbelievable. We were promised so much by the Coalition—it was to be the busiest government ever in New South Wales, flat out in its first 100 days getting stuck into law and order and other reforms. What has the Government done in its first month? It has reneged on its promise regarding the Solar Bonus Scheme. It has ripped the heart out of the independent umpire, ensuring that the conditions of public sector workers are slashed and burnt. What has it done with marine parks? Without scientific evidence, it introduced major reforms that are not supported by scientists. The moment the Government announced its proposals it was flooded with hundreds of emails stating, "You've got to be kidding; this is a joke." The past three days have been spent debating the so-called enormous library reforms. Today we are debating move-on powers. That is busy. It is so busy that Hansard must be struggling.

The workload that the Government is putting on us in this parliamentary session is absolutely incredible, even mind-blowing. I have never seen reform like it. We on this side of the House are always happy to support our police. We are always happy to give them the laws and powers that they need. That is particularly evidenced by the fact that when Labor left government the statistics in 17 of the 17 crime categories—one cannot get better statistics than that—were falling or stable. That is our history in law and order. Surprisingly, over the past few days in our discussions with the Police Association this matter has not been brought up. But the association's fear of those on the other side ripping their conditions from them and reducing the salaries for our hardworking police force has been discussed. The association is fearful that its hardworking men and women will not get the conditions they deserve, which is what that lot is about.

The association has not spoken to me about the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Amendment (Move On Directions) Bill. The association is worried about what those opposite, despite what is being said in the community, are going to do to the working conditions, salaries and livelihoods of the men and women of our police force. Those on this side of the House will always back police. We are not interested in coming into this place whilst those opposite produce bills for their mates and others fluff around. We want to get out into our electorates, and so should the other lot. Instead of moving four-worded amendments to bills those opposite should get out there and undertake some real reform. This is about real reform, real change; something that lot knows nothing about. The police and the Police Association are not screaming about this change but they are fearful of what every single one of that lot on the other side will do to their conditions, salaries and livelihood.

[Business interrupted.]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Inaugural Speeches

Motion by Mr Brad Hazard, by leave, agreed to:

That the business before the House be interrupted:

- (1) at 11.30 a.m. to permit the presentation of inaugural speeches by the members for Kiama and Orange; and
- (2) at 6.00 p.m. to permit the presentation of inaugural speeches by the members for Camden, Castle Hill, Baulkham Hills and Menai.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders: Routine of Business****Motion by Mr Brad Hazzard agreed to:**

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to provide for the following routine of business at this sitting after the conclusion of the motion accorded priority:

- (1) Government business;
- (2) Notices of Motions (General Notices);
- (3) matter of public importance;
- (4) private members' statements;
- (5) at 6.00 p.m., inaugural speeches; and
- (6) the House to adjourn without motion moved at the conclusion of inaugural speeches.

LAW ENFORCEMENT (POWERS AND RESPONSIBILITIES) AMENDMENT (MOVE ON DIRECTIONS) BILL**Agreement in Principle**

[*Business resumed.*]

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) [10.33 a.m.]: I speak in support of the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Amendment (Move On Directions) Bill 2011. The object of the bill is to amend the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act 2002 to authorise a police officer to direct an intoxicated person to move on from a public place. At present such a direction may only be given to an intoxicated person who is in a group of three or more intoxicated persons. We heard a lot from the former Government about responsible service of alcohol. That is a very sound principle and liquor licensees need to be careful not to supply children or serve drunks. However, some hotels, clubs and bottle shops sometimes do the wrong thing—only a small minority—but they need to be dealt with. But we did not hear very much from the former Government about responsible consumption of alcohol.

The O'Farrell-Stoner Government will not be letting those venues off the hook that fail to comply with the principles of responsible service of alcohol. Nor will it be ignoring the other side of the equation: Those people who make the choice to binge drink and make life miserable for everyone else: Those of us who just want a pleasant night out. We have all seen the footage of heavily intoxicated people in George Street, Kings Cross and downtown Newcastle staggering, screaming, swearing and fighting. Newcastle is where many of the young people from my electorate head for their university studies or to seek employment. Sadly those people intoxicated are often, but by no means always, young people and, increasingly, young women. As a parent of a young person who headed off to Newcastle with many of his friends, I was concerned to see those images on the television. I had every confidence that our young people would do the right thing but I was concerned that a night out for them could be ruined by other intoxicated persons.

Australia needs a profound cultural change in its attitude to alcohol and the acceptability of drunken behaviour in public places. This will be a complex and lengthy process involving, among many other things, a revived sense of personal responsibility and respect for the amenity of others. In the meantime our police bear the brunt of this increase in boozed-up hooligans who believe they own the streets on Friday and Saturday nights. The figures are astonishing on how much police time is spent dealing with alcohol-related violence and antisocial behaviour. Some estimates indicate it could be up to 70 per cent. On the mid North Coast alcohol-related incidents over the past two years have averaged about 13 per cent of all incidents, but it has been as high as 17 per cent. This must be dealt with.

No-one wants to see heavy-handed policing but the reality is that police need our support. They do not need to be sent out with one hand tied behind their backs to deal with the drunken masses seen on the weekends. This bill will make it easier to stop trouble before it starts. It represents the first in a series of responses to alcohol-fuelled violence set out in the Government's election commitments, and should be seen in that context.

Move-on powers are but the first step in an escalating scale of responses to be given to police under our reforms. The power to direct drunks who are behaving in a dangerous manner already exists but for some reason it can only be used if there is a group of three or more intoxicated persons—not against individuals.

What are police officers meant to do if they encounter an individual or pair who are intoxicated and behaving in an offensive and dangerous manner under the current law? Do they tell the drunks to telephone an intoxicated friend and ask them to join him or her? What an absurd situation to put police in. Under our reforms, the tests for intoxication and for behaviour remain unchanged but police who encounter a solitary person who meets those tests will now be able to tell him or her to move out of the area for a period of up to six hours. I understand that the great bulk of people who are given move-on directions comply with them, thus diffusing a potentially dangerous situation. But for those who refuse to obey that direction, police will soon have the discretion to charge them with a new offence of intoxicated and disorderly conduct.

I understand that a bill introducing this offence into the Summary Offences Act will be finalised shortly. I remind the House that in the lead-up to the 2011 election, the New South Wales Liberals-Nationals made a number of commitments relating to antisocial behaviour, including strengthening move-on powers to make our streets safe again. This is the first step in our commitment to ensure that people can enjoy a night out without the threat of antisocial behaviour fuelled by alcohol. The bill demonstrates that the Government is serious about dealing with troublemakers who make life miserable for others. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) [10.40 a.m.]: I to address the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Amendment (Move On Directions) Bill 2011. As you will know, in the other place The Greens opposed this bill, which amends the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act 2002. The bill will change the move-on powers of police in relation to intoxicated persons. Currently these powers only apply to groups of three or more people who, in a public place and where a police officer believes on reasonable grounds that their behaviour as a result of intoxication, are likely to cause injury or otherwise be a risk to public safety. The substantive amendment is to authorise police to move on a single intoxicated person rather than a group.

As a former mayor and as a councillor for almost 12 years now—other members have been involved in local government and several are in the Chamber now—I know that there are significant problems with alcohol-related violence. We all know that our pubs, clubs and liquor outlets do generate, at times, a great deal of concern. Last year and the year before the people who have to deal with alcohol-related violence—police, emergency services workers and ambulance workers—raised what was called the Last Drinks Campaign. I am sure many members are aware of that. In that campaign the issues that were raised were not issues of move-on powers by police but issues of the hours of operation, responsible service of alcohol, and the concentration and proliferation of liquor outlets. They are the issues that were raised by front-line workers.

While I acknowledge the contribution from other members that this is the first stage in the Government dealing with this issue, it is clear to me and those who work in a community with a strip—such as Darling Street in Balmain, Glebe Point Road in Glebe or Norton Street in Leichhardt, where there is a large concentration of liquor outlets—that more needs to be done. But we are concerned that strengthening police powers on this issue relates to the way these powers can be and have been used disproportionately in the past. We have heard other members make contributions about the Ombudsman's involvement, about the way that move-on powers can be used. It is clear that it is difficult in particular to take on the liquor industry in terms of the issues that have been raised by many front-line workers, but it is a step that this Government needs to take.

We Greens are concerned about this power in particular because the people most often targeted by these sorts of powers are the homeless, the mentally ill, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and young people. And it is important to note that police do have the power already: under section 197 of the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act 2002 police have the power to give a direction to a person in a public place who is obstructing another person or obstructing traffic or if the conduct constitutes harassment, amongst a range of other things.

Mr Mark Coure: So why would you oppose it?

Mr JAMIE PARKER: We have not got to the end of the speech yet. The issue that we raised is that these powers already exist. If these powers already exist, we think the implementation of additional powers is unnecessary. Police have the tools at their disposal to take action; we believe that these powers already exist and introducing additional powers might target those people I have described previously.

The proponents, the Government, need to introduce evidence as to why they are putting this bill forward. There is no evidence that has been brought forward by the Government to show that these changes are necessary. The Greens do not support increasing or augmenting these powers in the absence of good evidence. If the proponents have not provided that good evidence then it should not move forward. What I can say very clearly is that police do play an important role in protecting the community and enforcing our laws. We must recognise, however, that any powers we give police can be at the expense of individual liberties. It is imperative, therefore, that a proper balance is achieved between police powers and civil liberties. We believe the proponents, the Government, have not put forward the evidence to demonstrate why these powers and amendments are proposed and needed. Therefore, we are not supportive of this bill.

What we are supportive of is working with the Government to develop ways to increase the opportunities to reduce alcohol-related violence in our communities. I urge the Government to look at what the Last Drinks Campaign proponents have put forward: the front-line staff who are working in emergency services, police and ambulance. I urge the Government to look at the different options that they have put forward, some of which the Government could consider. We know that the main way to focus on alcohol-related violence is to look at not just the symptom of people who are intoxicated in the street but the cause. That goes to issues of, yes, as we have heard before, our culture, but also raises issues of approaches that we know need to be managed better: responsible service of alcohol, the service of shots and free drinks, opening hours of liquor outlets, the proliferation of liquor outlets and the concentration of liquor outlets.

In conclusion, in my local area we have worked very closely with the Leichhardt area command to reduce alcohol-related violence. One of the key strategies that we have implemented is managing public transport in a better way, because when the venues close at 3 o'clock the taxis are on change over and there is very little public transport. People who are intoxicated are leaving venues and have no transport. That is also an important issue that I trust the Government will address in the coming months.

Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) [10.45 a.m.]: The Bureau of Crimes Statistics and Research identified a significant increase in alcohol-related incidents of offensive behaviour for the period 2005 to 2009. That led to the Liberals and Nationals creating a policy entitled "Making Our Streets Safe Again", a policy that included a number of commitments to address drunken antisocial behaviour. For the benefit of the House let me identify the particular items: to strengthen existing move-on powers to apply to individuals rather than merely to groups of three or more, to reintroduce an offence of drunk and disorderly conduct and to pilot three sobering-up centres across New South Wales.

The move-on powers that we are debating today enable police to prevent or reduce antisocial behaviour without drawing people into the criminal justice system. Move-on powers will be used as an enforcement tool against antisocial behaviour. Of course, it is cost-effective and it is low intensity so that police can indeed ensure public safety without being tied up in paperwork, as we have heard from previous speakers. As result of this bill police will be able to apply move-on powers to intoxicated persons whether or not they are part of a group and whether or not other persons in the group are intoxicated. For these reasons I speak in support of the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Amendment (Move On Directions) Bill 2011.

I must say I have been reassured by statements made by the police Minister on the effect and intention of this bill and the rest of the Government's commitments to deal with alcohol-related crime. This bill and the forthcoming new offence of being intoxicated and disorderly are not directed at those who have been pushed to the margins of our society such as the homeless or the mentally ill—some of whom also live in our streets as we observe around this precinct—chronic alcoholics and some members of our Indigenous communities. These are people who can suffer under insensitive policing and harsh laws. But I am pleased to say that these people are not the focus of the suite of alcohol reforms to be brought in by this Government. I know the police commissioner is very aware of the sensitivities around the policing of vulnerable communities, and I trust he will communicate this message down through the ranks. The target of these reforms is those the police Minister recently called "cashed up thugs" and there are plenty of them around to keep our police, ambulance paramedics and hospital emergency departments busy.

With the indulgence of the House I would like to give a few figures from the recent nationwide police operation called Unite which targeted alcohol-fuelled behaviour in public places. The latest exercise under Operation Unite was conducted on 13 and 14 May 2011, and it also took place in my electorate. The previous campaign was held last December. Police arrested 563 people and charged them with a total of 830 offences relating to alcohol-fuelled crime and antisocial behaviour. Last December during Operation Unite police

arrested 723 people and charged them with a total of 1,314 offences. This year police laid 12 charges for assault police and 26 charges for resisting arrest. Last December during Operation Unite police laid charges against 24 people for assaulting police and 44 charges for resisting arrest.

This year police charged 47 people with assault. Last December they charged 81 people with assault. Remember that when we hear the May figures, which are lower than those for December, these arrests and charges were for just an ordinary weekend, and at a fairly cold time of the year at that. There has been a lot of talk about alcohol-fuelled violence. A careful reading of the legislation we are discussing shows that the definition of "intoxicated" also includes people who are affected by drugs. This should not be taken to mean the law, the Government or the police regard the consumption of alcohol—even in excess—as equivalent to the taking of illegal drugs. What it reflects is that at a street level for operational police it will often not be possible to tell if a person's behaviour is the result of consuming alcohol, drugs or indeed both.

The member for Toongabbie questioned the relevance of this bill to Albury. For the member's edification, I inform him that this particular issue was the major media story in Albury only yesterday. The licensee of the Bended Elbow, Gavin Grant, said, "The aggression issue is so much higher when they are on drugs." That is totally relevant to this bill. Under the change brought in by this bill police will be able to take preventative action in respect of intoxicated individuals, not just groups, whose behaviour puts them or others or property at risk. Police will be able to tell a person, "Look, mate, you have had enough and you are acting like an idiot. It's time to leave." I am advised that the great majority of people who are given such a direction do exactly that. This is a small but sensible and important reform that I am happy to support. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) [10.50 a.m.]: I did not intend to speak on the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Amendment (Move On Directions) Bill but, having observed the sidetracking of the logic that underpins it, I decided to add my thoughts to the debate. Since the Coalition took office I have said that they have a right to apply their minds to existing laws and to evolve them. Legislation relating to alcohol-related violence and antisocial behaviour that stems from alcohol particularly deserves continuing evolution, and it will continue to evolve for some years. There is no quick fix or cure except the banning of alcohol, and that has been tried and failed. The Opposition does not oppose this bill. As a former Minister for Police for over 12 months I consider that the Coalition has the right to seek to evolve these laws.

However, legislation such as this should always be about balance. When in government we were of the view that the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act, in relation to the move-on directions, was sufficient when applied to a group of three people. The Coalition wants the move-on directions to apply to one person. It is its right to seek such an amendment. But it should not claim, as some members have, that our legislation was a total failure and that this bill will be a panacea for the police. It will not. I want to put on the record that in my time as Minister for Police in the countless meetings I had with the police discussing all sorts of legislation that applied to them, including the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act, they did not request of me on a single occasion the introduction of this legislation.

They never suggested that their powers under the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act were inadequate. The police have done an excellent job in helping to clean our streets. They have had to battle against a huge problem for all of us, that is, alcohol-related violence. As I said, laws such as these are all about balance. I refer to a paper published in 2007 entitled "'You're not welcome here': Police move-on powers and discrimination law", written by Tamara Walsh, LLB, BSW (Hons), PhD, lecturer in law, Beirne School of Law, University of Queensland, and Monica Taylor, BA, LLB, coordinator of the Queensland Public Interest Law Clearing House, as well as other qualifications. In part the report states:

Whilst there have been few empirical investigations undertaken on the topic of move-on powers, those that have, have invariably found that certain groups are more adversely affected by the exercise of police move-on powers than others. As Robert Reiner has said:

In a society which is divided on class, ethnicity, gender and other dimensions of inequality, the impact of laws even if they are formulated and enforced quite impartially and universalistically will reproduce those social divisions.

Empirical research has also demonstrated that the use of move-on powers does not result in fewer arrests for public space offences, despite police claims to the contrary.

The most significant investigation of the use of police move-on powers in Australia was conducted by the New South Wales Ombudsman in 1999. Combining statistical evidence and data obtained through interviews and focus groups, the report concluded that young people and Indigenous people are more likely to be moved on than other community members ... the New South Wales Ombudsman also noted that in a number of instances the move-on power was being used to deal with behaviours associated with homelessness, such as begging and sleeping out.

That is one of the reasons we determined when we were in government that it was sufficient for the move-on directions to apply to a group of three people. I have absolute confidence in the police that they will apply these laws fairly and without discrimination. The New South Wales Police Force is the best police force in Australia. It is salient to note that evolution has taken place in antisocial behaviour and alcohol-related violence since 2008. The member for Albury said in his speech that between 2005 and 2009 there had been a significant increase in alcohol-related incidents of offensive behaviour. The Hon. Michael Gallacher, the Minister for Police, in his second reading speech in the other place said:

The Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research identified a significant increase in alcohol-related incidents of offensive behaviour between 2005 and 2009.

Whether the Minister's words were intentional or otherwise, he has used statistics to mislead. This is an interesting subject. I commend members of this place to the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research website, which publishes expertly written and well-documented research. It is educational. Bearing in mind the comments made by the Minister and repeated erroneously by the member for Albury today that there had been a significant increase in alcohol-related incidents of offensive behaviour between 2005 and 2009, I direct members of the House to the New South Wales Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research "Crime and Justice Statistics", issue paper No. 59 issued in April 2011. I say nothing about the years preceding 2005 or the two years following 2009. Let me tell members what Steve Moffatt and Don Weatherburn, who are the experts, had to say:

On 11 March 2008, following a number of requests from the public and the media, the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (BOCSAR) published a ranked list of the top 100 licensed premises for assaults occurring between January and September 2007. On 30 October 2008, new licence restrictions were imposed on the top 48 licensed premises on BOCSAR's top 100 list.

The member for Toongabbie, a former Premier of New South Wales, is responsible for the introduction of this regime. The then Premier accompanied police one night, without the presence of media—unlike the sideshow that occurred in January this year when the now Premier walked through Kings Cross with a media pack behind him. The then Premier accompanied police, sitting in the back of a police car travelling along George Street, where he observed the unacceptable and inappropriate behaviour of large numbers of youths. So he introduced new licence restrictions. The issue paper continues:

On 30 October 2008, new licence restrictions were imposed on the top 48 licensed premises on BOCSAR's top 100 list. The restrictions placed on the top 48 list came into force on 1 December 2008 and included:

- Mandatory 2.00 a.m. lock outs
- Cessation of alcohol service 30 minutes before closing time
- Plastic or polycarbonate glasses for beer service after midnight
- No "shots" and drink purchase limits after midnight
- Ten minute alcohol sale time outs every hour after midnight

The Coalition will continue the legislation, but that was a very good start. The paper goes on:

In October 2009, Moffatt, Mason, Borzycki, and Weatherburn (2009) evaluated the effect of these initiatives and found a decline in the incidence of assault on the 48 licensed premises upon which restrictions were imposed. The decline, however, was not restricted to these premises. A general decline in the number of assaults on licensed premises occurred across the top 100 licensed premises listed on the BOCSAR website. The precise cause of the decline is unclear but likely influences include adverse publicity and increased enforcement activity by the NSW Police Force and the Office of Liquor, Gaming and Racing (OLGR).

The report goes on to say:

The decline in assaults after midnight since March 2008—

which is when most assaults occur outside the domestic violence scene—

is now detectable at the NSW level and is equivalent to a drop of about 1 per cent per month since the liquor licensing policy changes were implemented ... This is the first downward trend in assault recorded in NSW since 1988.

I will repeat that for the benefit of members opposite who have adopted the modus operandi of this Government, which is to come into the Chamber and deny that anything good was done by our Government in 16 years.

Mr Stephen Bromhead: The people of New South Wales didn't think anything was wrong?

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: We lost an election but that does not mean that we did not do some good things. Don Wedderburn says that this is the first downward trend in assault recorded in New South Wales since 1988. Members opposite can come in here and take a political view or they can take an intelligent view and have a sensible discussion about this very important matter. The report also says:

Although it is impossible to pinpoint the precise reason for this decline in assault across NSW, there is little doubt it is a response to one or more of the measures taken from March 2008 onward to reduce the number of assaults on licensed premises. Prior to those measures the number of assaults on licensed premises in NSW was increasing.

It is pretty simple. As well as those measures, we continued to implement measures to see these sorts of laws evolve. We worked with the police to concentrate on licensed premises and to continue proactive policing on the street and we supported the police in increasing high visibility through programs such as Operation Unite. Some silly comments have been made in this debate. The member for Clarence, who has worked in pubs, suggested to the House that one of the biggest problems facing people who were on a night out was a single drunken rogue walking around the streets king-hitting people. If a person is walking around the streets he is not subject to a move-on power and this amendment will not apply to him in the first place. The member for Port Macquarie said the legislation had been precipitated by us all seeing the vision of large numbers of youths fighting on the street whilst drunk. If there are large numbers of youths involved the police already have powers to deal with them and this bill does not apply to them. So that was another irrelevant comment.

Those comments also ignore the fact that a very large proportion of violent incidents that are alcohol related—I do not have the statistics with me, but it is a significant amount—occurs in the home. If members opposite want to have general discourse about alcohol-related violence but have nothing to offer those people who are assaulted in the home by someone affected by alcohol they have no right to crow. If they want to come in here and be hairy-chested and bring forward a measure that will lead to a decline in alcohol-related violence they should support the police and emergency services through the Last Drinks campaign. I do not agree with it because, as I said at the outset, it is about balance. Laws that are adopted by this place have to be balanced. If members opposite want to be hairy-chested they should put their money where their mouth is and support that campaign.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) [11.03 a.m.]: I appreciate the opportunity to speak on this important bill. For the benefit of guests in the public gallery, we are speaking about the Making our Streets Safe Again policy. The Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research has identified a significant increase in alcohol-related incidents and offensive behaviour over a number of years. Our policy and the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Amendment (Move On Directions) Bill 2011 relate to move-on powers to make our streets safe again, which is very important. These move-on powers will enable police to prevent or reduce antisocial behaviour without drawing people into the criminal justice system. If one, two, three, four or five people are congregating, getting up to mischief and engaging in antisocial behaviour the police will be able to move them on. Under the previous Government, if just one or two people were behaving in this way—as we know, it takes only one or two to start a melee—the police were unable to move them on.

This bill will enable police to move such people on, whether it is one, two, three or four involved. That is what needs to happen. Using the move-on powers as an enforcement tool against antisocial behaviour is cost-effective and low intensity. Police will be able to ensure public safety without getting tied up in paperwork. We welcome the support of other speakers on the bill, even though a few perhaps disagree with the legislation applying to one or two people. I do not understand why they do not agree with that. The member for Toongabbie and former Premier said earlier that the bill did not do enough. The reason we are introducing this bill is so that the police can move on one, two, three or four people, regardless of whether there is a melee. I think that is enough.

The member for Balmain expressed concern that the bill might hurt people. If a policeman confronts and seeks to move on someone who is engaging in antisocial behaviour or two people who are having a blue or harassing others on the street who are walking with their families, the member for Balmain says that might constitute harassment. Those people are harassing us and we are sick of it. It is time something was done about antisocial behaviour and alcohol-related crime. The member for Maroubra, who was Minister for Police for 12 months, talked about the sideshow the Coalition was creating in relation to this bill. The sideshow we witnessed under the Labor Government was the antisocial behaviour and alcohol-related violence and crime on the streets of cities and towns across New South Wales. That was the sideshow. People were getting away with that sort of behaviour, which showed how soft the previous Government was on crime. We want to make sure that we crack down on crime.

The member for Maroubra, the former police Minister, said that his Government did some good things in office, and we do not dispute that. Members on this side agree that some good things were done in relation to

liquor licence restrictions, making sure that alcohol shots were banned, that there were lockouts and that access to premises was denied after a certain time. As member for Tamworth I can tell members that we are seeing real problems on our streets caused by youths after the pubs close, spilling people onto the street. Where there are a number of hotels in close proximity there is a real problem with antisocial behaviour and alcohol-related crime. Everybody has their favourite watering hole for a reason: that is their hotel and that is where they drink. While they are in those licensed premises everything is fine and you do not hear of any problems. The problems occur when the pubs shut and people spill out onto the streets. They come out of their particular watering hole and run into a group from another watering hole and the problems start. If we do not have these move-on powers we will continue to face real problems.

I want to refer to a wonderful initiative in my area, particularly in Gunnedah. The Gunnedah Shire Council initiated a mid-strength after midnight program. Such programs are being implemented at a local level because the Labor Government was soft on crime for the past 16 years. We want to get tough. Over the years we have seen a disgusting culture pervading of people going out, getting wasted, creating mayhem and wrecking lives. When you are walking down the street with your young family or your elderly parents or you are in a park—wherever it may be—and you see a crime being committed or witness antisocial behaviour, you feel that you are not welcome. You want to go home. You feel that your streets are not safe. Drunkards confront and harass people. It has to stop. Our streets are becoming scary places, and we want to reverse that trend and make them safe again. We want to walk with our families in parks and gardens and watch the children feed the ducks—things like that. New South Wales is a great State. We do not want to succumb to antisocial behaviour and alcohol-related crime.

The mid-strength after midnight program was established by the Gunnedah Shire Council under the liquor accord. Local accords have an important role to play in our regional communities. I encourage councils to get involved and use liquor accords and instigate wonderful programs to curb antisocial behaviour and alcohol-related crime. Under the mid-strength after midnight strategy only mid-strength alcohol was served after midnight. There was a bit of an outcry at the start because some pubs and clubs feared that people would stop frequenting their premises, but there were no reports of decreased trade from the licensed premises that participated in the program. I emphasise that point. That is testament to the success of the program. We want families to be able to go to licensed premises on a Sunday afternoon for a counter lunch or a counter tea. People should feel free to do that without fearing harassment by drunks. As a result of the mid-strength after midnight program the Gunnedah Shire Council has achieved a reduction in all crime categories related to alcohol of between 25 per cent and 35 per cent. If you are out at midnight and you have had a few beers you should be right to go. Instead of continuing to drink full-strength beer or having a shot or a whiskey or a rum—

Mr John Barilaro: Yes.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: I know the member for Monaro likes a shot of orange juice every now and again. At that time of night people should be thinking of heading home, not heading for a fight. We need to make our streets safe, and this bill will do that. The mid-strength after midnight initiative by Gunnedah Shire Council was very popular. As member for Tamworth I have had discussions with Gunnedah mayor Adam Marshall, who was a guest at Parliament House yesterday. We would like to investigate the option of introducing this program across the board. I commend the program to councils across the State. Licensed premises should think about serving only mid-strength alcohol after midnight because it reduces alcohol-related crime and antisocial behaviour. The figures tell the story: the number of incidents decreased between 25 per cent and 35 per cent with no reduction in trade.

This bill is a good one. We need to make our streets safe again. Young people congregate in the streets of Tamworth; they sit on the backs of benches with their feet on the seats, showing no respect. Elderly people are knocked over by people on skateboards. We need to give police the power, the legal right, to tell troublemakers, "You are being an idiot and making a nuisance of yourself. Just move on. Tell your story walking." Under this bill police will be able to apply move-on powers to intoxicated persons whether they are in a group or only some in the group are intoxicated. I commend the bill to the House. I look forward to seeing it implemented across New South Wales to make our streets safe again.

Mr RICHARD TORBAY (Northern Tablelands) [11.14 a.m.]: I support the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Amendment (Move On Directions) Bill 2011. There has been a great deal of commentary on this bill. For me, the first test is a simple one: What powers does the community expect police to have in circumstance such as this? What does the community expect police to be able to do when a group of people conduct themselves inappropriately? We can talk about case law and precedent and a range of procedural

matters, but at the end of the day the police, who are charged with the responsibility of protecting and serving, need to have powers that enable them to do their job on behalf of the community. So the test is a simple one: it is a community test. The statistics show that alcohol-related crime is increasing, particularly in regional areas. While there has been a decrease in some categories of crime, alcohol-fuelled crime remains an increasing problem that police on the front line are addressing. We know that social issues are also part of the problem, and a multiagency approach is critical. But arguing against the police having the power to move on a group is an argument against common sense and contrary to what the community expects.

Like many members of Parliament, I have a hardworking local area command in my electorate. Police in my local area command have been involved in a number of positive initiatives with licensed premises to address the problems associated with alcohol-related crime. The liquor accords are a classic example. I think the Armidale liquor accord was the third signed in New South Wales. Police and licensed premises are working together to resolve these issues. I do not want to demonise licensed premises, because I know that many of them have initiated a range of practices to help the police and the community deal with these problems. I do not support giving police unreasonable powers, but the community supports the very reasonable case for police powers in these circumstances. I am concerned about issues such as pre-fuelling. A massive trend has emerged recently of young people, in particular, drinking prior to attending licensed premises. This means that many are reasonably intoxicated before they go out.

I know that because, like many members of Parliament, I liaise with groups of parents and young people in the community and they tell me about this trend. We need to review laws regularly to ensure the protection of the community and individuals. High visibility policing often stops trouble occurring. I congratulate police officers on the effort they continue to make on behalf of the community. Many officers have said to me, "Come with us, Richard, and see what is happening on the streets at night, particularly with young people." I took the opportunity to join a local officer on patrol late at night, and it was certainly an education. I urge every member of Parliament to do the same. We can talk about changing laws to the detriment of people's liberty—and, as I said, I do not support giving power for the sake of it; there must be reasonable grounds and the public interest must be served. But to argue that this change is not in the public interest is to argue against common sense.

I am certainly very supportive of the bill, which hopefully will result in continued reasonable support of our police. Police must be properly resourced if they are to perform their duties in the manner that meets community expectations. I have noticed a number of very positive changes within the New South Wales Police Force, including improvements in police powers. However, a great deal still needs to be done. Police need additional coordinated support as part of a whole-of-government approach. The New South Wales Police Force is not the only agency involved in controlling antisocial behaviour. This legislation addresses social issues, such as truancy, so education is part of the solution, as is the Department of Community Services. A range of government agencies should be part of the solution in conjunction with the police. Fundamentally, police should be given the powers they need to undertake policing in support of the community and to protect the public interest. I believe this amending bill will achieve those objectives. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr BRYAN DOYLE (Campbelltown) [11.20 a.m.]: I am pleased to support the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Amendment (Move On Directions) Bill 2011. In my former life as a chief inspector of police and during my 27 years in the police force I believed that policing was always about public safety.

Mr Richard Torbay: A very good officer.

Mr BRYAN DOYLE: Thank you. Policing is also about public perceptions and feelings. I have always believed that policing is best done for and with the community, not to and against it. When parliamentarians speak to members of the public the major concerns of people are alcohol-fuelled violence and hoodlums, as the member for Northern Tablelands mentioned. The problem of alcohol-fuelled violence has been addressed in Campbelltown, and my experience tells me that it requires the adoption of a multilayered approach. It is also very important to include intent to achieve a beneficial outcome for the community. At Campbelltown we not only had that intent but also had the support of our local media, the *Macarthur Advertiser*, the *Macarthur Chronicle* and radio station C91.3FM. The local media reflected community values and supported local police officers to maintain safety in the community.

The amending bill forms just one part of a multifaceted approach adopted by the Liberal-Nationals Government. Ensuring that licensed premises work with the community and comply with the conditions of their

licence is a very important part of that approach, and attention has been paid to that in Campbelltown. Providing police with appropriate and sufficient powers is also important. The bill reduces the requisite number of people from three to one for the issuing of move-on directions, which is very useful. It will be welcomed by police on the street. The Government's policy of making our streets safer also involves reintroduction of the offence of being drunk and disorderly and a pilot program of three sobering-up centres. It is important to bear in mind that when police exercise behaviour control powers that is not done arbitrarily. Often the best and most effective tool goes unreported, and that is police presence. The community loves to see police officers on the beat, well presented in a uniform, and speaking with members of the community. I know that people who are in the public gallery support my view.

People love to see police on the beat and out among the community because policing is being seen to be done for and with the community: the police are part of the community, and the community is part of policing. When police exercise behaviour control powers it takes the form of conversation. Police are required to provide evidence that they are a police officer. If I were to revert momentarily to my previous role as a chief superintendent of police, dressed as I am now in a suit, I would produce my police warrant card so that people would have a way of knowing, apart from my fine bearing, that I am a police officer. However, it is usually the case that police are identified by their uniform so there is no issue, and in those circumstances police provide their name and place of work. Under the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act, when police exercise move-on powers or carry out a search they are required to explain to the person involved why they are exercising the power. That approach produces a powerful effect that tends to either prevent or reduce antisocial behaviour without drawing people into the criminal justice system.

Decreasing the incidence of alcohol-fuelled violence and drunken hoodlum activity on the streets is as important for shopkeepers as it is for the community generally. Anyone who has operated a small business knows about the added cost of repairing a shopfront window and cleaning up the detritus left by drunken hoodlums as they wander home. Property-related offences adversely affect the viability of small businesses by increasing the cost of insurance premiums, which is another reason why our streets must be kept safe and why this amending bill is so important. Alcohol-fuelled violence has a very powerful effect on hospital emergency departments. If alcohol-fuelled violence is not nipped in the bud by licensing restrictions or move-on directions, a situation can develop leading to the commission of a crime and investigation of a crime scene. Consequently, people may be conveyed to hospital, where emergency departments and triage facilities become clogged and security personnel become involved. It is no fun at all explaining to a parent that their youngster, who went for a night out on the town, is lying in hospital in a coma. This amending bill has a very strong safety focus: indeed, its principal aim is to protect public safety.

During the debate the member for Maroubra referred to the former Government's policies that addressed the problem of alcohol-fuelled violence through licence conditions. I commend those restrictions, which were used very effectively in Campbelltown. However, other aspects of the former Government's policies are probably not so laudable. A police presence in the community is incredibly important. It is about the community feeling safe because police are in contact with the community. The Eagle Vale police station in Campbelltown is a fine local police station that was built to address the needs of the local community. However, it was closed by the former Government. As members know, the opening of a police station is normally celebrated and attended by media representatives and dignitaries. But when a police station is closed there is no fanfare. While victory has many fathers, defeat is an orphan, and so is the closure of a police station.

To add insult to injury, the closure of the Eagle Vale police station was carried out with all the guile of a bunch of hoodlums walking backwards out of a Chinese restaurant. The former Government left the lights on. The police sign is still illuminated because the building is being used as a garage for highway patrol cars. Members of the local community did not know that the police station had closed. Police have to drive for 20 minutes from Macquarie Fields police station to respond to a call from Eagle Vale. Anyone summoning police at the Eagle Vale police station has to press a button at the front of the building to speak to a police officer at Macquarie Fields Local Area Command, which is 20 minutes away by car. But that is not all: when the Ingleburn police station was transferred to the Macquarie Fields Local Area Command people in the Ingleburn area felt the loss of a local police presence.

The Ingleburn community is a proud community. Until the late 1940s Ingleburn had its own council. It has now merged with Campbelltown City Council, but Ingleburn retains its distinct identity. When the police were moved from Ingleburn to Macquarie Fields the Ingleburn community donated their time and trade talents to build the Ingleburn policing centre, which was opened by the Minister for Police and the Commissioner of Police of the day. Although that station was located in the middle of the Ingleburn central business district, it too was eventually closed. These matters will be addressed in the ongoing audit the Minister for Police has

commissioned into the New South Wales police to examine better use of resources. As I said, my 27 years of policing has been about public safety and looking after the community. This amendment helps operational police look after their communities.

Mr Ryan Park: It's real reform.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr BRYAN DOYLE: It is all right, Madam Speaker. It is the brashness of youth.

The SPEAKER: The member for Campbelltown should not encourage the member for Keira.

Mr BRYAN DOYLE: I know from his blog that he feels intimidated when he comes into the Chamber.

Mr Ryan Park: The police haven't stopped talking to me.

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

Mr Andrew Fraser: Move him on.

Mr BRYAN DOYLE: It is funny the member for Coffs Harbour should say that. This amendment is useful; it will help operational police work with their communities to keep them safe. I commend the bill to the House.

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

INAUGURAL SPEECHES

The SPEAKER: In accordance with the resolution of the House, business is interrupted for the presentation of inaugural speeches. I have great pleasure in calling the member for Kiama.

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) [11.32 a.m.] (Inaugural Speech): This morning I deliver my inaugural speech in this place and in doing so I start by warmly acknowledging your ascendancy, Madam Speaker, to the role of Speaker. I will say more about you later, but at the outset I ask that you resist the temptation to interrupt or correct any part of this presentation, as you have become so accustomed to doing.

The SPEAKER: My position allows me to do that.

Mr GARETH WARD: It is without equivocation that I express my deepest sense of honour and privilege to serve in this, the oldest Parliament in the country. I hope that I can uphold and build upon the traditions of the most distinguished service and respect that have been developed through the creditable contributions of so many outstanding individuals who came here to articulate the views and concerns of their local community and with a desire for a brighter future for our State. I acknowledge the presence in the gallery of my mother, Margaret Bowcher, and my father, Malcom Ward: a son could not have asked for more diligent, dedicated and loving parents. Like most parents, my mum and dad worked hard to give me every opportunity they could afford. Without their best efforts I would not be the person I am today. I thank them both for so frequently giving up so much so that I could have the best chance in life of reaching my potential.

When I was born the doctors quickly diagnosed me with ocular coetaneous albinism, which has rendered me legally blind since birth. My parents were told by the doctors in the 1980s, "You'll need to keep him in the dark and behind closed doors". Today I say to those doctors, "Thanks for the advice", but I think they may wish to reconsider their prescription. At age 2½ my mother started me on the violin—with a tissue box and a ruler to develop my bowing technique. At age five I was entered in the local violin section of the Shoalhaven Eisteddfod and, to my mother's surprise, I won. I would later play in the local youth orchestra, study at the Conservatorium of Music and complete several grades through the Australian Music Examinations Board—all by the age of 16. I later played in jazz bands in clubs and pubs, and count these as some of my most memorable musical moments. All arts disciplines are a fundamental part of any civilised society and play an important role as an outlet for expression and talent. I still practice today but rarely play in public—after all, no-one is a fan of a fiddling politician, particularly those on that side.

Growing up in a small business family I quickly learnt the value of hard work and I remember well what Keating and Labor did to those who yearned for effort to be met with reward by government. Even at an early age I developed a passion for those who were prepared to take a risk and carve out a future fuelled by unwavering determination and unbridled aspiration. Small business people represent the backbone of this State's economy. These people rarely complain, because it is not in their nature to do so, but each of these merchant pioneers makes up the engine room of opportunity and represents what can be achieved when government takes a back seat as opposed to taking the front. I commend Barry O'Farrell and the Coalition for committing to removing two old regulations for every one that is introduced by this Parliament.

Whilst I will always stand up for what is fair and right for working families, occupational health and safety law in this State remains an encumbrance to small business and a barrier to jobs growth and employment. The law has become so cumbersome that the more business attempts to comply, the more those same businesses are undercut by those who fail or even ignore their obligations entirely. I place the House on notice that common sense must replace a system of common failure. I am a product of a public school education, having commenced my education at Kiama and Lyrebird preschools, through Nowra East Public and Bomaderry Public primary schools, and then Bomaderry High School.

I am proud of the strength of our State school system, and its intelligent and diligent teachers and staff. My teachers were good people who worked hard to provide a quality experience at all levels of my learning career. It gives me great pleasure to acknowledge Jo Parsons, the relieving principal of Bomaderry High School and my former year adviser, who is here with us in the gallery today. I thank Mrs Parsons and all my teachers who were such a great credit to their profession and for whom I hold a deep and unwavering regard and respect. I am proud of the education I obtained from the University of Wollongong and I acknowledge the significant contribution this institution has made to the Shoalhaven and the Illawarra.

It gives me great pleasure to acknowledge the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Wollongong, Professor Gerard Sutton, who is present in the gallery. Professor Sutton will be retiring later this year, in the university's sixtieth year. I record in my first speech my deep level of respect for a man who has made a good university great. Professor Sutton has been integral to diversifying the Illawarra; the academic maturity of this institution grew enormously under his leadership. My journey to this place has been anything but easy but, as I have often found, rarely does anyone slip into Parliament by accident. I joined the Shoalhaven Young Liberals at the age of 16.

If ever there was a point in my life on which the rest of it turned, no doubt that was it. I quickly became involved in branch activities and before too long became the branch president. After I finished my Higher School Certificate the then President of the Young Liberals, Tony Chappell, asked me to serve on the policy committee. After a short disagreement with the then president and now member for Bega—a dispute I resoundingly won—I became the rural and regional officer of the New South Wales Young Liberals. I later served as the membership officer and the political officer, and established the first Young Liberal branch in the Illawarra: the Throsby Young Liberal branch was established with almost 200 members.

The Young Liberal movement has played a critical role in training the next generation of leaders. The challenge to leaders is to create more leaders, not more followers. As I look around this Chamber I see my friends Mark Coure the member for Oatley, Melanie Gibbons the member for Menai, Matt Kean the member for Hornsby and Dominic Perrottet the member for Castle Hill. They are all fine examples of young people who are passionate about their local communities and their service in Parliament. They all have benefited from the incredible tutelage that the Young Liberal movement provides. Regardless of politics or persuasion I encourage all young people to take an active interest in politics and public affairs; after all, it is your future that is up for debate.

As a student at the University of Wollongong, student politics frequently took precedence over my study. I was proud to establish the University of Wollongong Liberal Club and I acknowledge the presence in the gallery of its current president, Chris Whittaker. The university Liberal Club is, without dispute, the most active political club on campus eclipsing Labor, which now is even more irrelevant than the campus Greens. I am conscious that I am the first person from the University Liberal Club to be elected to Parliament. I sincerely hope that I am the first of many. I am proud of my ongoing connection with the University of Wollongong and continue to serve the university as a graduate member of the University Council alongside my friend and fellow graduate Kelly Knowles-Lyon.

At the age of 22, I was elected to Shoalhaven City Council as the youngest councillor in our city's history. It was not long before I found the headlines—warring with the then mayor, Councillor Greg Watson. If you learn more from your enemies than you do from your friends then Councillor Watson has continued to be a veritable fountain of knowledge. In spite of our disagreements, I respect and commend his 38 years of service to

local government in our district and acknowledge his continued contribution to the Shoalhaven. Local government was where I cut my teeth on the issues that matter, but, more importantly, I had the unique opportunity to meet some amazing people, and I have been fortunate to maintain these outstanding connections with our local community. Be it standing up for the residents of Lyndhurst Drive and fighting, alongside Ken and Louise Karger, the imposition of thousands of dollars in resident contributions towards local footpaths, or be it standing alongside the Kangaroo Valley community to oppose the then New South Wales Labor Government plans to extract billions of litres of water from Tallowa Dam, local government is the melting pot of so many interesting personalities and unique individuals.

In 2008 I was re-elected to Shoalhaven City Council and subsequently elected deputy mayor unopposed. This was a position I held until I stood down to contest the State election. I met many good friends during my local government journey but one that stands out above all others is my friend the Mayor of the Shoalhaven and newly elected member of the Legislative Council, the Hon. Paul Green. Paul has been like the older brother I never had—and there is probably a reason for that—and in spite of our political differences on some matters, his friendship has enriched my life. I thank Paul, his wife, Michelle, and their wonderful family for allowing me to share a space in their life which means so much to me.

It is certainly tradition that one should thank those that assisted us arriving in this place. At the outset, I believe it is appropriate to thank the former member for Kiama, Matt Brown. Matt Brown and I share one thing—a passion for serving a district we love. I thank him for his service to our community and wish him well in his life's journey. Whilst time prevents me from acknowledging all those who made a contribution, rest assured I am so very grateful for each of your tremendous contributions and support. First, I must thank the thousands of dedicated Liberal voters in Kiama who have faced so many disappointments, but have remained faithfully loyal to our party. To the hundreds of Liberal Party members from Gerringong, Berry, Bomaderry and Kiama branches and in particular Shoalhaven Young Liberals and the University of Wollongong Liberal Club, thank you.

To former Senator John Tierney—thank you for being a great employer, a wonderful mentor and a reliable friend. I note your presence in the gallery today and thank you most sincerely for the opportunities you gave me and the advice you continue to provide. Another friendship that has grown out of my local government beginnings is my friendship with Colin Waller. Whilst Colin is now the Secretary/Treasurer of the New South Wales Australian Hotels Association, he was then the local Berry publican where my Apex Club used to meet. Colin has been a genuine supporter of local young people. He talks the talk when it comes to building opportunities for the next generation. In so many respects, I can only aspire to follow in his footsteps. To my polling booth co-ordinator, great friend and outstanding supporter Paul Terrett and his partner Jason Horton, thank you for your continued friendship and support.

To Ashley Priest, Mark Grimson, Paul Rolland, Philip Motby, former Senator Tony Messner, Neil Hartwell, Anthony Strik, Leigh Nelson, Dennis and Marilyn O'Keeffe, David Boyd, James Parrish, Morgan Forrest, Al Cameron, Alex Dore, Rob Leigo, Phillip Pease, Matthew Jackson, Fiona Hudson, Olga Stoutchilina, James Stevens, Steven Marshall, MP, Councillor Warren Steel, Councillor Trevor Fredericks, Councillor Juliet Arkwright, Councillor Jim Mauger, Arthur Dean, Brendan Lyon, Michaela Packer, Chris Hall, Matt Cross, Bede Crasnick and Clayton McInness—my thanks for your support and friendship. To my local government colleagues, David Bennett and Nigel Soames, thank you for your enduring friendship and support. You have always gone well out of your way to help and sustain my goals and objectives for our community. I am extremely grateful for all you have done and continue to do. To Shoalhaven City Council General Manager Russ Pigg and senior staff Rob Donaldson, Peter Dunn, Tim Fletcher, Bill Paterson, Peter Adams and Carmel Krogh, I thank and highly commend you for your dedication to serving local residents.

Whilst the media do not tell us what to think, they do tell us what to think about, and in regional New South Wales the local media play an important part in public debate. I would like to thank John Hanscombe, Adam Wright, Glenn Ellard, Claire Dressler, Melissa Jaros, Matt Snelson, Kristia Thomas, Adam Straney, Danielle Cetinski, Alex Arnold, Ben McClellan, Kerrylyn Clark, Nicole Hasham, Nick Rheinberger, Nick McLean and Peter Riley for always allowing me an opportunity to have my say. A special thank you must be reserved for the Yoda of local news radio, Graham French. I call him the "Yoda" of local news radio not just because of his journalistic longevity, but because his appearance is strikingly similar in all respects. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

I must thank the well-oiled team at Liberal headquarters, led by State Director Mark Neeham and the incredibly patient campaign director, Chris Stone. Your success has been our success. You ran an incredible

campaign and I thank you for exceeding even my expectations. To Michael Photios—I advise the House that Michael was my good friend well before he was a lobbyist—thanks for all your encouragement over many years. To Robyn Bramley, Shirley Hollis and Paula Turnbull for weathering every condition for hours on end at the pre-poll, thank you for never giving up hope; you are truly an inspiration. To local upper House member John Ajaka, thank you for your never-ending advice, support and friendship. To my aunt Brenda: None of you has ever witnessed anything quite like my aunty. She flew halfway around the world from Edinburgh to spend 10 weeks on the campaign trail. For a woman who used to campaign for the Scottish National Party, boy, could she pack a punch.

To my electorate office staff, Vicki Henry and Bryan Fishpool, my thanks for your continued service to our community. I must make mention of the senior members of my campaign committee. To Nathan Barton, thank you for going well out of your way to ensure we had a campaign that was equipped with the best information technology resources that eBay could buy. To Paul Ell, a young man who was raised by his grandparents and has achieved so much in spite of all the obstacles placed in front of him, thank you for never ever giving up hope, for always being there and for being a tireless worker. To Nicholas Mickovski, you could not ask for a more dedicated and loyal friend and supporter. Nick ensured the campaign office was not only fully staffed, but frequently amused and entertained. Nick was our campaign fixer, and I thank him for his outstanding dedication to the cause. I cannot go past my friend, council colleague and campaign manager Andrew Guile who provided the maturity and considered opinion required for this campaign. My only hope is that you will one day be given the opportunity to serve in Parliament so that your true talent and abilities can be realised.

To my parliamentary colleague and close friend Rob Stokes, thank you for giving up so much of your spare time to support a campaign in a world away from your own. Now I must turn to five very important people without whom I would not be here. To Jaymes Bolland-Rudder: Jaymes is unquestionably without peer when it comes to simply getting on with the job. This always fearless, sometimes shameless but never capricious character was one lean, mean campaigning machine. Thank you for your support. Madam Speaker, when I first met you almost 10 years ago when you were serving as Deputy Mayor of Shoalhaven City Council, I would have never thought we would be part of this most amazing journey. From your pre-selection battle in 2002 to your stunning victories in 2003 and 2007, both you and Ossie have been a warm source of advice and truly wonderful and invaluable friends. I simply would not be here without you both.

To the Hon Don Harwin, his intellect and political ability are renowned and respected, but his friendship means so much more. If there is one trait that defines Don Harwin, it would be his commitment to helping others make their contribution in public life. I think this is one of those rare occasions when I can speak for both of us, Madam Speaker, in saying that Don Harwin has been critical to our mutual success. Whilst many may talk of what they achieve in politics, Don Harwin's achievements now speak for ourselves. Ben Blackburn is someone who is known to many people in this place. I first came into contact with Ben through the child care and protection agency Bravehearts. Ben is a remarkable young man in whom I have enormous trust and confidence. His passionate dedication to the campaign was nothing short of impressive and his continued contribution as one of my electorate office staff and close friend is invaluable to say the very least.

It is appropriate that I conclude my long list of thanks with a person who has backed me right from the start. Luke Sikora has been a part of every successful election campaign I have ever contested in public life. Everyone in politics needs someone like Luke, and to those who do, none of you has anyone half as good as he is. Apart from being a skilled campaigner, a relentless worker and enthusiastic Liberal, he is a friend I simply could not do without. Whilst success has many fathers, I have no doubt that I would not be standing here today if it were not for a great mate and a wonderful friend. I know that there has been somewhat of a competition between new members presenting their inaugural speeches as to who has the best electorate. Whilst all of you have been sterling advocates for your individual communities and have extolled their virtues with passion, I know you would all rather be representing Kiama, and you know it is true for why else would most of you holiday in my electorate. Kiama is truly where the mountains touch the sea.

From the lush green fields and natural waterways of the northern Shoalhaven, to the picturesque and seemingly never-ending undulation of the Southern Highlands through to the sweeping sandy coastal towns of Gerringong, Kiama and Minnamurra and up into the City of Shellharbour including Shell Cove and Albion Park, Kiama is without doubt a magnificent place to call home. Be it the best beaches in Australia, bush walking in Kangaroo Valley, a quiet lunch at the Burrawang Hotel, a picnic at Killalea State Park, a coffee in Berry, seeking a thrill at Jamberoo Action Park or taking in the sights at the Illawarra Fly, the electorate of Kiama is a moving portrait of magnificent beauty and natural diversity.

With such an environmental résumé, is it any wonder that residents in my electorate were concerned about a regressive State planning system that progressively saw communities lose their right to have a say in the future of their urban environment and a Labor Government that saw only financial value in public open space, not the real social value for families and communities. I am a committed environmentalist; but this important debate is often lost on pseudo greens that see only the politics of protectionism—rather than the true value of conservationism. Environmental protectionists would rather defend the need to do nothing with our environment than recognise that life is about balancing the need for sustainable progress whilst conserving what defines our district. How else can you make the case about protecting our environment if people cannot be allowed to experience what is so important?

As someone who has witnessed the loss of life on our local roads, I look forward to joining with you in taking up the battle to see the upgrade of the Princes Highway. This is not just about safety—this is a major artery for economic investment and jobs. It will be with great alacrity that I shall continue to stand up and fight for funding and see the delivery of necessary improvements to the Princes Highway. Indeed, I thank all of those who travelled by coach or car up the Princes Highway to be here in the gallery, in the Waratah Room or out in the Foyer today. I am delighted that I could share this special moment with you as I commence this most interesting chapter of my life. Thank you all for making the considerable effort to be here.

In addition to the Princes Highway, I will deliver better safety measures to prevent accident and injury on the Kiama bends, an upgrade to hospital car parking at Shoalhaven Hospital, and improvements and upgrades at Shellharbour Hospital. I will fight to see the preservation of public open space such as Killalea State Park. I will continue to advocate for those with disabilities and in particular young people with impairments to ensure they get the best chance in life, and I will champion the work of such groups as Bravehearts for stronger child care and protection laws in New South Wales. On this point, I acknowledge Wendy and Roger Woodward—the founders of the South Coast chapter of Bravehearts who are here with us in the gallery today.

To quote former US Speaker of the House of Representatives Tip O'Neil, "all politics is local" and local government plays a critical part in the delivery of the most vital services. However, my experience to date is that city areas are serviced by simply too many councils and that has produced an unnecessary duplication of municipal services and all local councils would be better off with governance changes that produce more efficient local government. The 1993 Local Government Act has weakened the ability of elected representatives to participate in civic process; conversely, the distinct lack of accountability measures such as a requirement for local representatives to exercise due diligence and fiduciary responsibility, such as company directors, must be made. These changes should coincide with a reduction in the number of councillors, which should correspond with an increase in remuneration.

I stand here today with a lot to live up to. The seat of Kiama has been held by some amazing figures including former Premier Sir Henry Parkes. Former Premier Sir Joseph Curruthers was born in the district. However, my most memorable and regarded would have to be Sir George Fuller, a former member for Kiama and Premier whose Government passed the Harbour Bridge Act in 1922 and outlawed monopolies in 1923. Fuller was an economic rationalist and a social liberal—a category in which I firmly and proudly reside. So much of what Fuller faced is history repeating—the need to streamline government in an effort to ensure infrastructure investment and economic growth against the might of a union movement consumed only with itself and not the broader needs of New South Wales.

I am proud to stand here today as the first ever Liberal member for Kiama. I am a progressive liberal who believes that government must provide services to those who need them and opportunities to those who want them. The business of government should never hinder the inalienable right of every individual to reach their full potential. I have no doubt that this Government will be the people's vanguard of a free and confident society. I thank the House.

Mr ANDREW GEE (Orange) [12.01 p.m.] (Inaugural Speech): I believe in the future of regional Australia; it is the reason that I stood for Parliament. It is the reason that my family, like so many before us, crossed the Great Divide to find a new life in the magnificent electorate of Orange. We have put our faith in regional Australia—and I want to see it grow and prosper so that it continues to provide an unbeatable quality of life for generations to come. I believe that every child in regional Australia deserves the same educational opportunities as those in the city. We need to ensure that our education system does not become a tale of two States with our country students struggling to compete with schools in metropolitan areas that are better resourced and better equipped.

My parents both started life as schoolteachers in our State system. I believe the profession of teaching should be restored to the place it once had as a destination of first choice for our State's brightest young graduates. I believe in production and the idea that the wealth of this State and this nation is built on what we grow, what we make and what we sell. I believe we let our productive capacity, including our agricultural capacity, slip in New South Wales at our peril. If the recent global financial crisis has taught us one thing, it is that the wealth of states and nations can never be built on the back of real estate booms, be they in Sydney or anywhere else.

I believe we need to be restoring the place of agriculture in this State. These days it is fashionable to talk about food security and the need for those in our State and in our country to feed themselves. But words about the importance of food security need to be backed up by deeds. As host to the Department of Primary Industries, the electorate of Orange is at the front line of agricultural research in New South Wales and, therefore, not only the protection of our food security but also our biosecurity. The equine influenza outbreak a few years ago served only to reinforce the vital role that the department plays. We need to give the Department of Primary Industries the resources it needs to contribute properly to the food and biosecurity security of our State. This means promoting agricultural research and protecting research stations, and providing proper agronomy services. And it means rebuilding the Department of Agriculture and—as we have just seen our new Minister Katrina Hodgkinson do—restoring the Department of Agriculture.

I believe that the engine room of this State is our small businesses, be they in the city, on country properties or in our regional centres. Our small businesspeople personify a word that is richly laden with overtones of hard work, initiative and optimism—that word is enterprise; a word that the people of my electorate know well. I believe that governments need to support and encourage small business. Our regional communities such as Wellington are crying out for more business investment. One of the best ways governments can help small business in the Orange electorate is to provide the infrastructure that reduces transport costs and makes our communities easier to get to. And once our businesses are established our Government can also help by leaving them alone and letting the entrepreneurs of our electorate and those right across this State get on with the creation of opportunity and prosperity. Our Government should be encouraging initiative and achievement, not penalising it with ever-increasing taxes and then strangling it with red tape.

I believe that if regional New South Wales is to grow and prosper and reach the potential that we all know it has, decentralisation must be actively pursued and promoted. Regional New South Wales needs new industries, more people, and greater investment. In recent years my party has blazed the trail for decentralisation. The last State Coalition Government oversaw the move of the Department of Primary Industries to Orange and my Federal colleagues, led by Senator Fiona Nash, secured funding for the state-of-the-art dental school at Charles Sturt University in Orange—a school that will train dentists for rural practice for years to come.

Since having moved back to the country, I am constantly amazed at how little those in Sydney and its surrounding cities know of life over the Great Dividing Range. My previous occupation was that of barrister. Colleagues still express surprise to me that barristers exist in western New South Wales. Although I have to confess that for sound commercial reasons we often do not advertise it to our colleagues in Sydney, I can tell members that not only are there in fact barristers west of the sandstone curtain; we also have a talented array of other tradespeople and professionals from medical specialists to winemakers, stockbrokers and geologists, to name but a few. People come from around Australia and around the world to live and work in the Central West, and all of them form part of the rich mosaic of the Orange electorate.

New technology has made it possible for increasing numbers of them to come. But decentralisation will not truly succeed until the yawning gulf in knowledge about what lies beyond the Great Dividing Range has been bridged. I believe that governments need to live within their means. People in my electorate work hard for their money, and they have a tendency to tell it like it is. Nothing makes them angrier than to see their tax dollars being squandered by people on government payrolls in Sydney and Canberra. I believe that the people of our region should be able to walk the streets or sleep in their beds at night without fear of assault.

Yes, we need more police—particularly in towns such as Wellington—but to back them up we need better support for youth programs such as our regional police and community youth clubs; we need more drug and alcohol workers; and we need better mental health support in our electorate. We need to curb the affliction of vandalism and antisocial behaviour that blights too many communities in our region. Go down to any Local Court on any given day and you will see the social cost of this problem. There you will see broken lives that are changed forever. The police have been crying out for it and that call needs to be answered; we need to get drunken people off the streets of our electorate in the early hours of the morning.

I believe that every person in this electorate should have the same access to proper health facilities as those in the cities. But our health system in regional New South Wales has become reliant on the goodwill of its local communities just to function. I have seen it at meetings of the Orange Lions Club and it is a scene that has been repeated across western New South Wales—nurses begging for funds to purchase basic equipment that this State should be providing and which city patients take for granted. That has to change and, under this new Government of ours, I am confident that it will change. In some of the towns in our electorate people have to wait weeks just to see a general practitioner.

One of the ways to address the shortage of doctors in regional New South Wales is to train them for rural and regional practice. That is why I strongly support the proposed new medical school to be based at Charles Sturt University in Orange. Charles Sturt University has already opened a world-class dentistry school on that campus and I encourage all my colleagues in regional seats to support this very worthwhile proposal. The closure of our rural hospitals is a continuing source of concern, particularly in towns such as Cudal and Gulgong. To the people of Gulgong I say this: I will continue to work with my State and Federal colleagues to deliver the health services that you deserve. I will not rest until we have turned the first sod on a new multipurpose service. I consider myself lucky to serve a diverse and vibrant electorate.

At the eastern part of our electorate is the bustling regional metropolis that Orange has become. It, like Mudgee to its north, is growing quickly. Both Mudgee and Orange are renowned for their wineries, restaurants and lively cultural scenes. To the west of Mudgee is the beautiful Wellington Valley and historic Wellington itself—close to the recreational hub of the electorate, Burrendong Dam. In between Orange, Wellington and Mudgee are many towns and villages such as Cargo, Cudal, Manildra, Molong, Cumnock, Guerrie, Gulgong, Mumbil, Stuart Town and Mullion Creek. Some are full of history, others are full of industry, but each is unique in its own way.

Like many of the seats of my colleagues, my seat is blessed with natural beauty from its rugged ranges to its fertile fields of plenty that help feed our State. The lamb and beef on your dinner table may well have come from the Orange electorate, or the wine that you enjoy with it. The apples and cherries that you buy in the supermarket could also have come from our electorate and if it is an Electrolux fridge you store them in, that definitely came from Orange. We have much to be proud of. However, if I could single out one characteristic of our seat that shines out above all others, it is the generosity of spirit of its people.

Our electorate is no stranger to adversity. For years our communities have battled crippling drought; a drought that made the land so parched and cracked and dry you could almost hear it screaming out. And then just when it looked like our farmers would finally reap their best harvest for years, the rains and floods came with such force that the crops could not be brought in and the harvest was lost. Now when it is time to sow again, they battle a mouse plague. Our orchardists battle fruit bats and, worse still, bureaucrats. Our vignerons battle dwindling returns for their fruit. But through it all our communities carry on. Whether it be passing the hat around or rolling up their sleeves for their neighbours, they carry on caring about each other and carry on building for the future.

Our electorate is truly part of the beating heartland of Australia. Ophir, just to the north of Orange, was the scene of Australia's first gold rush and the rush at Gulgong was later to follow. Orange is again the scene of another, modern day gold rush, with gold and copper being exported around the globe from one of the world's largest mines. The Mudgee and Gulgong areas have seen a surge of mining exploration and activity in recent times and there has also been recent interest in and around Wellington and Molong. Through the years, our electorate has made, and continues to make, a huge contribution to the development of this State. But the people of our electorate are increasingly asking why: why it is that with billions flowing into the State coffers in mining royalties, they have struggled to secure basic infrastructure and services.

They ask why it is that construction of a new expressway along the Bells Line of Road that will open up the great electorates of the west and encourage investment and development, has not commenced. They ask why it is that the rescue helicopter that is based in Orange and serves the electorates of western New South Wales does not fly 24 hours when helicopters based in cities as close to Sydney as a 10-minute flight are able to do just that. The people of our electorate and our region are not greedy. They are a people with great common sense and they understand that these are difficult times for our State. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

What the people of our electorate seek is nothing more than their fair share. The Government's new Resources for Regions policy is a very good start and it is my hope that it can eventually be expanded, because local governments such as the Mid-Western Regional Council continue to struggle under the weight of the infrastructure they need to provide now and in the years ahead. Balancing the interests of agriculture and mining is one of the major challenges facing the Orange electorate and its neighbours. That will not be easy, but the work has begun. Not everyone in the Orange electorate shares in the modern day gold rush or the prosperity of the mining boom. For some in our electorate life remains a constant and sometimes bitter struggle.

During the recent election campaign I visited people living in conditions so appalling that I could scarcely believe it possible in this prosperous Australia of 2011. A couple of weeks ago I returned to one of those troubled areas for a community meeting and barbecue organised so that residents could share with me their concerns. They told me of how they felt like second-class citizens in their own city—forgotten by government and society at large. To the people of those areas who put their faith in me at the election just two months ago, I say that I will not forget you and I will work to ensure that our Government does not forget you.

I was born in Wagga Wagga and whilst I was young, my family lived for a time in Nairobi, Kenya, and San Francisco. We eventually settled in Maitland in the Hunter Valley. My parents by then operated a small business and it was they who taught me the value of hard work, initiative, perseverance and resilience. I was fortunate enough to attend Newcastle Grammar, and I would like to acknowledge my not so old headmaster, Brian Charlton, who is in the gallery today. It was at that school that I met Patricia Forsythe. Before Patricia entered the upper House of this Parliament she was a modern-day history teacher. She is also here today and I thank her for putting up with a class full of unruly lads, making what we thought then were hilarious gags and interjections.

I suspect Patricia may have had a different view of it at the time. It was she who first pointed me in the direction of the Liberal Party and I thank her and would like to acknowledge her continuing support. There is some irony in the fact that I have moved to the country and joined The Nationals whereas my father, who once ran for the seat of Maitland as a National, has moved to Sydney and joined the Liberals. After leaving Newcastle I attended university where I studied economics and then law. I spent four years at St Paul's College. I would like to thank the Warden of St Pauls, the Reverend Dr Ivan Head, for attending today and for his ongoing support.

After finishing law school and commencing life as a solicitor, my brothers and I decided we would move to Asia and start our own business licensing consumer products and promotions for international entertainment companies. My brothers went to Singapore and I was dispatched to Hong Kong. The day after I arrived I remember standing outside the Sogo department store in Causeway Bay, surrounded by a sea of people and thinking right, I guess I had better find an office. It was a long way from Largs in the Hunter Valley. Building a business from scratch across multiple countries was hard work, but I look back on those years with pride not least because my brothers and I did it together.

When I returned to Australia my first job as a solicitor was at the illustrious firm of Colin Biggers and Paisley, or "the fighting CBP" as it is known to its many friends. There I was lucky enough to be schooled in the art of litigation by two outstanding solicitors, Antony Riordan and Alex Ostermayer. Antony is also in the gallery today. The NT Power case that we ran for months and months in Darwin and that Antony would ultimately end successfully in the High Court, would prove to be one of the highlights of my legal career. In 2003 I was called to the bar, where I read on the ninth floor of Selborne Chambers, home of the doyen of the Sydney bar, Alister Henskens. He was a constant source of advice during my campaign and I thank him for his presence today.

After completing my reading I moved around the corner to Queen Square Chambers in Macquarie Street, of which I remained a member even after moving to Orange. I would like to thank Dr Robert Harper, SC, who joins us today, for all his support and assistance over the years. I believe him to be the only barrister in the country who speaks classical Greek. I am not sure even George Souris could top that one. No matter what side of politics you are on, no candidate enters this House without the support of many. I am the fourth National to hold the seat of Orange since 1947. I follow Sir Charles Cutler, Garry West and of course my immediate predecessor, the great Russell Turner.

Today I would like to thank and pay tribute to Russell. Russell and Diane are in the gallery today. It was Russell who laid the foundation for our recent electoral success and I have learnt a great deal from him. He is much loved and respected in our party and in our electorate. I would also like to make special mention of Jenny Gardiner, MLC, for her unwavering support and assistance throughout my campaign. Jenny is one of the keepers of our party's values and history and I simply would not have been able to properly run my campaign without her support and guidance. I will always be grateful for her help.

I thank my campaign director, Dave Pattinson and also Chris Blunt, Chairman of the Orange Branch of The Nationals. Along with Kieran Renshaw they have been with me from the very beginning. I am also greatly indebted to Rachael Hayes, whose ability to remain calm and organised in the face of unrelenting chaos is unsurpassed. A more committed and energetic campaign coordinator you would not find. To my campaign team Chris Messenger, Peter Bryan, Mitchell Lyons, Jamie Jones, Dick Niven, Sandy Walker, Guy and Sim Gaeta, and Royce Munro, I also say thank you, as I do to Alan Hay, Paul Davey, Ron Gander, the Hayes family, Wendy Wilson, Reg Kidd and also the great many party members and family friends who worked so hard on my campaign. I am truly humbled that so many have travelled so far to be here today, from not only the Orange, Wellington and Mudgee districts but also all over New South Wales.

I would like also to thank the team from The Nationals head office: Ben Franklin, Greg Dezman, Nathan Quigley and Douglas Martin. A candidate could not have asked for better support. I am also very grateful for the help and assistance of Andrew Stoner, State leader of The Nationals, Christine Ferguson, State chair of The Nationals, and all the MPs—both Liberal and Nationals—including the Premier, who travelled to my electorate to support my campaign. I would like to mention also and to thank David Brownhill, former senator and lion of the party, not only for being present today but for his wise counsel. I further wish to acknowledge and express my gratitude to an unsung Australian, Professor John Thompson, and also Margaret Lett and Maria Gonzalez. And I acknowledge the hard work of Bev Glover and Lachlan Paix who have made the transition into my role as local member a seamless one.

Finally, I would like to thank my family. I am lucky to have a close-knit family that has always been there when I have really needed it. To my father, Bob, and mother, Melva, and David and Vanessa Gee, Alison and Andrew Blattman, Matthew and Joanna Gee, Jan Lintott, and Scott and Ros Harbison and the Harbison family, words cannot express how grateful I am for everything you have done. I also express my gratitude to my old friend Romano Kwok. There are some more family members to whom I most definitely need to pay tribute. Indeed, they have told me in no uncertain terms that they expect a very good mention. They are my daughters, Amanda and Alexandra, and sons, Sam and Jonathan, who sit in the front row of the gallery this afternoon.

Having come to this place I am occasionally asked what my finest achievement or contribution to our society will be. The truth is I have already made it. It is that of my four children whom I love dearly and of whom I am immensely proud. Of course, to my darling wife, Tina, whom I met just a block from this House, I thank you for all your love and support and for the sacrifices that you have made in order that I could be here today. One of the challenges facing our party in recent years has been changing demographics. To the strains of funereal music it has been fashionable to suggest that our party is in its twilight years and that it would slip quietly into the night. I think that at this election the party has proved that rather than bemoaning changing demographics it can adapt to them.

Our party has renewed itself, and I am looking forward to working with my colleagues Paul Toole and Troy Grant. The Central West at last has a united voice. The National Party was born of the vision that we should right the imbalances of opportunity, of representation, of development and population between the cities and regions. My colleagues and I are all here today as trustees of that vision, and of that hope. It is the honour of my life to represent the people of the Orange electorate in this Parliament. I express my deep gratitude to them and today commit to representing them with the same qualities that they themselves possess—with courage and passion and energy, and an unshakable faith in the future of the Central West.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): I congratulate the member for Orange on his inaugural speech. I recognise the former member for Orange, Russell Turner, and all former members in the gallery. Thank you for being here.

LAW ENFORCEMENT (POWERS AND RESPONSIBILITIES) AMENDMENT (MOVE ON DIRECTIONS) BILL 2011

Agreement in Principle

Debate resumed from an earlier hour.

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta) [12.25 p.m.]: It gives me great pleasure to speak in debate on the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Amendment (Move On Directions) Bill 2011. I congratulate the Attorney General for introducing this legislation so early in the term of this Parliament—another sign that the Liberal-Nationals Government is delivering on its commitment not only to law and order but to getting the State moving and making New South Wales number one, as well as caring for the people of New South Wales, those who voted the Government into office on 26 March.

Members on both sides of the House have contributed to debate on this bill. The member for Toongabbie referred to the amendment in this bill as an insubstantial amendment, but that in itself is its beauty: it is simple and it does not need to be complicated. Some of the best legislation is simple. These are good laws, giving police the powers they need to solve problems on the street and problems that they face every day, and they do not need to be complicated. The member for Maroubra cited statistics that revealed that crime is reducing, which reminds me of a statement by Benjamin Disraeli in the late 1800s. He said, "There are three kinds of lies: lies, damned lies and statistics."

The member for Maroubra has only to walk down some of the streets in Sydney and in Parramatta to see the crime on our streets. We have become so used to crime on our streets that people do not report many incidents as they do not receive the desired outcomes. Anyone walking down our streets would see people hanging around for only one reason—they are looking for trouble, whether it is dealing in drugs or anything else—and they are up to no good. It is not the fault of the police. Our hardworking police have a difficult job to do—a job that was made even more difficult by the former Labor Government. Many hardworking police in my electorate are frustrated with the powers that they have, but this bill will go some way towards giving them more powers. Police need move-on powers, which is what this bill provides.

The bill was based on the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research identifying a significant rise in alcohol-related incidents, such as offensive behaviour, between 2005 and 2009. These provisions are a part of our Making our Streets Safe Again policy, which includes a number of commitments to address drunken and antisocial behaviour. The bill will strengthen existing move-on powers to apply to individuals rather than merely to groups of three or more; reintroduce an offence of drunk and disorderly conduct; and pilot three sobering up centres across New South Wales. Move-on powers will enable police to prevent or reduce antisocial behaviour without drawing people into the criminal system, a matter about which I will speak in more detail in a minute. Move-on powers, used as an enforcement tool against antisocial behaviour, are cost-effective and low intensity, and ensure that our police officers enforce public safety without being tied up in the volumes of paperwork with which they are faced every day.

As a result of this bill, police will be able to apply move-on directions to intoxicated persons, irrespective of whether they are part of a group and irrespective of whether other persons in the group are intoxicated. The cost of antisocial behaviour is not limited to the cost of legal enforcement. The cost of dealing with injuries caused by intoxicated persons who engage in antisocial behaviour is borne by emergency departments in hospitals throughout New South Wales. Sadly, I remind the House of the many failures of the former Labor Government. During the election campaign newspapers were full of incidents that were occurring in the Church Street Mall. Many concerns were expressed about people hanging around the mall for no good reason but particularly those who were intoxicated, dealing in drugs, waiting to buy drugs or who were up to public mischief. The Church Street Mall now has police officers walking its length and breadth and patrol cars are stationed in the mall to control antisocial behaviour.

For many years people asked the former State Labor Government to clarify the fate of Ermington police station. At night the Ermington police station is staffed by a single police officer. When a person phones the police station to ask a police officer to come out and see them, that sole police officer at the station is not allowed to leave. If someone has a problem, police officers have to come from the Granville Local Area Command, which often involves a 40-minute response time. People are sick of long delays in police responding to their calls, so they simply no longer phone the police. People have been asking for answers for years. It is only now under a Liberal-Nationals Government that the answers are forthcoming. The Government will undertake an audit of police numbers and antisocial incidents and decide the areas of greatest need so that local area commands can be situated where the community will be best served.

Shopkeepers in Harris Park often complain about antisocial behaviour. My constituents tell me that typically police take a long time to attend incidents, if they ever attend at all. Under the Liberal-Nationals Government the concerns that have been expressed about response times will be addressed. A wide area of the Parramatta electorate is supervised from the Granville Local Area Command. It takes police 40 minutes to drive over and see people at Dundas, Ermington and Telopea. In spite of those unfortunate and sad statistics, Parramatta does not suffer incidents of antisocial behaviour alone. Violence and antisocial problems occur right across New South Wales—a disappointing and negative aspect of Australian culture that is being perpetuated by a few members of a fringe element.

When I walk down the street to a shopping centre and talk to business people, shopkeepers and residents, it is clear that people are not happy with that situation. I agree with the statement made by the member for Campbelltown that the community likes to see police patrolling the streets. The police are a valuable part of the community, and when police are on the beat it sends a strong message to the community that police are in charge. Police presence assists in making problem-makers disappear, so police need to be more visible. This legislation is not targeted towards the consumption of alcohol but, rather, is directed at antisocial behaviour generally, which includes graffiti and illicit drugs.

Mr Geoff Provest: It was neglected under the Labor Government.

Dr GEOFF LEE: That is absolutely correct. Immediately prior to the March 2011 election, an Ermington shopkeeper told me about someone shooting up in his toilet at 10 o'clock in the morning in broad daylight. That is an example of the difficulties faced by shopkeepers and business people every day. Parramatta has many licensed venues. The latest reports clearly show that licensed venues are being better managed. Not one of the Parramatta licensed premises is number one on the priorities and issues list. The publicans in Parramatta are very responsible people. They support this type of legislation because they just want to get on with their business and serve members of their precinct. Venues such as the Parramatta RSL and the Parramatta Leagues Club play an important role in the community, not just because they provide fantastic entertainment but because they support community activities, such as sports, young sporting groups, community groups and fishing clubs of which I am a fan.

This amending bill's move-on powers represent proactive law enforcement. It is a preventive measure that will allow people to walk down the street and feel safe at all times. When this legislation is implemented, people will be able to have a night out without feeling harassed by hooligans. The benefits of this legislation will have a knock-on effect in emergency departments of hospitals by reducing demand for emergency services, especially on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights. We all know that Westmead Hospital in my electorate is one of the busiest hospitals in the State.

Mr Geoff Provest: It is a good hospital with hardworking doctors and nurses.

Dr GEOFF LEE: Indeed it is. The doctors and nurses at that hospital work very hard. Unfortunately, as a result of the former Labor Government's neglect, the hospital has recorded diminished emergency care rates evidenced by long waiting lists and achievement of only 43 per cent of the 75 per cent target rate for seeing patients within 40 minutes. That is a shame because in spite of Westmead Hospital being one of the largest teaching hospitals in New South Wales, currently it is ranked second last of all teaching hospitals in dispensing emergency treatment. This amending bill will enable police to take direct and appropriate action to control behaviour before it escalates and draws people into the already clogged criminal justice system. Parramatta has the second-largest justice precinct in Australia. This bill will result in reduced paperwork in a system that is already overloaded. It is a cost-effective way of nipping problems in the bud and allowing police to concentrate on more important and more serious matters.

The Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Mike Gallacher, visited the Parramatta electorate during the election campaign to hear about problems firsthand. I understand that he is working in conjunction with the Attorney General, and Minister for Justice to sort out the problems. This amending bill will go some way towards achieving that objective. As the member for Albury pointed out, it must be remembered that the reforms in the bill are not intended to penalise good people who like to have a good time, disadvantage people who have impaired mental health, or impinge upon the rights of people who are homeless. It is up to an individual whether they choose to drink alcohol and to what extent, but law-abiding citizens should not be penalised because others perpetuate antisocial behaviour. Providing the police with more powers will be an important benefit of the bill because it will give police the power to control problems before they escalate. This bill represents a proactive policy that is being adopted by the Government. It will make our streets safe. I commend this amending bill to the House.

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) [12.37 p.m.]: My contribution to debate on the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Amendment (Move On Directions) Bill 2011 will be brief. Members of this House must always be careful about infringing civil liberties. In considering this legislation, the question is which side of the line this legislation falls in striking a balance between individual rights and protection of public interest. I suggest it falls into the category of protecting civil liberties. This bill is an appropriate mechanism for an extension of police powers to reclaim a sense of wellbeing among communities throughout New South Wales. Certainly in Lake Macquarie there have been many instances relating to law and order that have caused people to tell me of their concern. Among the whole host of issues that I hope the Government will address is providing police with sufficient resources to be able to do their job and keep our community safe. This bill has been characterised during debate by our friends in the Labor Party as unwarranted.

Mr Geoff Provest: "Friends"? Are you using the term loosely?

Mr GREG PIPER: Perhaps "comrades"? Opposition members have characterised this bill as minor legislation that the Government is using to address small-target issues. I do not see it that way at all. This is responsible legislation that will meet the expectations of local communities. Without wishing to unfairly characterise the demographics that this bill targets, it is fair to say that most instances of antisocial behaviour

associated with intoxication, which this power will help police to address, occur among the younger generations. The younger generations are well aware of their existing rights and the laws that support the authorities. Police may have the mechanisms to deal with individuals who behave antisocially while intoxicated but it is quite clear that the community is not aware of those measures, which makes it more difficult for police to apply the powers.

This bill will send an unambiguous signal to those who commonly behave in an antisocial manner. The rights, wellbeing and safety of the broader community must be protected and enhanced. This bill does not take away any rights; it adds to everyone's safety, including those individuals whom this legislation might target. The bill provides for police to intervene early to keep even intoxicated people safe from the consequences of their own behaviour. Rather than condemn it, I commend the Government for taking this stance and introducing this initiative early. I commend the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Amendment (Move On Directions) Bill 2011 to the House.

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Parliamentary Secretary) [12.41 p.m.]: I strongly support the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Amendment (Move On Directions) Bill 2011. The object of the bill is to amend the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act 2002 to authorise a police officer to direct an intoxicated person to move on from a public place. The bill comprises only 11 lines, but that does not mean it is not important. At present a move-on direction may be given to an intoxicated person only if that person is one of a group of three or more similarly intoxicated people. The amendment means that there will no longer be a requirement for an intoxicated person to be in the company of other intoxicated persons for a move-on direction by police to apply; it will apply to intoxicated individuals regardless of whether they are alone, with another person or in a group.

Alcohol-related violence and antisocial behaviour are enormous concerns within the Pittwater community. Sadly, this problem seems to be shared among coastal communities and electorates in particular, and Pittwater is no exception. Certainly we have experienced seasons of increased violence, and the problem is yet to be tackled head on. New South Wales communities are under threat from people who are intoxicated or under the influence of a cocktail of drugs and alcohol, and the police are left to pick up the pieces. Our local police and hospital staff, particularly at Mona Vale Hospital in my electorate, are sick of this behaviour, as are our communities and this Government. That is why we are taking action.

The legislation responds directly to local community concern and to those concerns expressed to the police Minister and to every other member on this side of the House. I assume that members on the other side of the House have received similar pleas from their communities. This Government has made protecting our communities a priority by extending the suite of measures available to police. People are entitled to enjoy a night out without it being ruined by those affected by alcohol or drugs. The current move-on powers outlined in section 198 of the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act restrict police to giving directions only to intoxicated people in groups of three or more. These amendments will extend those powers to apply to individuals.

Members opposite have questioned the need for this legislation, citing that somehow it is unnecessary. My rebuttal is that the argument is one of threshold. Police should have move-on powers to protect the community but those powers should not be limited to the size of the congregating group. One intoxicated person behaving in a threatening and antisocial manner is as much reason to empower the police to move that person on as a group of three or more people behaving similarly. It is not logical to have an artificial threshold of three or more people before the power is enforceable. The member for Maroubra referred to some academic research that found that move-on powers tended to have a disproportionate impact on minority groups. If that is so it exposes a need to continue to address disadvantage. It is not a reason not to protect the community: police should have the power to intervene to ensure that communities are safe.

Basically, these amendments are common-sense changes. It takes only one person to spoil an evening out and to cause discomfort and even danger for others—it certainly does not take a group of three or more. Our police defuse situations and ensure that wherever possible damage, conflicts and assaults are averted rather than having to clean up the mess after they occur. The legislation gives police the direct power to intervene in these difficult and unpleasant situations and, hopefully, it will empower them to take action before any assaults, conflicts or property damage result.

As I have mentioned, antisocial behaviour by intoxicated persons is a particular issue in my community of Pittwater, and the problem is repeated along the northern beaches. Only a minority of people cause trouble, but the costs of their actions are borne by the entire community. Many local residents, shopkeepers, paramedics

and hospital staff, council officers, bus drivers, taxi operators and police have told me about the impacts of the behaviour of the few on the many. Alcohol-fuelled violence is a widespread community problem and particularly impacts on entertainment and retail areas—the public areas in which this bill will empower police to take action. Those hot spots in the Pittwater electorate are Village Park and Pittwater Place in Mona Vale, Berry Reserve in Narrabeen, Barrenjoey Road in Newport and Avalon Village. At times some of these areas are plagued by drunken individuals, often under-age drinkers, with a history of disturbances and violence of which we are not proud.

Pittwater's ratepayers are particularly angry at having to foot the bill for private security guards in Mona Vale central business district to put right damage caused by vandals. I commend the work that Pittwater council is doing with local businesses through the Pittwater Village Safety Working Party and the Mona Vale, Newport, Avalon and Narrabeen Lakes chambers of commerce. Outside the village centres parents are too scared to hold parties for their children because of the risk of gatecrashers and those affected by alcohol. For example, the riot squad was deployed to Pittwater on 25 occasions in the 2009-10 statistical period.

Mr Andrew Constance: To your place?

Mr ROB STOKES: No, they were not called to my place—although if anyone saw my children at six o'clock in the morning they might argue that the riot squad should attend. The riot squad is often called to incidents that have been ignited by the action of only one or two people, not necessarily three or more. It is responsible and sensible to broaden the ability of police officers to intervene to defuse those situations. For example, I was at Mona Vale beach as part of the surf patrol on Australia Day when I noted groups of two or more starting to congregate. There was clearly going to be a problem—as there has been in the past few years on Australia Day at Mona Vale beach—and, sure enough, it ended with a lot of violence and under-age drinking on the beach. A 16-year-old girl was taken to Mona Vale Hospital after being glassed in the head when a brawl broke out. Lifesavers who went to assist her were threatened by other young people, which was disgraceful. Police need to be able to intervene to prevent such events. The legislation is therefore an important step in the process of addressing those issues. It is important because it gives police the sorts of powers they need. In that context, I reflect on the wonderful work of the Northern Beaches Local Area Command.

Mr Geoff Provest: Hear! Hear!

Mr ROB STOKES: I note the assistance of Government members, who I know support the police in their local communities. Last Wednesday I had the pleasure of attending the Northern Beaches Local Area Command awards presentation ceremony at which I represented the member for Wakehurst, the member for Manly and the member for Davidson. It was a special opportunity for me to thank our local police for their outstanding work. The awards were presented by Acting Assistant Commissioner Mark Wright and Northern Beaches Police Superintendent Doreen Cruickshank. I will identify why police officers need to be able to act to protect the community and also to ensure that situations do not develop to such an extent that the officers themselves are exposed to risk or violence.

The officers who were awarded for bravery and for distinguished service were Senior Constable Matthew Thompson, who received a Region Commander's Citation for his bravery during an armed robbery in Narrabeen in 2007; and Leading Senior Constable Richard Brown and Detective Senior Constable Sean McLoughlin, who received the Emergency and Recovery Response Medal for their outstanding work during the horrific storm that hit the Central Coast and Hunter Valley in June 2007. Six local officers were honoured for 20 years of service and three were honoured for 30 years of continued service. They are the sorts of men and women who need our support, and this bill goes a long way to giving them the powers they require to protect our communities.

Police are very aware of the duty of care that is owed to officers and to the community in relation to the impact of alcohol-related violence that puts them at risk. The New South Wales Police Force estimates that alcohol was a factor in more than 70 per cent of street incidents last year, and more than 560 police officers were injured in alcohol-related incidents across New South Wales in 2009. Those basic statistics prove that alcohol-fuelled violence is a real problem—and it is not just groups of three or more who cause trouble. Just two individuals in concert can cause a huge amount of damage and it is important that police have the powers outlined in the bill. Obviously empowering police officers in this way is not enough by itself. We need to ensure that there is proper education in our communities, in our schools and in our homes, about the dangers of alcohol and the need to protect children from its effects for as long as possible—at least until adulthood, although there is evidence that young adults can be severely damaged by alcohol when used inappropriately.

I commend the work of others in my local community. Their efforts, together with the powers in this bill, constitute important community action. For example, Point Zero under the direction of Chairman Tony Bates provides a community response to those people—particularly the young—who are on the streets and who may be intoxicated, at risk or vulnerable. Point Zero and its bus do an amazing job keeping those young people safe. I note the thoughtful contribution by the member for Lake Macquarie, who noted the balancing act that needs to be performed in this type of legislation to ensure that civil liberties are protected.

I also note that appropriate regulations will still apply, including that the direction given by a police officer must be reasonable in the circumstances and given to prevent injury or damage or to reduce the risk to public safety, and that the period during which a person may be directed not to return to a public place is not to exceed six hours. I believe the powers are limited appropriately, and police officers may act only when it is reasonable to do so in the circumstances. In conclusion, it is a nonsense to suggest that move-on powers should apply only to groups of three or more. It is obvious that if an intoxicated person is behaving in a threatening or antisocial manner the police should have the powers they need to keep the community safe. That is common sense.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) [12.56 p.m.]: The Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Amendment (Move On Directions) Bill 2011 is a small step in a very long journey. The object of the bill is to amend the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act 2002 and to authorise a police officer to direct an intoxicated person to move on from a public place. At present, such direction may be given only to an intoxicated person who is in a group of three or more intoxicated people. "Intoxication" replaced the drunk and disorderly description, and the Commissioner of Police has advised that it applies to people under the influence of drugs, alcohol and other substances that affect their behaviour on the streets.

I support the legislation and the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, the Hon. Michael Gallacher. I believe it is the first small step towards returning power to our local police. In the past 16 years various powers that police used to protect local communities have been removed. Too often we get caught up in civil rights debates and neglect the silent majority in local communities. In the past 18 months to two years, there has been an enormous amount of antisocial behaviour on the streets of the Tweed electorate caused by drug or alcohol abuse. That is to the detriment of our local community.

I have described in this Chamber how about a year ago youths affected by alcohol or drugs picked on and harassed a 60-year-old gentleman in our town. Unfortunately, that gentleman thought his only way out was to commit suicide, which he did in front of the house of the alleged perpetrators. Residents have held a number of street protests and met with local police officers to discuss the problem. I have joined police officers on several 12-hour shifts on Friday and Saturday nights, and I encourage newly elected members to do the same in their electorates. I have sat in the back of a highway patrol car for hour upon hour observing random breath testing operations.

It is one thing to read and hear reports and local media items about the difficulties that police have in dealing with antisocial behaviour and intoxicated people on our streets, but it is quite a different thing to see police dealing with these problems at 3 or 4 o'clock in the morning. When I became a member of this place I was aware of comment about domestic violence, child abuse and so on, but I had not witnessed it to any great extent. Being with police at 3 or 4 o'clock in the morning and seeing incidents of domestic violence, children suffering and the elderly being too scared to leave their own homes is really sobering. The one common denominator in the number of trips that I had with police—and I very much appreciate Superintendent Stuart Wilkins and Sergeant Troy Hamilton for allowing me to accompany police—was that they need basic powers to make our streets safe. This is what the local community wants.

I am sure one of the main complaints made to members in their electorate offices is lack of police numbers and inadequate police powers. When you talk to the fine, hardworking men and women who are out policing our streets you find that they are the ones seeking that power. I applaud the Minister for Police for this measure, but the journey to restoring law and order is a fairly long journey because police powers have been eroded over a long time. The northern boundary of the Tweed borders the Gold Coast, and therefore I am aware that Queensland police have had significantly greater move-on powers than have the New South Wales police—until the introduction of this bill. Our border with Queensland is the other side of the street; there is no river or fence.

I have witnessed Queensland police actually say to intoxicated persons on the street, "Please move to the other side of the street, otherwise we will be forced to arrest you on this side." In that regard Queensland has been exporting its trouble to New South Wales. For the past 27 years I have been the licensee of a number of large liquor venues, in Tweed Heads and in Sydney, notably at the famous Revesby Workers Club in Bankstown. That is a fine club, and it will continue to be a fine club. In the 4½ to 5 years I was at Revesby Workers I attended court on 27 occasions in relation to antisocial behaviour that had occurred on the club's premises or in the surrounding area. I saw things that I never wanted to see. Back then, I accompanied police on part of their rounds and saw the enormous hardships they faced. They need the backing of the law.

The use of move-on powers as an enforcement tool against antisocial behaviour is cost effective and low intensity so that police can ensure public safety without being tied up in paperwork. Currently, the Tweed has little public transport after about 9 or 10 o'clock at night other than a bus service emanating from Queensland. Unfortunately, some six years ago the Labor Party took away our train; it did not think we needed it. We are left with very little by way of a public transport system. The Gold Coast actually funded a free bus to transport patrons to and from licensed venues on both sides of the border, both in Tweed Heads and in Queensland. That bus started operating six months ago.

Back then I asked the Labor Minister for Police, as well as a number of Labor Ministers—I lost track along the way because they were changing like a revolving door—whether the Tweed could have some funding. I was told none was available. Yet the Queensland Government thought that was a very good idea—and it is. It allows young people to go home without causing disturbances on the street. This is an important bill, but it is but a small step in a long process. I am buoyed by the attitude and the support of the incumbent Minister for Police in engaging his Queensland counterpart to make this part of New South Wales fairly safe. I know that a number of the elderly in my town regard this as a very positive step. I believe it is. I am sure there is a lot more to come. Empowering our local police force, which does a fabulous job, is a step in the right direction. I wholeheartedly commend the bill to the House.

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

[The Acting-Speaker (Ms Melanie Gibbons) left the chair at 1.05 p.m. The House resumed at 2.15 p.m.]

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I welcome the former member for Orange, Mr Russell Turner, and his wife, Dianne to the gallery, as well as former Australian Senator Mr David Brownhill. I also welcome members of the National Party from Orange, Wellington and Mudgee.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Notices of Motions

Government Business Notices of Motions (for Bills) given.

QUESTION TIME

[Question time commenced at 2.21 p.m.]

POLICE SALARIES AND CONDITIONS

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: My question is directed to the Premier. Which of his members of Parliament have joined the members representing the electorates of Orange, Dubbo, Bathurst, Oatley and Menai in supporting their local police by lobbying to stop his legislation to slash wages and entitlements?

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: All of my members support the New South Wales police. But that cannot be said for the member for Kogarah. The member for Kogarah who is not even—

[Interruption]

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: It cannot be said for the member for Kogarah, who has disobeyed and ignored police instructions more than anyone else in this House. I repeat for the Leader of the Opposition: The wages policy applies to public service departments, the government service, independent statutory bodies, any other public sector service within the meaning of the Public Sector Employment and Management Act 2002 and

State-owned corporations. The policy applies to all negotiations, variations, claims or offers by management that impact on wages, salaries and employment conditions, whether or not they are formalised in an award, agreement or any other arrangement. It could not be clearer.

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: The member for Canterbury says, "That's why they are all worried." I have just quoted from Labor's wages policy.

The SPEAKER: Order! Government members will come to order.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: I have to say that if I did not know the member was a Canterbury supporter I would think she was a bunny.

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: What we are doing is continuing the former Government's wages policy, with two exceptions. We are not going to stick taxpayers with a \$900 million bill—

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: —for wage order increases over and above inflation—

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: —that were paid on the promise of productivity savings that those opposite failed to ensure were delivered. The second thing is we are going to ensure that the Industrial Relations Commission—

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: —not the Industrial Court, as Justice Boland would have you believe—

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: —gives effect to the Government's wages policy. Why? There is no better source on this than former Treasurer Michael Egan, who said that actions of the Industrial Commission ignoring their wages policy prior to 2007—

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: —added half a billion dollars to the annual wages bill each year. That is half a billion dollars that could have gone into improving services; half a billion dollars each year that could have gone into improving infrastructure across the city and the State. We were elected to make tough decisions; we were elected to fix the mess in New South Wales; we were elected above all to restore economic growth to this State. We will continue to make those decisions and we will continue to apply the wages policy that I read earlier that was put in place by those opposite in 2007 when the Leader of the Opposition was head of Unions NSW. If it was good enough for them it is good enough for us. But we will actually deliver the policy and we will require the Industrial Commission to give effect to the State's wages policy.

POKER MACHINES

Mr GEOFF PROVEST: My question is addressed to the Premier. What action will the Government take if the Commonwealth proceeds with its plan to introduce a compulsory pre-commitment scheme for poker machines?

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: I thank the member for Tweed for the question and his ongoing interest in clubs and all they do across our communities. He has worked in the club movement and after he left the club movement and worked in education he was also able to see firsthand the impact of clubs in his area. He as a local member, like all local members, understands the importance of the club movement. It beggars belief that

today we are being held to ransom by a Federal member of Parliament from Tasmania who secured just 13,788 votes in last year's Federal election. That is the situation because the Independent member for Denison in Tasmania, Andrew Wilkie, is forcing the Federal Labor Government to introduce a compulsory pre-commitment scheme for poker machines and the deadline is today. Let us put the absurdity of Mr Wilkie's position in perspective. Even the Leader of the Opposition, in Blacktown, got more than 14,000 votes in the last election. Even the member for Kogarah, when she was not evading police, managed to collect 15,000 votes in her seat.

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: Imagine if either of those two had control of the Federal Parliament. That is how serious and absurd this situation is. Yet Mr Wilkie, who secured fewer votes than those two high flyers opposite, is able to use his position to force a Prime Minister to agree to a scheme that no State wants. He set the deadline of today for the Federal Government to reach agreement with the States on pre-commitment or the Federal Government will lose his support. That of course puts the Gillard Government in danger of losing office in Canberra. Naturally, the Federal Government is bowing to pressure from Mr Wilkie, with families Minister Jenny Macklin saying that the legislation is already being written whether the States like it or not.

It is an unsatisfactory situation when a single member of Parliament with such a small support base is able to dictate to the Federal Government how to legislate on State issues like poker machines. We all agree that appropriate action should be taken to minimise problem gambling. That is why my Government supports voluntary pre-commitment where people who feel the need to limit their spending can do so. If people have a problem in these areas the solution has to start with the people themselves. It has to start with personal responsibility. My Government will continue to look at harm minimisation reforms that assist the small percentage of people who are at risk of developing gaming problems.

However, this move by the Commonwealth goes well beyond pre-commitment. I put it on the record that we will fight to preserve those rights. We have no choice but to take up the fight with the Commonwealth on this matter. If this reform is introduced by the Federal Government it will cost taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars and up to 16,000 jobs across the clubs movement. What the Commonwealth needs to tell us but has so far failed to detail is how this money will be returned to the State. If the Commonwealth proceeds with this ill-conceived reform New South Wales has to be paid compensation for the revenue it loses. Otherwise we will be looking to the Commonwealth and the Labor Party to tell the people of New South Wales which hospitals, which schools, which police stations and what other facilities will be closed or will miss out on being built as a result of this denial of revenue.

Surely the time has come for those opposite to put their position on this matter clearly to the public. If they support the acts of their Federal colleagues, they should say so and they should tell the people of New South Wales where they want cuts in services to take place. While those opposite remain silent on this matter, my side of politics will continue to fight the Commonwealth Government. We are joined by the Premiers from all States, Liberal and Labor, who are opposed to the Commonwealth's compulsory pre-commitment scheme and who demand compensation also for any revenue lost as a result of that legislation.

SOLAR BONUS SCHEME

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: My question is directed to the Minister for Fair Trading. Given that Blacktown has an uptake rate lower than 15 other areas, with less than 1 per cent of households having installed solar panels, is the Minister's focus on my electorate just another cynical political stunt from his Government?

The SPEAKER: Order! Government members will come to order. The member for Kiama will come to order.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: This is the third question about fair trading issues from Labor—the Leader of the Opposition is only the third person to take any interest in this matter. The temporary Leader of the Opposition is dishonestly playing politics with solar panel safety. His false claims yesterday were simply not true. The results have been provided to media outlets to enable them to release those results to the public. Opposition members should get their facts right. If they want a copy of the report they can ask me for it. I was waiting in my office last night for a phone call. This morning I was waiting for the member to come to see me. Instead, Captain Solar over there complained when I announced that we would be checking solar installations in Blacktown. I have in my hand a statistical summary of the concentration of complaints made to Fair Trading in relation to these installations. Sydney and Blacktown are both included in the summary and I can provide members with additional information.

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

Dr Andrew McDonald: Point of order: As you well know, the Minister is not allowed to wave props around.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Macquarie Fields is correct. I am sure the Minister will dispense with the prop shortly.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: Blacktown is right in the middle of the map.

The SPEAKER: Order! The use of props is disorderly. The Minister will proceed with his answer.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: I am happy to table the map. Opposition members should hide their heads in shame for not acting faster in protecting consumers in New South Wales. I ask members to pass that map around and they should then pass it over to the Leader of the Opposition. Captain Solar or Corporal Cover-up—Comrade Cover-Up to his Labor mates—knew there were problems in the scheme last year. Those opposite were warned on six occasions.

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

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: Those opposite are all former Ministers who are guilty because they knew the issue of solar safety went to Cabinet. I remind the House of six different warnings that were given to the former Government: on 8 June last year it received a warning from the Home Building Advisory Council; on 29 June 2010 various electricity providers raised their concerns; on 20 July the then shadow Minister once again did a fantastic job of bringing problems within the scheme to the attention of the House and the Government; on 27 July Fair Trading supplied the Government with briefs regarding unqualified people performing below-standard work or installing cheap, non-approved imports.

On 28 September 2010 the Master Builders Association once again warned the Government about issues of licensing and product standards; and, finally, on 28 January the Electrical Equipment Safety Advisory Committee warned the former Government about solar panel installation issues. The former Government betrayed legitimate installers in the industry by ignoring serious concerns that they raised with it on six different occasions. The Department of Fair Trading should be congratulated. On Thursday two weeks ago it told me that there was an issue in Port Macquarie. I did what members on this side of the House always do—I acted promptly.

Ms Linda Burney: Point of order: My point of order relates to relevance under Standing Order 129. The question was specifically about Blacktown and its selection, and whether the Minister was just being political.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. The Minister's answer has been generally relevant. Government members will come to order.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: If Opposition members were presented with the facts that I have been presented with they should have acted in a timely manner, as I have to do under section 86 of the Act. In June last year Opposition members knew about the dangers and contractual problems relating to the rollout but they did nothing. We acted in a timely way. Opposition members, looking after their mates, would have appointed one or two mates to get the contract to look at this issue. In contrast, I immediately went to Fair Trading the following day and instructed it to inform the public about the safety issues in Port Macquarie. I then instructed the department to carry out further audits. I advised Fair Trading—and this is in the note—that those audits should be conducted with respect to safety concerns. [*Time expired.*]

GRAFFITI

Mr JOHN FLOWERS: My question is addressed to the Attorney General. What action is the Government taking to combat graffiti across the State?

Mr GREG SMITH: I thank the member for Rockdale for his question—the first Liberal member since that seat was created in 1941. Rockdale was Frank Sartor's seat and I know that he is writing a biography about it which will be interesting to read.

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

Mr GREG SMITH: The member for Rockdale has been subjected to intense abuse and unfair treatment and he has shown great dignity and control in the face of mischievous provocation. He is rightly concerned about graffiti in his area, as I am sure all members are. A number of councils, including Rockdale council, have been forced to increase their constituents' rates to meet day-to-day costs of graffiti removal. I understand that in Rockdale the trouble spots are on West Botany Street, the Princes Highway and along the canals and skate park in Bicentennial Park. The Liberal-Nationals went to the election promising a tough approach on graffiti, not the slap-on-the-wrist approach of Labor.

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

Mr GREG SMITH: The cost to the community of this State is at least \$100 million. Of course, the member for Maroubra has a major graffiti problem. As I doorknocked around his electorate I saw it—\$50 million paid by RailCorp alone.

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

Mr GREG SMITH: The Mayor of Blacktown, a Labor man, told me on a visit to Lalor Park on Graffiti Action Day, on 15 May, that his council alone spent \$850,000 last year in cleaning up graffiti. That is money coming out of the pockets of ratepayers which should be used to fix gutters, put in footpaths and fix potholes in roads. There is not nearly enough money for councils to spend on essential items because they are wasting so much on cleaning up the mess. The problem of graffiti is caused by serial offenders and juvenile boys—there might well be some opposite, judging from some of the questions that we are being asked. There is a great difference between graffiti art on designated walls and the rubbish that is around the streets, on gutters, on our railway stations and everywhere else in our State that is just vandalism.

The O'Farrell Government will implement the Government's election commitments in relation to graffiti by requiring juvenile graffiti vandals to appear before a court for a graffiti offence. The Government will give courts the power to suspend an offender's drivers licence or impose other tough restrictions on his or her drivers licence. Cleaning up graffiti will be a condition of any court-imposed community service order that is imposed upon graffiti offenders. Requiring juveniles to appear before a court for a graffiti offence is intended to emphasise the seriousness of the offence and highlight that damaging or defacing property is not a trivial matter. The former Labor Government treated graffiti as trivial.

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

Mr GREG SMITH: The former Labor Government ignored the community protests and the screaming that resulted from the scourge of graffiti. Wollongong is a disgrace as far as graffiti is concerned.

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

Mr GREG SMITH: Any parent of young adults would know that there is nothing more valuable to young people than their drivers licence.

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

Mr GREG SMITH: That is why, when someone is guilty of a graffiti offence under the Government's legislation, a court will have power to impose orders affecting an offender's drivers licence conditions. The courts will be able to suspend a driver's licence for up to six months or extend the period for which an offender holds an L or P plate for up to six months. Members opposite should bear in mind that courts will be able to impose on holders of full licences a limit on the number of accrued demerit points over a specified period up to six months. A drivers licence order, including a graffiti licence order, is a penalty that can be imposed on its own, just like a fine or a sentence of imprisonment, or it can be imposed in addition to any other penalty.

The bill minimises the risk of secondary offending by ensuring that licence suspension is one of a number of penalty options. Under the legislation that I will introduce, community service orders requiring the offender to perform graffiti clean-up work will be required to be made unless it is reasonably impracticable to do so. If an order is not made, a court will be required to give reasons why such an order has not been made.

That will assist in ensuring there is adequate regard in the sentencing process to the seriousness of graffiti offences and it will assist the Government to identify any further tweaking that might ensure every offender possible cleans up graffiti.

Dr Andrew McDonald: What has the Law Society got to say about that?

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Macquarie Fields to order.

Mr GREG SMITH: This is legislation that will do something about graffiti, not like the nonsense introduced by the former Government, which included the member for Macquarie Fields, that was not enforced. It is for that reason among others that Labor was chucked out of office. The community is sick of graffiti and sick of Labor. [*Time expired.*]

SOLAR BONUS SCHEME

Ms LINDA BURNEY: My question is directed to the Minister for Fair Trading. In the light of his previous answer, what directions did he give Fair Trading in the selection of areas for solar panel inspections?

Mr Barry O'Farrell: He answered that yesterday.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the Leader of the Opposition to order. Government members will come to order.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: As the Premier quite correctly points out, given the level of recycling of the member for Canterbury, she should be very active within the shadow Environment portfolio. Must I present the map again? Is the map here?

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind the Minister that the use of props is disorderly.

Ms Linda Burney: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! I have already ruled on the point of order. The Minister has the call.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: I am happy to provide an answer as many times as Labor members wish. They can keep asking me dorothy dixers, but what Labor members should learn is that when they get a letter from "Robbo" with a question, it is not their "Robbo", the Leader of the Opposition, but me. As I informed the House yesterday, the next round of at least 500 checks will be carried out in Baulkham Hills, Blacktown, Kellyville and surrounding areas based on their high rate of installation of solar panels.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! What is the member's point of order? The Minister is only five seconds into his answer.

Mr Michael Daley: No, the Minister is more than five seconds into a non-answer, Madam Speaker, and that has been the case on two days.

The SPEAKER: Order! What is the member's point of order?

Mr Michael Daley: My point of order is that it is a very specific question. He has avoided answering on two days.

Mr John Williams: What is your point of order?

Mr Michael Daley: The point of order is relevance. We are not talking about the next round of investigations.

The SPEAKER: Order! I understand the point of order. I am sure the Minister is about to answer the question.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: This is the second time in two days I have been answering this question. As I informed the House yesterday, the next round of at least 500 checks will be carried out in Baulkham Hills, Blacktown, Kellyville and surrounding areas based on their high rate of installation of solar panels and complaint data.

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

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: I know there is a lot of complaint data from constituents of the Leader of the Opposition, who is the member for Blacktown. Blacktown is a "safe" Labor seat with a margin of 3.7 per cent.

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

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: I make it quite clear that the department was directed to conduct further audits. They were decided by professional staff—the good people at Fair Trading that the member for Canterbury attacks time and time again. Those officers are trying to do their jobs. They are good public servants. The checks were based on high rates of installation of solar panels and complaint data.

Mr Barry O'Farrell: Where was it highest?

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: The map that has been handed to me shows that the professionals in our investigation units have come up with the areas of Baulkham Hills, Blacktown, Kellyville and surrounding areas. That is based on the higher rate of installation of solar panels and complaint data.

CARBON TAX

Mr JOHN WILLIAMS: My question is addressed to the Treasurer. What will be the effect of a carbon tax imposed by the Federal Labor Government on New South Wales State-owned electricity businesses?

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I thank the member for his question and congratulate him on his election outcome. We all remember that in 2007 Labor said he would never make it. They said he would not win the 2007 election. He not only won the 2007 election but also won at the March 2011 election with 77.2 per cent of the two-party preferred vote in what was formerly a marginal electorate. Why was he successful? He was successful because he listened to his community.

Mr John Barilaro: And he was against Labor.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: That was another reason. When he was listening to members of his community, they were all talking about the cost of living. They understood that Federal Labor has been imposing costs on families across the State and across the economy. The New South Wales Government is pleased to say that the mandate of the O'Farrell Government is to protect the interests of the State after the State endured 16 years of Labor looking after itself. I have no doubt that the carbon tax will increase the costs of living. It will slash jobs and investment. New South Wales has the most to lose from a carbon tax. We have the largest energy market, the largest power generators and accordingly the carbon tax will have the greatest impact on New South Wales jobs and prices of all places in Australia.

The studies indicate that all regions in New South Wales, including the Hunter Valley and the Illawarra that are represented by good Government members, are likely to experience significant loss of jobs and investment. Frontier Economics found in previous forecasts that by 2050 the Hunter will lose more than 13,000 jobs and \$1.2 billion in economic activity. Against that background the Federal Labor Government wants to impose a tax that places our economy at a competitive disadvantage yet will have next to no impact on global emissions. Today reports indicate that Russia, Canada and Japan have confirmed that they will not join a second round of Kyoto carbon cuts because developing companies such as China are not required to do so. The United States of America has reiterated that it will remain outside the treaty. Nevertheless, Labor wants a new tax on everything so that we can set an example to the rest of the world—an example that the rest of the world will not notice and will not follow.

I know that electricity prices in the State have been increasing, and I know why. In fact, electricity prices have increased 60 per cent over the past five years whereas the consumer price index has increased by only 16 per cent. The imposition of a carbon tax will mean that electricity prices will increase even more. Why

have prices increased before the imposition of a carbon tax? That is because of Labor's mismanagement. Over the past 16 years Labor has ripped dividends and taxes out of the electricity industry worth \$15.3 billion, which is equivalent to more than \$5,000 for every single household in New South Wales. At the same time Labor failed to invest sufficiently in infrastructure, and the people of New South Wales are now confronted with a catch-up. The consequential infrastructure spend has resulted in increased prices.

The O'Farrell Government has refused to yield and has placed a cap on dividends and forecast budget levels. No longer will the households of New South Wales have to subsidise Labor's mismanagement. There is so much to say about the electricity gentrader transactions, but suffice it to say that at every point and turn Labor's mismanagement is costing families in this State dearly. An examination of the impact of a carbon tax on the electricity stocks reveals that the State Government is the owner of one of the largest electricity businesses in the nation, which means New South Wales particularly is exposed to loss.

For example, Macquarie Generation, which represents about 20 per cent of coal-fired capacity in Australia, has written to the Commonwealth, as it should, to outline the consequences of a carbon price for the sector. These include, under previous forecasts, that the value of Macquarie Generation fall by about \$2 billion—that is \$2 billion lost to the State; that there will be a 120 per cent increase in annual operating costs, which is \$600 million a year going straight back to electricity bills across this State; and that there will be a reduction in total payments to New South Wales of approximately \$7 billion over its remaining economic life.

State Labor has been silent on this; we have heard nothing from it. Why did it not act when this was announced? Why is it not putting its position on the table? Why is it not standing up for our State, our industry, our jobs or investment here? Its Federal Labor colleagues are riding roughshod over the New South Wales economy getting rid of jobs and investment. State Labor is not standing up. We know the Leader of the Opposition appears today to support a carbon tax. We know that the shadow Treasurer appears to not support a carbon tax because he said at a forum that coal is so cheap we would be silly to leave it in the ground. That may well be part of the leadership tensions on the other side. In that instance the shadow Treasurer wins because the State deserves better. [*Time expired.*]

MEMBER FOR ROCKDALE

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: My question is directed to the Attorney General. On becoming aware that the member for Rockdale was in receipt of a breakdown pension, what steps did the Attorney General take to inform the Premier's office or other Cabinet members and when?

Mr GREG SMITH: None.

ROYAL NORTH SHORE HOSPITAL REDEVELOPMENT

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA: My question is addressed to the Minister for Health. Will the Minister inform the House about problems with the Royal North Shore Hospital Redevelopment inherited from the former Labor Government?

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: I thank the member for Davidson for his question. He is an excellent member who shares my concern and those of many members on this side of the House who rely on the fantastic work of the doctors, nurses, allied health professionals and others who work at Royal North Shore Hospital. The member was not present at the rally outside Parliament House today to hear what they had to say about us. They booed the shadow Minister and gave great applause to the Minister for Health.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Macquarie Fields will come to order.

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: I will tell the House about the litany of failures with the Royal North Shore redevelopment that we inherited from the previous Labor Government. Those words are contained in a letter I received from the Medical Staff Council at the rally outside today. The following is the history of the redevelopment. The original concept master plan was developed in 2007. A parliamentary review of the hospital followed numerous patient problems. Pointed out at the inquiry was the lack of a clinical services plan across the area, no proper planning for the new Royal North Shore Hospital, a lack of real engagement of clinicians in the planning and redevelopment of the hospital, and concerns about the detail of the development, particularly the lack of sufficient beds.

Ms Cherie Burton: What are you going to do about it?

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: The member for Kogarah should listen carefully.

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

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: This evidence about the variation of the clinical plans was given to the inquiry by Professor Leslie Burnett, who was director of pathology services. He said:

The blood bank was demolished and not replaced. You cannot have operating theatres without a blood bank. The anatomical pathology department was cut in half and the pathologists and their microscopes were separated from where the specimens were being cut, so they could not report the specimens ...

The pneumatic tube system—

which was used to deliver the specimens—

was demolished. It could arrive there by lift but the lift well was demolished. It could arrive there by corridor but the corridors were demolished.

And so it continues. These are the details of the previous plan. What happened? The concept plan was amended in 2010 but the brief provided by the former Labor Government led to many problems that were solved only after much public disclosure in this House by me, other members of this House, by clinicians who went to the media and only after drawn-out negotiations with doctors who had to fight every inch of the way for a resolution. I will summarise the problems. The plan started off with too few theatres, which also were too small. The theatres were not big enough to treat patients. A helipad was originally intended for the Douglas Building, from where patients would have to be brought down in an elevator and transported across a 450-metre walkway to the new building. The same applied to the maternity unit: a woman in labour and desperately needing an urgent caesarean would have to be put on a trolley and taken across a 450-metre walkway to the new building.

Dr Andrew McDonald: That's been fixed too, Jillian.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Macquarie Fields to order for the second time.

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: The shadow Minister says that has been fixed. It was fixed only because the doctors protested loudly and clearly with my support. His Government would not have let it happen. What remains to be done? We still have too few beds, we still need to accommodate patients in allied health, rehab, subacute care, child care, family accommodation because Rotary Lodge was demolished and the hydrotherapy pool. The land proposed to be sold has changed from 176 square metres to 186 square metres. These issues now are the subject of a petition with over 13,000 signatures that will be discussed tomorrow.

Dr Andrew McDonald: Organised by you.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Macquarie Fields will come to order.

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: The shadow Minister said it was organised by me. I hope the 13,000 signatories—the doctors, nurses, cleaners, cooks and everyone else who works at that hospital, and the members of the public—hear the comments of the shadow Minister. Effectively he has said that this petition was orchestrated by us. The shadow Minister was happy to walk around that hospital with his stethoscope saying, "This is the place where I trained." The shadow Minister should get his act together. He is responsible for the mess. In opposition I promised to freeze proposed land sales until a campus plan is developed. In government I have done just that: I froze the land sale. On day 10 I started the process of developing the campus plan. It will be finished.

WHITE BAY REDEVELOPMENT

Mr JAMIE PARKER: I direct my question to the Minister for Planning. Given that the former Government's decision to relocate a cruise ship terminal to White Bay is not supported by the main user—the transport and tourism industry body—local councils or the local community, and the Deputy Premier has stated that White Bay was not the optimal site, will the Minister reverse the decision to relocate the cruise ship terminal to White Bay?

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: I thank the member for Balmain for his question. As a result of the issues around White Bay and many other communities across this State that reduced this lot to a mere rump of what it was previously, I congratulate the member for Balmain because he was part of a conspiracy by No. 42, who is not present today. No. 42 has disappeared; she is out job hunting. The member for Balmain was not in this place during the notable period when No. 42 told us, "I'm nobody's protégé, I'm nobody's puppet and I'm nobody's girl." But it turned out that she was. As former Premier Rees pointed out, she was a puppet of the former member for Fairfield, Joe Tripodi, and of Eddie Obeid.

Ms Cherie Burton: Point of order: my point of order is relevance. I ask that the Minister be directed back to the question, which was very specific. We would all like to hear the answer.

The SPEAKER: Order! We all would like to hear the answer. I am sure the Minister is about to answer the question.

Dr Andrew McDonald: You forgot your notes again.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: I do not need my notes. I remind the member for Balmain that prior to the 2007 election the Australian Labor Party promised that a consultative committee would be established—a reference group—to undertake a complete community review of the White Bay precinct.

Mr John Robertson: What are you going to do? What will you do?

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: Robbo, it is so good to have you here—solar reflection and all.

Mr Barry O'Farrell: The Sun King.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: Yes, the Sun King. I indicate to the member for Balmain that I sought advice from the department shortly after 26 March and discovered that in his capacity as Mayor of Leichhardt he wrote in 2009, as did the member for Sydney in her capacity as the Lord Mayor of Sydney, seeking representation on the task force that was established following the 2007 promise. It took the Labor Party two years to get the task force up and running, and a little longer to get the reference group together. From memory, I was told when I was shadow Minister that former Premier Keneally attended just one meeting of the reference group. The net result was that the reference group felt it was disenfranchised and the Balmain community obviously felt that it was not being listened to—and hence the member is here. The primary reason the member for Balmain is in this place is that the former Labor Government did not listen.

This Government is very concerned to make sure that there is appropriate consultation between the community and the Government on the very challenging issue of the bay precinct. After all, it is 80 hectares—or five kilometres—of harbour-front land that deserves proper consultation and an appropriate master plan. I inform the Leader of the Opposition, as he probably was not cognisant of the fact at the time, that a master plan was promised prior to 2007. There is still no master plan; it has not appeared. I indicate that this Government is very serious about getting the consultation right. I acknowledge the presence of Dr Pezzutti, a former member of the Legislative Council, in the advisors area. It is good to have him here.

This Government has already determined that it is ridiculous not to have community involvement. I have asked the Director General of the Department of Planning to write to Leichhardt council and to the City of Sydney and indicate that the general managers of both councils are welcome on the task force. This Government values councils' input. I indicate that a community representative will also be asked to join the task force. This Government is going to do the precise reverse of what the former Government did in losing the last election. This Government will listen to the community and make sure that a valuable asset—80 hectares of Sydney's best land—will get the best result as a consequence of appropriate community consultation.

Ms Anna Watson: Are you going to listen to them?

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: Listen to the baying hounds on the other side—they cannot stand community consultation. Look around the Chamber. Labor used to occupy a vast part of this House, but it does not any more. Listen and learn.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON: My question is addressed to the Minister for Local Government. What is the Government doing to ascertain the extent of the infrastructure backlog that local government is burdened with?

Mr DONALD PAGE: I congratulate the member for Camden on his wonderful win, with a 22.8 per cent swing.

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

Mr DONALD PAGE: He is following in the footsteps of the former Liberal member for Camden, the wonderful Dr Liz Kernohan. Local government is an important player in the New South Wales economy. It manages \$158 billion worth of assets and employs about 44,000 people. The former Government did not have any time for local government. It took away the capacity of local communities to determine their own destinies and replaced that with centralised decision-making based on a decisions-for-donations culture. Not only that, but for 16 years the former Labor Government let the infrastructure backlog in local government grow and grow.

Its approach was, at best, to do nothing and, at worst, to cut funding to important local infrastructure projects. Just one example of the former Government's lack of commitment to local government is the \$42 million cut in funding for the Country Towns Water Supply and Sewerage Program. What has been the result of that slashing of expenditure? Some 40 Country Towns Water Supply and Sewerage Program projects have been delayed or postponed. That is Labor's legacy. By contrast, the Liberal-Nationals Government has already commenced, in its first 100 days, a council-by-council audit of the total local government infrastructure backlog.

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

Mr DONALD PAGE: Once the audit for each council has been completed we will know exactly what projects need funding, and in what order. From this audit New South Wales councils will be able to determine long-term financial plans about how to address any shortfalls in maintenance. This Government takes very seriously its relationship with local government. We want to work in close partnership with councils to address the infrastructure backlogs. The Government's commitment to reducing the infrastructure backlog can be seen by its financial assistance for councils as they conduct their infrastructure audits. The Local Government Reform Fund will improve councils' long-term asset management and financial planning capacity.

An amount of \$1.6 million from the reform fund will go directly to targeted individual councils to assist them with their asset management. The remaining funds will be used to assist training for financial planning and asset management. This is being developed in partnership with the Local Government and Shires Associations, Local Government Managers Australia and the Institute of Public Works Engineering Australia. The Division of Local Government will analyse the plans developed from the audit and provide feedback to councils. By the end of this financial year—which is only one month away—about half of all councils in New South Wales will have completed asset management plans and determined the extent of their infrastructure backlogs.

Importantly, our Government will unlock up to \$1 billion in funds for local councils to upgrade roads, community halls, libraries, parks, sporting grounds and water infrastructure—yet another example of the Government rebuilding New South Wales. The Government will establish a local infrastructure renewal fund that will provide subsidies to local councils to assist them with the cost of debt. The scheme will allow councils to borrow with an interest rate subsidy, which will be equivalent to 50 per cent of the New South Wales Government bond rate, at a cost \$70 million over four years. The infrastructure audits and asset management plans will help councils to review their rates and allow them to plan for special variations on their council rates for specific infrastructure programs in the future. Tomorrow I will address the Shires Association conference. I will again emphasise the importance of councils collaborating and sharing resources.

I will be releasing a survey on collaborative arrangements between councils, joint programs which have sparked innovation in service delivery and greater utilisation of council assets. The council-by-council audit, which started in this Government's first 100 days, will guide councils and help them plan effectively for the future, share ideas and resources, borrow cleverly and confront the immense infrastructure backlog that is the legacy of the previous Labor Government. By working together, our Government and all the councils of New South Wales will rebuild this State from the ground up. Hand in hand, local government and the State Government will make New South Wales number one again. We have big plans for infrastructure in this State. For big projects the Government has Infrastructure NSW, KickStart for other projects, and the local government renewal fund for local infrastructure projects. This Government is serious about infrastructure and it will make things happen—unlike the lot opposite.

Question time concluded at 3.08 p.m.

DISABILITY SERVICES AUSTRALIA

Ministerial Statement

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Ageing, and Minister for Disability Services) [3.08 p.m.]: I advise the House that earlier today the Campbelltown outlet of Disability Services Australia was flooded. That service supports 20 people living with disability, who had to be evacuated. It is pleasing that all individuals accessing the service have been relocated and are safe and sound. I particularly thank the State Emergency Service [SES] and staff at Disability Services Australia for their work to relocate people with disability during this flood emergency. Earlier this afternoon Mark Spurr, the Chief Executive Officer of Disability Services Australia, told me that the local Catholic Club will house the service during the next few days. He particularly wanted to thank the members of the State Emergency Service who were involved in assisting with sandbagging and the like. I also indicate to the House that the O'Farrell Government will assist the service should there be any ongoing costs associated with the flooding.

Mrs BARBARA PERRY (Auburn) [3.09 p.m.]: I thank the Minister for Ageing, and Minister for Disability Services for bringing to the attention of the House the unfortunate circumstances at Campbelltown at the moment. It is pleasing to hear from the Minister that everyone is safe and sound. I understand that many of the people at Disability Services Australia in Campbelltown are in wheelchairs, so it must have been a very big effort from all involved to evacuate them. On behalf of all members of this House, I commend the wonderful work done by our volunteers in the State Emergency Service and the staff at Disability Services Australia. Disability Services Australia is a large organisation that provides not only accommodation and care but also other opportunities for people living with a disability, including employment opportunities. Our thanks to the staff for the work they do each and every day, particularly today in the very difficult circumstances outlined by the Minister. Those on this side of the House thank the Government for its support of Disability Services Australia and its particular endeavours to provide assistance at this time.

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**.

Community Housing Mental Health Services

Petition requesting increased mental health support for people with mental illness who are tenants of Housing NSW and community housing, received from **Ms Clover Moore**.

National Parks Commercial Development

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

CONSIDERATION OF MOTIONS TO BE ACCORDED PRIORITY

Clubs Industry

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) [3.12 p.m.]: Today is the deadline that Mr Wilkie gave the Prime Minister to introduce a mandatory poker machine pre-commitment scheme or risk losing his support for her minority Government. This is a matter of priority for this great State of New South Wales. Every small town or large city in this State depends for its survival on the great commitment of the New South Wales clubs industry. Every bowling green or golf course is sponsored by a local club. This is a matter of priority for the tens of

thousands of workers in our local clubs. My electorate of Tweed has 31 clubs whose annual wage bill is \$44 million. That amount is increased by a factor of five—that is, \$200,000—when it comes to the local economy. That is why this matter should be accorded priority. I was pleased to learn today of the attitude of the Liquor Trades Union. The Leader of the Opposition is a former president of the New South Wales Liquor Trades Union, a union that has come out in support of the Government's stance. Even the Leader of the Opposition's own union has turned its back on Labor. The club industry is vital to the wellbeing of New South Wales communities.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition will have an opportunity to outline why his motion should be accorded priority.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST: Many people in New South Wales depend on the clubs industry for their employment. Labor members do not care: they turn their backs on the New South Wales clubs industry. They have not even made a commitment to the industry. When this House debated a similar matter recently, I said that Labor members had a hide to walk into their local clubs, which are the backbone of their communities. From an economic point of view, the industry creates many jobs, provides work for the trades and supports many community groups, such as Legacy, Meals on Wheels and so on. Members on both sides of the House know that.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition will come to order. He will have an opportunity to outline why his motion should be accorded priority.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST: Why does the Leader of the Opposition not pick up the phone and talk to his Federal colleagues? Why does he not make a clear commitment to oppose this proposal? We know the truth: Labor's priority is to pander to a Tasmanian Independent despite the fact that he will take away some of the rights and privileges of the people of New South Wales. That will be to the detriment of all in this State. On the weekend I was approached by five ladies, all aged more than 75, who go to the local Tweed Head Bowls Club to play bingo on a Thursday. They do not play poker machines or drink alcohol; bingo is perhaps their main enjoyment in life. They asked, "Why is the Federal Government taking away things that we enjoy? Why are they doing this to us? We have worked hard all our lives for Australia and the State; why are they doing this?" I said it was so Labor could stay in power. They responded, "Why are they hurting us? Why don't you bring it up in Parliament?" Well, here I am today bringing the matter up in Parliament—because their rights are under attack.

This matter should have priority because pensioners and senior members of our community need our support. Workers and tradesmen in this great State are dependent for their livelihoods on the clubs industry. Sporting groups and young footballers will be affected. Why is Labor hurting them? Members opposite should stand up for their electorates. They should at least have the backbone to pick up the phone and tell their colleagues in Canberra, "Enough is enough." They know the truth; they all have great clubs in their local areas. Why are they not supporting those clubs? How can they go to back to their clubs from Sydney and explain that they sat here silently because they had to observe party policy? That is not good enough; they are here to represent the people of New South Wales, not the party.

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

Mr GEOFF PROVEST: Is not the whole reason they became members of Parliament to stand up for what is right? They know it is right to stand up for the rights of the people of New South Wales, whether young or old. I have taken a firm stance on this matter: I stand behind that great organisation, ClubsNSW. I am pleased to acknowledge the presence in the public gallery of Wayne Krelle, an executive officer of ClubsNSW. I have known Wayne for more than 20 years. He has worked for the clubs industry, and in turn the clubs industry has worked for the good people of New South Wales. That is why Labor members should stand behind the clubs industry; they should not slink silently into the night, coming out with some vague lines. They should pick up the phone and say the deal is not worth it. Instead, they will allow their Federal colleagues to wreck the New South Wales clubs industry. That is why this motion should be accorded priority.

Public Sector Wages and Conditions

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON (Blacktown—Leader of the Opposition) [3.17 p.m.]: The motion for which I seek priority relates to the Government's attack on the wages and conditions of those in the public sector. The motion should be accorded priority because a new, dangerous and duplicitous precedent is being set. It is an

attack on the confidence in public office that this House depends on—and so we should address this issue as a priority. For more than a year prior to his election the Premier consistently hid his intentions for the public servants of this State. In an interview in March 2010 he was asked specifically about how much pain our public servants should expect. I want to hear the Premier's answer, but I will pre-empt an entirely predictable interjection by my mate from Terrigal over there—

Mr Chris Hartcher: Point of order: In my 23 years in this place I have been insulted many times, but never like that.

The SPEAKER: Order! I uphold the point of order. The Leader of the Opposition will continue.

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: Madam Speaker, I did not realise that the member is so easily offended. The Premier misled the people of New South Wales and should therefore be held to account by this Parliament. The substance of my argument lies partially in the following statement by the Premier:

I've made it clear that we'll end Labor's policy of no forced redundancy, which will affect a couple of hundred public servants whose jobs have been abolished getting paid \$45 million a year ... but there's no threat to the rest of the public service.

A "couple of hundred" is all the Premier spoke about, and he had the people of New South Wales believe that he was not going to do anything to the rest of the public service. But what do we see after the election? It is the complete opposite. The entire public service is now under threat. I listened to the member for Tweed talk about spine—

The SPEAKER: Order! Government members will come to order.

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: I heard the member for Tweed call on members to stand up. I do not see anyone on the Government side standing up for the police, for the nurses or for the teachers.

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

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: I do not see any of them standing up. I have heard plenty of them say in their electorates, "I'm going to Sydney; I'll tell the Premier. I'm going to stand up to the Premier", and then what do they do when they get here? Nothing. They do absolutely nothing. The member for Coffs Harbour has run away because he knows that he is one of those people. He says, "I'm going down there", and he beats his chest in the local media. But now he has run away. Where is he? He has run away because every hardworking nurse, teacher, doctor, police officer and social worker who is on the job in New South Wales is now in the firing line. Why? It is because we have a Premier who wants to give himself unprecedented powers to attack the rights of those who deliver front-line services to the people of New South Wales.

The SPEAKER: Order! Opposition members will listen to the Leader of the Opposition in silence.

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: Those people have been profoundly misled by the Premier—a Premier who says one thing and does another and by Government members who say one thing in their electorates and then do another in Sydney. The member for Tweed talked about spine; he should have a look in the mirror because he has no spine. Those opposite have no spine—

Mr Geoff Provest: Point of order: A personal attack on another member should be made by way of substantive motion.

The SPEAKER: Order! I uphold the point of order. Personal attacks should be made by way of a substantive motion.

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: Is the member worried that the public might work out that he does not have one? There has been a profound misleading of the people of New South Wales. There is no requirement—

The SPEAKER: Order! Government members will come to order

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: The bill that has been introduced in Parliament removes the requirement for public sector workers to receive any wage increases whatsoever. Even the Minister for Finance and Services said in the other place that it is okay for conditions to be traded off. We are going to see workers lose conditions,

we are going to see jobs slashed, and we are going to see the people of New South Wales lose services because those on the other side do not want to debate this issue. They have not got the spine or the courage to do so. [*Time expired.*]

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

CLUBS INDUSTRY

Motion Accorded Priority

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) [3.24 p.m.]: I move:

That this House notes:

- (1) today is the deadline date Federal Independent Andrew Wilkie gave the Prime Minister to introduce a poker machine pre-commitment scheme or risk losing his support for her minority Government;
- (2) calls on the Prime Minister to abandon her deal with Mr Wilkie, which will harm New South Wales clubs and;
- (3) calls on the Leader of the Opposition to tell the people of New South Wales whether he supports a mandatory or voluntary pre-commitment scheme.

Only moments ago the Leader of the Opposition accused me of having no spine. That is a shame indeed. Where is the Labor Party's spine? Are Labor members protecting the many tens of thousands of workers in New South Wales clubs? Where is the member of Liverpool? Where are they at the Campbelltown Catholic Club, Blacktown Workers Club and places such as that all over New South Wales? I bet those opposite do not have the hide to go into their local clubs and to say, "I couldn't vote for the motion. I didn't want to support the club workers."

New South Wales relies on our clubs industry, which is symbolic in the history of this State. If it were not for the clubs industry we would have no junior sport, and we would have no Meals on Wheels and other community-based services. We all know the truth of the matter: A deal was done with the devil and today is D-day for the clubs. There is no room for the minority Federal Labor Government to move on this issue. The signed agreements, which have been placed in my hands, allow no room for manoeuvre. Unions across the nation have come out and said that if the deal goes ahead some 358,000 people will lose their jobs. There are 31 clubs in my electorate, including great clubs such as the Twin Towns Services Club headed by Rob Smith. I was general manager of a club for many years. I started work back in 1976 at Georges River Sailing Club, cleaning toilets and ashtrays. I know what it is like to do a bit of hard work—it is a pity those opposite do not know the meaning of the phrase.

The heart will be ripped out of the clubs industry. The 31 clubs in my electorate employ 1,130 people. I will relate a few facts about the Tweed Heads Bowls Club. Over the past five years it has paid wages in excess of \$30 million and made payments to local suppliers totalling \$37 million. The community benefited by some \$3 million. The club paid tax to government of \$17 million and its capital expenditure was around \$9 million. So that club has reinvested in our local community to the tune of \$98 million. This information was supplied to me by Peter Newell, the fine chairman of the board of ClubsNSW, and Anthony Ball, the chief executive officer. The combined commitment of clubs in the Tweed will drop by some \$46 million, and many of them will close. Today I spoke to the chief executive officer of the Tweed Heads Bowls Club, Mr Ross Bailey. He is one of the most astute men I know, particularly when it comes to finance. He said, "Geoff, if this goes through this club will shut. All the bowls and all the community activities we do will stop. Our just over 100-odd staff will be out of a job."

Labor members have no commitment to club workers. They will not stand up for clubs in their local areas. The Leader of the Opposition talked about spine and protecting people's rights. Where does he stand on the clubs issue? Many of the people in the public gallery today will undoubtedly be members of clubs. There are around 90,000 people in Tweed shire—which encompasses part of your electorate, Mr Deputy-Speaker—but the 31 clubs have 140,000 members. Where are they going to go? As I said, it is not only the staff and the suppliers who will be deeply affected; it is the little old ladies, the poor pensioners. I spoke to five of them. They come to the club to play bingo. They do not gamble or drink. Where are they going to go?

I am sure that applies to many members on both sides of the House. It could be their aunty or their grandmother. They have worked their guts out for this State for many years—50, 60, 70 years or whatever it

is—and through a deal with the devil, which starts today, the Federal Government is going to rip clubs apart. The Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Hospitality and Racing, George Souris, said at the recent Council of Australian Governments meeting, "We will not be a part of this. This is crazy." I praise the Minister; he has been talking to the industry and he knows what the effect of this proposal will be. ClubsNSW is fighting this move and so are many other sporting groups in the community. We must stand together in this House and say that enough is enough. The clubs need our support even more than they did in 1996, when Labor tried to tax them. I led demonstrations outside this building at the time.

This Labor Opposition, like the Federal Labor Government, is so disconnected from local communities it does not know the difference between reality and fantasy. It will do anything to stay in power: bugar the good people of New South Wales, bugar all the club industry people; they do not count. But for members on this side they do count, from the little old ladies that play bingo to the people who play golf and bowls and those taking part in junior sport and other community activities such as scouting groups. We care about them. Our Minister said, "Enough is enough." We will not go silently into the night. This is about openness and transparency, and the problem created by a stupid Federal Government commitment.

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) [3.31 p.m.]: I commence by acknowledging that this time the member for Tweed got rid of the spelling mistakes in his motion. That is an improvement on the last one he moved. I move:

That the motion be amended by leaving out all words after "That " with a view to inserting instead:

this House notes:

- (1) that after 16 years in opposition the Government refuses to debate State issues and considers itself an arm of the Federal Opposition, and not the Government of this State;
- (2) that this is the second time this week that the Government has moved a motion to be accorded priority to debate a Federal issue; and
- (3) that the alternative motion before the House dealt with important State Government issues such as conditions for police, teachers and nurses.

As the amendment suggests, this lot has been in Opposition for 16 years and one would have thought that within a few weeks we would be flooded with legislation and a serious discussion of State issues. What we have had is a series of discussions about Federal issues, the Government acting as the State arm of the Federal Opposition and no substantive work before this House. We had 32 speakers on a 52-word bill. We have the least prepared Government coming into office in the history of this State. It is an embarrassment to this institution; it is wasting the time of this House. It is an absolute disgrace and insult to this institution. I will be the only speaker for the Opposition in this debate. We refuse to waste any more time of this House on this motion. When members opposite are ready to deal with State issues let us know and we will come back to the podium.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! I call the member for Kiama and in doing so I congratulate him on his inaugural speech this morning.

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) [3.33 p.m.]: What an extraordinary performance from the member for Liverpool, who does not even have the guts to stay in the House and hear the response. He thinks this is about Federal politics. Has he walked into one of his local clubs in Liverpool and talked to the workers that his vote in this House will affect? Clearly he has not even talked to the Liquor, Hospitality and Miscellaneous Workers Union about the 16,000 jobs that will be affected as a result of changes by Federal Labor. Is the member for Liverpool in this House today sticking up for those workers? Is he here supporting the jobs in his electorate? Where has he gone? He has disappeared. Like the Scarlet Pimpernel of the Parliament we seek him here, we seek him there, we seek him everywhere, but never is he found on the issue of clubs in this State.

[*Interruption*]

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! The member for Kiama does not need further assistance. He is doing well. He will be heard in silence.

Mr GARETH WARD: I acknowledge the point made by the member for Tweed earlier when he talked about spinelessness. Members opposite did not even have the guts to stay and vote on this motion to be accorded priority. Instead they run out of the Chamber and are not prepared to stand up for clubs. Did we hear

any substantive debate from the member for Liverpool about pre-commitment technology? No. Did we hear about the potential challenges from internet gambling? No. We heard nothing about the issue that has been raised today, which just goes to show what this lot is about. Those opposite are all about politics and spin and not about supporting the clubs of this State. I am going to get behind the clubs in my electorate that support community groups and sporting organisations, such as the Pride of Bomaderry Committee, which is hosted free of charge at the Bomaderry Bowling Club so that they can have community meetings. The member for the Tweed referred to State issues, so why did the member for Liverpool not talk about the grants and services that will not be available if the source of revenue dries up as a result of the technology that he wants to introduce?

We should ask Opposition members whether they support their Federal colleagues because the member for Liverpool did not outline that situation. Jenny Macklin went on the record in the Tasmanian *Mercury* and said the Federal Government will introduce this legislation whether the States want it or not. Is that the sort of consultation we can expect from a Federal Labor Government? Absolutely. It is not interested in the views of clubs and it is not even interested in the views of its union. It is interested only in pandering to an Independent to stay in government. This has nothing to do with community groups, sporting groups or the clubs themselves. This is just a vain attempt to stay in power to maintain a grubby deal that keeps this irresponsible and disreputable Labor Government in the Lodge in Canberra.

[Interruption]

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! I call the member for Maroubra to order.

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith) [3.37 p.m.]: Mr Deputy-Speaker—

Mr Michael Daley: You recycled this motion the other day. Just use the same one; it is the same motion.

Mr STUART AYRES: Why don't you do something about it? You do not care about clubs or the funds that are required in communities and you do not care about community services.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! The member for Penrith and the member for Maroubra will direct their comments through the Chair.

Mr STUART AYRES: It is pretty clear that members opposite have completely walked away from their communities.

Mr Guy Zangari: Not in Fairfield, mate.

Mr STUART AYRES: It is fairly clear that the member for Fairfield has made no effort whatsoever to make any representations on behalf of his clubs. It seems fairly clear that the member for Liverpool has done the same thing. The member for Maroubra is walking away from clubs as well. I know that in the electorate of Penrith I will not walk away from the clubs that support the community that I am lucky enough and honoured to represent in this place, whether it be the Penrith Panthers Leagues Club, the Gaels Cultural and Sporting Club, the Leonay Golf Club or the Kingswood Bowling Club. All of these clubs provide services to the community. Every member of this House represents communities across the State and has clubs in their electorates that look after people in those communities. This is a State issue. Let us not be fooled by members opposite. This proposal will impact on New South Wales communities and clubs. It is time the people of New South Wales finally had a government that stood up for them and looked after them, and did not pander to people in Canberra who are trying to dictate what should take place in our local communities.

Some high and mighty power in Canberra is trying to keep the Federal Government together because it has barely enough votes to form a government. One person from Tasmania is holding the entire nation to ransom through his efforts to impose these conditions on clubs right across Australia, but in particular in New South Wales. Those provisions will strip money straight out of the pockets of local communities and local clubs. Think of a hockey club, a cricket club, a football club or a cultural club; if members think about a club in their area that is supported by a community club they will realise those local clubs are under threat. I guarantee every member that if the proposed legislation is passed in Canberra we will be inundated with letters from community groups that we are elected to represent asking us to oppose the legislation that will strip money out of local communities.

Members know what those organisations will ask for. After they have asked us to fight for them and we are unable to do that, they will ask for money. That will put pressure on our State budget because clubs will no longer be able to support local organisations—sporting clubs, cultural clubs veterans clubs, Legacy, Salvation Army, or St Vincent de Paul. Members can pick any community group in their electorate and they will find a licensed club supporting that group. That is why this is such a fundamental issue to every member of the Chamber. It is fundamental to every community group that is supported by a licensed club anywhere in the State.

We must send a clear message to Canberra that we do not want this kind of legislation. We do not want licensed clubs in our community dictated to as to how they spend their money. We want to make sure that they are able to support those community groups. We do not want to rip cash out of those clubs that are sending it to community groups. No-one on this side of the House would ignore this. No matter what we hear from the Opposition benches about this not being a State issue, it is very clear that every person in this House has a responsibility to support their local communities. If we do not, we will not only destroy those clubs but we will also destroy their ability to support those organisations in the areas we represent with such pride and, on top of that, we will ask the New South Wales Government to foot the bill.

Do we want to prioritise funding to those smaller clubs and organisations when we should be spending money on roads, hospitals, police, and infrastructure that may make the daily lives of families that little bit better? I know that representatives of the Kingswood Bowling Club would much rather support the members of the Kingswood Bowling Club than have to pay for the extension to the M4 East that members opposite did not manage to pay for in 16 years.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) [3.41 p.m.], in reply: Much of the day has been spent debating workers rights and the future of workers. Clearly this debate is about the rights of club workers, but it goes a bit further than that. It goes to the rights of the people of New South Wales: their right to enjoy their local club; their right to meet with their friends; their right to play sport; their right to be part of Rotary, Meals on Wheels and many other charitable organisations. The member for Liverpool is quick on pronunciation and quick to point things out but in speaking today he was unprepared and ill-informed. I find that a disgrace. He has many great clubs in the Liverpool area and he is unprepared. He does not have the spine to stand up for his clubs. Let him walk into his clubs tonight and say to them, "I did my best for you. You guys voted for me and I did my best for you in Parliament."

Once again I acknowledge Wayne Krelle, a great executive officer of ClubsNSW, in our gallery. I ask him to contact the clubs in Liverpool and let them know how their member behaved—ill-prepared, uninformed and unwilling to stand up for the workers. This is clearly a State issue. We are facing massive unemployment. We are facing a massive number of lost sporting arenas. There is not one charity in New South Wales that does not get some support from the club industry. The club industry is made up of fair, upstanding people. They believe in their local clubs. Clubs came together for people with a common interest—whether it be bowls, golf, music or whatever. Their secondary object is to support their local communities. Being a club manager for 27 years, I can tell you that as soon as there was a natural disaster in our town, as soon as somebody was diagnosed with cancer, as soon as somebody had some form of hardship, the first place they went to was the local club. Who was the first to put their hand in their pocket? It was the local club. That is why clubs need our support.

Even the Leader of Opposition Business in this place, the member for Maroubra, has been a club director—the Randwick Rugby Club—for many years. He knows. His general manager would have been telling him. Members opposite should hang their heads in shame. We talk about spine. Where are the Labor people today? A deal was done federally. It is D-Day with the devil to the detriment not only of the people of New South Wales but also of the people of Queensland and Victoria, and all over. Once again the Labor Party has shown it has no spine. It is all about staying in power to the detriment of our local people.

That is why I am proud to be on this side. We heard from the member for Kiama and from the member for Penrith. They are strong supporters of their local club industry and in turn their club industry supports them because those two members understand the local issues and support their local people. Everyone on this side does that, from the Premier, Barry O'Farrell, all the way down. Our Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Hospitality and Racing has a spine. He told the Council of Australian Governments that enough is enough and that we are not going to cop it. That is why this motion is a priority. I call on members opposite to pick up the phone and say to their Federal colleagues, "This is no good; get rid of it."

I challenge members opposite to bring this matter to a vote. They are full of wind; no substance whatsoever. What about the people of New South Wales? What about the people who voted for you—although there were not too many this time? They are turning their backs on those people. That is fundamentally wrong and they should stand up for their club industry. The club industry in New South Wales is unique and I am 100 per cent behind it.

Question—The the words stand—put.

The House divided.

Ayes, 69

Mr Anderson	Mr Gee	Mr Roberts
Mr Annesley	Mr George	Mr Rohan
Mr Aplin	Ms Gibbons	Mr Rowell
Mr Ayres	Ms Goward	Mrs Sage
Mr Baird	Mr Grant	Mr Sidoti
Mr Barilaro	Mr Hartcher	Mrs Skinner
Mr Bassett	Mr Hazzard	Mr Smith
Mr Baumann	Ms Hodgkinson	Mr Souris
Ms Berejiklian	Mr Holstein	Mr Speakman
Mr Bromhead	Mr Humphries	Mr Spence
Mr Brookes	Mr Issa	Mr Stokes
Mr Cansdell	Mr Kean	Mr Stoner
Mr Casuscelli	Dr Lee	Mr Toole
Mr Conolly	Mr Notley-Smith	Mr Torbay
Mr Constance	Mr O'Dea	Ms Upton
Mr Cornwell	Mr O'Farrell	Mr Ward
Mrs Davies	Mr Owen	Mr Webber
Mr Dominello	Mr Page	Mr R. C. Williams
Mr Doyle	Ms Parker	Mrs Williams
Mr Edwards	Mr Patterson	
Mr Elliott	Mr Perrottet	
Mr Evans	Mr Piccoli	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Flowers	Mr Piper	Mr Maguire
Mr Fraser	Mr Provest	Mr J. D. Williams

Noes, 20

Mr Barr	Mr Lalich	Mr Robertson
Ms Burney	Mr Lynch	Ms Tebbutt
Ms Burton	Dr McDonald	Ms Watson
Mr Daley	Ms Mihailuk	Mr Zangari
Mr Furolo	Mr Parker	<i>Tellers,</i>
Ms Hay	Mrs Perry	Mr Amery
Ms Hornery	Mr Rees	Mr Park

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Amendment negatived.

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

Motion agreed to.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! Debate on the motion accorded priority having concluded, the House will now consider Government business.

COURT SECURITY AMENDMENT BILL 2011**Agreement in Principle****Debate resumed from 25 May 2011.**

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) [3.59 p.m.]: I lead for the Opposition in debate on the Court Security Amendment Bill 2011. The Opposition supports the bill, which amends the Court Security Act pursuant to recommendations of a statutory review required under the provisions of the 2005 principal Act. I am sure the Attorney General would agree that it is a modest Act; nonetheless, it does useful and sensible things and flows from the statutory review, which I apprehend was commenced and completed during the term of the previous Government. My recollection is that the previous Cabinet considered and approved the review. Despite being a modest Act, the issues are of considerable significance or of significant principle. One of the fundamental elements of our justice system is the public's right of access to courts.

Certainly those of us in this place who understand our constitutional history and the institutional history of this building would understand the role that principle has played over a number of centuries. The rhetoric we hear about not wanting to go to a Star Chamber is partly about whether the public can have access to places where decisions are made. Those issues were relevant to the years before and after the English civil war, which some would say reached their pinnacle in the Glorious Revolution of 1688. The Attorney General would agree, if he were present, that that was far less than glorious to Ireland. Certainly these issues are part of the constitutional institutional history of this place and the society in which we live. Despite the importance of that principle, in clearly practical terms restrictions must be imposed on access to courts.

Prior to the 2005 Act the restrictions were set out by the inherent jurisdiction of the court and a number of limited legislative powers. That is why the 2005 Act was a significant and progressive move: for the first time those powers were put on a sound statutory basis codifying the legislative position rather than leaving it to what might be called the vagaries of common law. It was a step in the right direction. It is progressive to codify and put in specific detail those legislative powers that remove uncertainty. Whilst the principle of the public's access to the court remains and is enshrined in the 2005 legislation, the bill involves a number of restrictions. In 2005 the Act contained provisions consistent with the move-on powers under the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act, search powers, arrest powers and so forth, all of which were given firm statutory form.

Certainly, real issues were involved and court security issues are not fantastic. Earlier this year I had the opportunity again of looking at Liverpool Local Court for reforms and renovations. The only thing that had changed in the 30 years since I last practised there was the considerable increase in security to access the court. Of course, it is now typical of courts around this State to have a degree of security that was never present and which is consistent with having a proper legislative control base. This bill deals with a number of particular refinements and developments. Amongst other things, it clarifies duration of orders by judicial officers that exclude members of the public generally, or certain members of the public, from court premises; it contains measures to prevent the taking of animals and alcohol into court premises.

The bill enables a court security officer to require a person not to wear a helmet that obscures the face while in court premises; it enables a court security officer to arrest a person who is committing an act of violence against another person in court premises, or has just done so; and it extends the definition of "court premises" to include certain areas used in relation to courts that are also used for other purposes. The latter provision perhaps is the only significant expansion of powers, although it is limited and appears to be a clarification rather than a dramatic expansion of the current powers. As I stated, perhaps it is a modest bill but it is sensible and rational. The amendments make sense. The Opposition is happy to support the bill.

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) [4.04 p.m.]: I support the Court Security Amendment Bill 2011 and note that I am in good company in that regard. The bill updates the Court Security Act 2005, which provides for the secure and orderly operation of courts and confers certain functions on judicial and security officers for that purpose. I acknowledge that the 2005 Act was introduced under the previous Labor Government, whose members will be pleased to see that this amendment bill will help to ensure that court security officers can continue to perform their role in protecting court personnel and other court users.

I note the advice of the Attorney General that the bill will commence towards the end of this year once security officers have received appropriate training on the amendments. That is an example of how this Government thinks about reform and how it might be implemented effectively and properly, which did not always happen under the previous regime. I note also that the current Government has made sure that various

stakeholders within the legal profession, law enforcement agencies, the courts and justice-related agencies were consulted regarding possible amendments to the Act. These stakeholders included the Chief Justice, who indicated that he had no difficulty with the bill. I shall briefly revisit the object of this amendment bill, which states:

The object of this Bill is to amend the *Court Security Act 2005* to implement certain recommendations arising from the statutory review of the Act. In particular, the Bill:

- (a) clarifies the duration of orders by judicial officers that exclude members of the public generally or certain members of the public from court premises, and
- (b) contains measures for preventing the taking of animals and alcohol into court premises, and
- (c) enables a court security officer to require a person not to wear a helmet that obscures the face while in court premises, and
- (d) enables a court security officer to arrest a person who is committing an act of violence against another person in court premises or has just done so, and
- (e) extends the definition of *court premises* to include certain areas used in relation to courts that are also used for other purposes.

Section 33 of the Court Security Act 2005 requires the Minister to review the Act to determine whether the policy objectives of the legislation remain valid and the terms of the Act remain appropriate for securing the objectives. The report on the five-year statutory review of the Court Security Act, which has been tabled in both Houses of this Parliament, recommended a number of changes to update the legislation. The proposed amending legislation will ensure that security officers can effect an arrest when people commit an act of violence that constitutes an offence under part 3 of the Crimes Act 1900.

The bill also amends the definition of "court premises". As currently defined, "court premises" means the premises or place where a court is held or that is used in relation to the operations of a court. This includes areas such as forecourts, parking areas, and entrances and exits. Disturbances have occurred in areas that, while located close by, do not fall strictly within the precise definition of court premises. It is inevitable that incidents involving people attending court will take place in the vicinity of the court. It is appropriate that security officers are able to act in such circumstances. Under this amendment bill the definition of "court premises" has therefore been expanded to cover areas that might include, for example, a footpath, or a justice precinct.

When security officers exercise their powers in such situations existing safeguards, mainly under section 20 of the Court Security Act, will continue to apply. Those safeguards include requirements that security officers use only reasonable force in exercising their power; reasons are provided for the exercise of that power; they give a warning that failure or refusal to comply with a direction or requirement of the security officer may be an offence; and they discontinue an arrest at any time if the person is no longer a suspect, or the reason for the arrest no longer exists. These sensible protective measures and requirements are balanced against the sensible powers that are extended under this Act. These updated powers will help to ensure the continued safety of court operations—something that we should all welcome as an essential component of an effectively functioning justice system. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr CHRIS SPENCE (The Entrance) [4.12 p.m.]: I support the Court Security Amendment Bill 2011 and note that I am probably the only member of Parliament who served in Corrective Services and performed the same duties as New South Wales Sheriff's officers. I commend this Government for introducing legislation which will give security officers these long overdue powers. The overview of the bill states:

- (a) clarifies the duration of orders by judicial officers that exclude members of the public generally or certain members of the public from court premises, and
- (b) contains measures for preventing the taking of animals and alcohol into court premises, and
- (c) enables a court security officer to require a person not to wear a helmet that obscures the face while in court premises, and
- (d) enables a court security officer to arrest a person who is committing an act of violence against another person in court premises or has just done so, and
- (e) extends the definition of *court premises* to include certain areas used in relation to courts that are also used for other purposes.

The Court Security Amendment Bill 2011 gives effect to recommendations arising out of a five-year statutory review of the Court Security Act 2005. The Court Security Act 2005 provides security officers with a range of powers directed specifically at ensuring the secure and orderly operation of courts throughout New South Wales. Security functions within the New South Wales court system are generally carried out by New South Wales Sheriff's officers. I commend these officers for their work in this potentially dangerous field in ensuring the safety in the courtroom of the New South Wales public.

Whilst there have been some serious incidents at court premises over the years, it should be noted that courts remain a relatively safe environment. In recent years the number of security incidents has remained relatively steady at about 350 to 360 a year—a low number of incidents in the context of the thousands of matters that are heard every year in the 164 courts located in New South Wales. The vast majority of incidents concern less serious incidents of aggression, intimidation and disruption, which in themselves can cause those attending court to feel less safe. However, there has been an increase in the number of confiscated weapons, ranging from knives to corkscrews and knuckledusters. The Court Security Amendment Bill 2011 will provide security officers with a power of arrest in relation to acts of violence that constitute an offence under part 3 of the Crimes Act, which refers to offences against the person.

Under the Court Security Act 2005 the existing power of arrest applies to matters such as absconding to avoid arrest, the obstruction of security officers, failure to obey a direction by a security officer and the destruction of signs in court premises. The proposed amendments will make it clear that security officers can arrest a person when he or she or other people attending court premises are the subject of an assault, as provided under part 3 of the Crimes Act 1900. In line with the safeguards contained in the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act 2002, the Court Security Amendment Bill 2011 provides that a security officer may discontinue an arrest at any time if the person is no longer a suspect, or if the reason for arrest no longer exists. This bill will ensure that security officers have adequate powers to address any situations that may involve acts of violence.

These amendments will ensure that security officers are able to intervene if incidents occur in areas adjacent to the courthouse, including the footpaths. Other proposed changes to the Act include: clarification that an order from a judicial officer that a person or persons leave court premises, or not be admitted to court premises, where considered necessary for securing order and safety in the court premises is subject to a time limitation not exceeding 28 days. The ability for these important orders to be renewed is included in the bill. The power to exclude people where, for example, witnesses are being intimidated or members of the public are disrupting the process of the court is important in protecting the integrity of the justice system. The power to require the surrender of alcohol will also assist in preventing disturbances on court premises.

The wearing of motorcycle helmets and the bringing of animals onto court premises will also be restricted, naturally excluding assistance animals. These are only relatively minor amendments in relation to the broader amendments being sought today. However, they are necessary to ensure the smooth running and natural order of the court system in New South Wales. A broad spectrum of stakeholders from within the legal profession has been consulted regarding possible amendments to the Court Security Act 2005. These include the Chief Justice, law enforcement agencies, courts and justice-related agencies. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) [4.17 p.m.]: I support the Court Security Amendment Bill 2011. As has been outlined by earlier speakers, the bill gives effect to recommendations that arose out of a five-year statutory review of the Court Security Act 2005 which was tabled in this House. The Court Security Act 2005 provides a statutory basis for the exercise of security powers in New South Wales courts. The legislation provides security officers with a range of powers that are directed specifically at ensuring the secure and orderly operation of the courts. Various stakeholders within the legal profession, law enforcement agencies, the courts and justice-related agencies were consulted regarding possible amendments to the Act.

One of the main changes to the legislation clarifies the power of arrest. Under the Act the existing power of arrest applies to matters such as absconding to avoid arrest, the obstruction of security officers, failure to obey a direction by a security officer, and the destruction of signs in court premises. The proposed amendments make it clear that security officers can arrest a person when they or other people attending court premises are the subject of an assault, as provided for under part 3 of the Crimes Act 1900, which refers to offences against the person. Consistent with the safeguards contained in the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act 2002, the bill also provides that a security officer may discontinue an arrest at any time if the arrested person is no longer a suspect, or the reason for the arrest no longer exists.

Other proposed changes to the Act include the expansion of the definition of "court premises" to clarify that "court premises" extend to areas used in relation to the operations of the court, or for other purposes.

Parramatta Court comes to mind. This will enable security officers to intervene when an altercation occurs in an area adjacent to the court such as in a justice precinct or on the footpath. This will also clarify that an order by a judicial officer that a person or persons leave court premises, or not be admitted to court premises where this is considered necessary for securing order and safety in court premises, is subject to a time limitation not exceeding 28 days. Such orders may be renewed. Other proposed changes include the introduction of restrictions concerning the bringing of alcohol and animals, other than assistance animals such as guide dogs, onto court premises, and the wearing on court premises of helmets that obscure the face.

I am advised that the Chief Justice has been consulted and has indicated that he has no difficulty with the bill. Further, we have heard from the member for Davidson. Years ago, when there were no security checks, people were caught bringing knives, guns, iron bars and other implements of that type into court. From time to time there were threats and attacks on witnesses in the courtyard. The amendment to the principal Act, the Court Security Act, is necessary to clarify the powers of Sheriff's officers to avoid difficulties that they might experience. I support the bill.

Mr RICHARD TORBAY (Northern Tablelands) [4.20 p.m.]: I support the Court Security Amendment Bill 2011. When I read the details provided by the Attorney General I was a little surprised that some of the changes had not been made many years ago. I commend the Attorney General for introducing what appear to be commonsense changes and measures to clarify roles. I acknowledge the fact that the consultation process has been significant, in that the bill gives effect to recommendations arising from a five-year statutory review of the Court Security Act 2005, previously tabled in both Houses of Parliament. The clarification of roles and the purposes of these amendments are a matter of commonsense. I note that the Chief Justice has been consulted and has indicated that he has no difficulty with the bill before the House. Some of the changes have already been commented upon, and various stakeholders in the legal profession, law enforcement agencies and the courts have been consulted regarding these proposed amendments.

Some of the main changes relate to the clarification of the powers of arrest. Existing arrest powers in the Act apply to matters such as absconding to avoid arrest, the obstruction of security officers, failure to obey a direction of a security officer, and the destruction of signs in court premises. Reading on, one thinks to oneself: Goodness me, do these things really happen on court premises? In fact, they do. The Attorney General and his predecessor, who I also highly regarded in his role, remind us by such changes of some of the issues with which people in the front line of our courts have to deal. Whilst I have indicated my support for the bill, I wanted to indicate also how pleased I am that reviews are taking place regarding the resources of country courthouses. Also, as I indicated to the Attorney General before taking part in this debate, the proposed new courthouse for Armidale is a welcome initiative. I was very pleased to hear the Attorney General comment on that in this place. I look forward to seeing the historic, original Armidale courthouse and of course the commencement of the new facility at Armidale. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) [4.23 p.m.]: We in Australia have one of the great judicial systems of the world—inherited from the British, evolved, adapted and refined for Australian conditions. Australian justice shines as a beacon for the rest of the world. But Australian justice will do so only if we continually refine and perfect the circumstances in which our courts operate. We are very fortunate in Australia to have one of the finest judiciaries in the world—a judiciary where the taint of corruption, scandal or misconduct is extremely rare. It is very important that litigants and the general public have confidence in their judiciary and the judicial process. They will only have that confidence if, among other things, they can be sure that when they turn up to court they and those who hear their cases do so in complete safety. That is why the Court Security Act was passed in 2005, and it is why this Government, after the result of a statutory review, has now introduced the Court Security Amendment Bill 2011.

The objects of the 2005 Act were to provide for the secure and orderly operation of courts, and to confer functions on judicial officers and security officers for that purpose. The purpose of the Court Security Amendment Bill 2011 is to amend that Act to implement the recommendations that came from the statutory review that I mentioned. In particular, the bill seeks to do five things: first, it will clarify the duration of orders by judicial officers that exclude members of the public generally or certain members of the public from court premises; second, it contains measures for preventing the taking of animals and alcohol into court premises; third, it allows a court security officer to require a person not to wear a helmet that obscures his or her face while in court premises; fourth, it allows the court security officer to arrest someone who is committing an act of violence against another person in court premises, or has just done so; and, fifth, it extends the definition of "court premises" to include areas used in relation to courts that are also used for other purposes.

I now propose to go through the schedules to the bill and identify the amendments in question. I deal first with schedule 1, item [1], to the bill. It amends the definition of "court premises" by broadening the current definition to cover any part of premises or a place used in relation to the operations of a court, or referred to in the preceding paragraphs of the definition, that is used also for other purposes. Take, for example, the Parramatta court precinct, which is a multipurpose centre that involves not only courts but other public agencies. There, it is important that court security officers who are exercising their functions under the Court Security Act are not confined to exercising those functions within the courtroom itself but also the footpath outside and adjacent areas. To the extent that there is a gap in the legislation for the protection of our judicial officers and litigants at the moment, the amendment aims to overcome that gap—that lacuna.

Schedule 1, item [2] will amend the Act by inserting subsection 7A into the Act. At the moment, section 7 allows a judicial officer who considers it necessary for securing order and safety in court premises or part of court premises to order members of the public generally, or specific members of the public, to leave the court premises, or a part of court premises, or to order members of the public generally, or particular members of the public, not to be admitted to court premises or part of court premises. The amendment contemplated by schedule 1 [2] deals with a time limit. At the moment, the orders that I have just described are open-ended. The orders could apply indefinitely, and of course that is unsatisfactory. One needs definition, finality and certainty about how long the orders will operate.

The purpose of the amendment is to specify that such an order cannot have effect for more than 28 days. However, the subsection will make it clear that nothing prevents the judicial officer from renewing the order and having it operate for a further period of not more than 28 days if he or she thinks the circumstances warrant that. And the order can be renewed more than once; so one can have a set of rolling orders of up to 28 days each. But there is some certainty, finality and definition about how long these orders will last. The third set of amendments is new section 7A. I have referred to section 7, "Closing court premises for security reasons". New section 7A to be introduced by this bill will allow a security officer to refuse a person entry to court premises or allow a security officer to require a person in the premises to leave the premises if he or she is in possession of an animal.

If the security officer requires such a person to leave the premises that person must leave immediately. The bill will introduce exceptions to this prohibition. The first is that an assistance animal that is being used by someone with a disability will be exempt. Secondly, when a judicial officer, a police officer or a security officer authorises the entry of the animal into the court premises it, too, will be exempt from this prohibition. The fourth amendment is to section 10. It appears in schedule 1 [4], which deals with the power to search persons or vehicles. It is consequential upon the fifth amendment, which amends section 11 of the Act. Section 11 of the Act is entitled "Power to require property and other things to be surrendered for safekeeping." Section 11 (1) states:

A security officer can require a person who is entering or in court premises to deposit with the officer while that person remains in the premises any or all of the following:

- (a) any thing in that person's possession or control that the security officer believes on reasonable grounds is a restricted item or offensive implement.

A "restricted item" is defined in section 4 of the Act. It means:

A prohibited weapon within the meaning of the Weapons Prohibition Act, a firearm or an imitation firearm within the meaning of the Firearms Act or a knife, whether or not a prohibited weapon within the meaning of the Weapons Prohibition Act.

Under section 11 a security officer can also require someone to deposit anything in that person's possession or control that is reasonably capable of concealing a thing of the kind referred to in section 11 (1) (a), such as a restricted item or an offensive implement. The bill will extend the power to require property and other things to be surrendered for safekeeping to alcohol and related material. New section 11 (1) (c) will be added to allow a security officer to require someone who is entering or is in the court premises to deposit with the officer while that person remains in the premises any alcohol or bottle or other container in which alcohol is contained that is in that person's possession or control, unless the person is taking it into the court premises with the authority of a judicial officer or the registrar of the relevant court.

Schedule 1 [6] amends section 14 of the Act, which is entitled "Power to give reasonable directions". It permits a security officer to give a direction to a person in court premises if the security officer has reasonable grounds to believe that the person's behaviour in the premises is obstructing others, constitutes harassment or

intimidation, or is causing or is likely to cause fear to another person or persons. Subsection (2) states that the direction must be reasonable in the circumstances. The bill will introduce a new section 14 (2) (a), which will make it clear when a security officer can give either or both of the following directions to someone who is entering or is in court premises: first, a direction to remove a helmet that is being worn by the person; and, secondly, a direction to not wear a helmet while in court premises.

There is a qualification and it is that the direction can be given only if the helmet is obscuring or would obscure the face of the person wearing it. Schedule 1 [7] amends section 14 (3) of the Act. The amendments are consequential upon the other amendments that I have described, or will describe. Likewise, schedule 1 [8] is a consequential amendment to section 14 (7). Schedule 1 [9] amends section 16 of the Act, which is entitled "Powers of arrest". At present under section 16 (1) a security officer can without a warrant arrest a person in court premises if:

- (a) the person is in the act of committing an offence under this Act or has just committed such an offence or
- (b) the security officer believes on reasonable grounds that the person has committed an offence under this Act.

The amendment introduces new section 16 (1) (c), which states:

- (c) the person is assaulting another person in the premises or has just assaulted another person in the premises.

Schedule 1 [10] introduces a further amendment to section 16 that inserts new subsection (4A). It makes it clear that a security officer can discontinue an arrest at any time if the arrested person is no longer a suspect or the reason for the arrest no longer exists, or for any other reason. The current section 16 permits arrests and the amendment makes it clear that the security officer has the power to discontinue such an arrest at any time for various reasons—namely, the arrested person is no longer a suspect or the reason for the arrest no longer exists, or for any other reason. There is a consequential amendment in schedule 1 [11] to section 16 (5) that introduces a definition of "assault". It means to commit an act of violence against a person that constitutes an offence under the relevant part of the Crimes Act 1900. Schedule 1 [12] introduces savings, transitional and other provisions.

Schedule 1 [13] to the bill will introduce schedule 1, part 2 to the Act, "Provision consequent on the enactment of the Court Security Amendment Act 2011." In many ways this bill is a tidying-up exercise that resolves gaps, irregularities and peculiarities in our court security system. As I said at the outset, we have one of the finest judicial systems in the world. It will stay that way only if, among other things, people who come to court, those who appear in court as legal representatives, and those who decide cases in court as judicial officers have the utmost confidence that they can go about their business in a secure, safe and orderly manner. That is paramount to our system of justice, and the bill refines existing security legislation to ensure that that objective is met. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) [4.38 p.m.]: I support the Court Security Amendment Bill 2011. The Court Security Act 2005 provides security officers with a range of powers that are specifically directed at ensuring the secure and orderly operation of the courts. I have spent the past 30 years of my life in courts—on the correct side of the bar, not in the dock. I thought I should make that clear before the Attorney General intervened. New South Wales sheriff's officers usually carry out court security functions. Court security officers play a very important role in the courts, as do the sheriffs. It is interesting that we have the support of the Labor Party for these amendments. The member for Liverpool said he supports this legislation and that it does sensible things.

I commend the Attorney General for bringing this legislation forward. This Government does sensible things. We are a Government that intends to do further sensible things. So much of what we are doing in Government in bringing forward sensible legislation stems from 16 years of Labor neglect. New South Wales had to put up with that neglect and mismanagement for 16 years. One has only to think about the \$500 million that was spent on the Rozelle metro and what that could have done for our electorates. In my electorate, Greater Taree City Council has a backlog of infrastructure works of about \$200 million. That could have been done. Great Lakes Council has a backlog of about \$100 million worth of works that could have been spent on roads and bridges. That could have been done.

There are so many important roads and arterial roads off the Pacific Highway in my electorate on which that \$500 million could have been spent. Another \$100 million was spent on the Tillegra Dam and not a sod was turned or a blade of grass touched. That could have built the Martin Bridge over the Manning River. Mr Deputy-Speaker, you will have driven over that bridge many times and seen the lead paint falling into the river and the rust eating into the structural integrity of the bridge, but nothing was done by the Labor Government. The member for Northern Tablelands said he was surprised that nothing had been done during the 16 years of Labor. Of course, whilst he was Speaker he was the partner of the Labor Party. He could have done something about this for years.

This amending legislation gives effect to recommendations arising out of the five-year statutory review of the Court Security Act 2005, which has previously been tabled in both Houses of Parliament. To understand the proposed amendments we have to look at the previous Act and the Court Security Act. Prior to the passage of the Court Security Act the power of sheriff's officers to perform court security functions was based on the inherent power of the judiciary to control order in and around the courts, and limited legislative powers. The Court Security Act provides a statutory basis for the exercise of powers and duties relating to court security.

It provides that, first, court security officers may require a person entering court premises to undergo a scanner search using an electronic metal detection device; and, secondly, where an officer has a reasonable belief that the person possesses a restricted item, for example a gun or an offensive implement such as could cause injury, the officer may conduct a personal search. This may involve the security officer running their hands over the person's outer clothing or the removal and examination of overcoats, hats or bags. Vehicles entering court premises may also be stopped and searched.

Mr Bryan Doyle: You can store a lot in bags and coats.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD: You certainly can. I remember that not so recently in Taree the sheriff stopped a woman who was pushing a pram from coming into the court. He expected to see a baby under the blanket, but amazingly the pram was full of stolen goods that had just been shoplifted. The woman had come to court to see how her partner was going with his case and the pram was chock-a-block with stuff she had just shoplifted. Under those circumstances he did not have the power of arrest.

Mr Mark Speakman: Did you give her a card?

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD: No. After he tried to arrest her and was assaulted I gave him a card. Vehicles entering court premises may also be stopped and searched. A security officer may refuse entry or remove people from court premises if they refuse to comply with the search requirements. Restricted items or offensive implements may be required to be deposited with court security officers or may be confiscated. One hopes that the sheriff would hand it to the constable nearby and the constable would then arrest the person for having an offensive implement in their possession. A judicial officer may order a person to leave court premises or deny the entry of people to court premises if considered necessary for securing order and safety in court premises.

It is an offence to use a recording device, such as cameras, mobile phones, tape or digital audio recording devices to record sound or images in court premises. A mobile phone may be used as a telephone in court premises—that is a relief for many I am sure—but not to take pictures or record court proceedings. A court security officer may give a move-on direction to a person on court premises if they have reasonable grounds to believe that the person's behaviour or presence is obstructing another person, constitutes harassment or intimidation or causes fear to another person. That is the move-on power we have been debating in other legislation before the House today. That is a preventative measure and crime prevention is far better than dealing with the consequences of crime.

If a person can be moved on before they do anything or get out of hand, it will save that person from getting into trouble, save police and the courts a lot of time and save the cost of the person going through the court system. Of course, a person whose conduct obstructs another person, constitutes harassment or intimidation, or causes fear can be arrested under the Crimes Act and can be liable to an apprehended violence order. Sometimes you see people just outside a courtroom abusing another person and arguing, swearing and carrying on and, after a couple of warnings, the police arrest and charge that person with apprehended violence, particularly when the victim of the abuse and carry on is in some way related to or known to that person.

A court security officer may require a person to provide identification details and the reason for their visit if the officer believes on reasonable grounds that the person is carrying a restricted item or offensive implement, or has committed an offence on court premises. Once again, he would probably wave to a nearby constable and get the constable to have a look at the offensive implement or item because other charges may flow from that. A court security officer may arrest a person in the act of committing an offence under the legislation or where an officer believes on reasonable grounds the person has committed an offence. It is an offence to obstruct or assault a court security officer, not that I think the legislation needed to say that. The Crimes Act makes it an offence to assault anyone.

The Act contains safeguards on the exercise of powers consistent with the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act 2002. These include obligations to give a warning that a failure to comply with a

security requirement or immediately leave the court premises may be an offence; to conduct searches expeditiously, with minimal invasiveness and in a way that affords reasonable privacy; and the timely provision of information that the officer is a security officer. One would hope that if an officer spoke to a person they would announce their status and why they are speaking to them. This legislation provides that they do that.

The bill will provide security officers with a power of arrest where they or another person are the subject of an assault in court premises. This appears to be a reasonable power to protect members of the public and court precincts from violent offenders. Many times over the years I have seen people jump out of the dock and try to hit the magistrate. I have seen lawyers at the bar table struck, prosecutors struck and numerous people attempt to run from the court. One time I was in court and not paying particular attention to the proceedings as they did not involve me. I was getting ready for the next case—

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): You were on house duty, were you?

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD: In a sense. I was oblivious to what was going on around me, concentrating totally on the welfare of my client. I went to the courtroom door and opened it just in time for the offender to run through it, with the police following. Of course, the police officers claimed, tongue in cheek, that I was helping the person to abscond.

Mr Bryan Doyle: But you actually blocked the door?

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD: No, I opened it and they ran through the gap. I was not blocking it at the time. This power of arrest extends to areas that approximate the court premises. Again, this appears to be a reasonable extension of the officers' powers, and I support the amendment. Finally, the bill clarifies that an order by a judicial officer that a person leave the court premises or not be admitted to court premises is subject to a time limitation, which is 28 days. Putting a time limit on such an order appears to me to be reasonable. The bill also amends the definition of court premises. Often a lot happens outside the courtroom and the court building. Often troublemakers loiter around the area of the court—they could be relatives or friends of offenders—and they can cause a lot of trouble. Extending the court premises to include the area in the immediate surrounds of the courthouse assists in maintaining safety and public order around the precinct of the courthouse.

The bill also introduces restrictions on the bringing of alcohol and animals onto court premises. Alcohol is a major concern throughout our community and the courthouse is not immune to that problem. Many people who attend court are already intoxicated, even at 9.30 in the morning. Also during the day many people bring alcohol with them, which further fuels their hostility at having to be at court or their hostility towards people who cause them to be at court. It is commendable that authorities will have the power to remove alcohol and stop it being brought onto the premises. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr BRYAN DOYLE (Campbelltown) [4.53 p.m.]: I support the Court Security Amendment Bill 2011. Section 33 of the Court Security Act 2005 and section 19 of the Sheriff Act 2005 provide that a review of the Acts is to be undertaken as soon as possible after five years after the assent to those Acts. This review is now due. The proposed amendments following the review are designed to improve safety in the court precincts and resolve some issue of powers, particularly in relation to arrest and exclusion. One fundamental principle of any court in the State is that the proceedings are open. That is necessary and extends way back in our judicial history. It is vital that courts remain open so that justice can be seen to be done—the public can watch it being done. It is similar to allowing people into the public gallery of the Parliament. It is important that people are able to come in and watch the proceedings of Parliament to see what their lawmakers do. A book about the local courts entitled *The Courts Are Open*, which my father was a co-editor of, was written to introduce the courts to the people.

I have had a lot of experience in courts. My father was a magistrate in the Local Court. He worked in Petty Sessions and eventually became a magistrate. My elder brother was also in Petty Sessions before he went into legal practice, and I started in the Court of Petty Sessions at Campbelltown as a temporary clerk before I saw the light and joined the New South Wales Police Force. During my time in the Police Force I worked as a police prosecutor and appeared in many local courts and children's courts far and wide, in metropolitan and rural areas. Courts should be places of safety. They are where law and justice are dispensed. Sheriff's officers have a general responsibility for court security and they are ably assisted by security officers in that task. However, as courts are places for dispute resolution, inevitably there will be incidents. There are mercifully few overall, but they occur. In 2008 and 2009 there were about 350 incidents across the 164-odd courts in New South Wales. A recent violent incident was the unfortunate attack on a security officer at Liverpool court in August 2010 that resulted in the hospitalisation of that officer.

My father used to preside at Bankstown Petty Sessions, as it was called in those days, before the change to the Local Court. The old courthouse—which has since been demolished—was designed in the old 1960s or 1970s style. It was very much like our offices upstairs, with timber panelling. Magistrate Doyle had adjourned for morning tea, as is the custom in the Local Court. The barristers used to enjoy morning tea following the initial hearing. The court was supposed to be locked but there were no security officers back then, only sheriff's officers, and unfortunately a litigant let himself back into the court. Magistrate Doyle returned to the court to retrieve his bench book and found the defendant on top of the bench removing the coat of arms from above the magistrate's seat. He objected to the symbolism, the power and the judicial process that the coat of arms represented.

With the assistance of the sheriff's officers, the man was apprehended but unfortunately the coat of arms was damaged and had to be replaced. The original coat of arms was eventually repaired, and when my father retired from the bench after some 30 years it was presented to him as a memento of his service to the community. Unfortunately, I am the third of five children and it was decided that the eldest son, John, who was a lawyer and had a firm at Broken Hill—Doyle Kingston and Swift—would take possession of the coat of arms. It was proudly displayed in the front foyer of his legal practice for many years. That is just one example of the need for security in courts.

As I mentioned previously, part of my role as a police prosecutor was to appear in court, which had a bar table not unlike the table of the House. However, people appearing before the Children's Court remained seated. In the far west of New South Wales I was appearing in a matter involving a young person who received a decision that did not sit well with him. Being unable to properly express his concern about the decision, he stood up in a rage, picked up his chair and stood over me. At that stage I was seated, and he was standing over me holding a chair. Clearly he had the drop on me, so I just looked at him. He looked back, waiting for people to jump in. I just shook my head. He began to shake, and the chair slowly came down. He resumed occupying his chair and we continued. A long-term magistrate, Brian "Rocky" Lulham, was very impressed with thought power alone resolving that incident.

When I was a chief inspector at Campbelltown Court an urgent call notified the police of an issue at the Children's Court. When a group of supporters for one side had entered the courtroom the court officers and security officers realised there was an issue. They called for assistance from the Campbelltown police. An incident extended outside the court into the precincts and down the street. With the assistance of the police, security guards and the Sheriff's officers, the matter was quickly resolved. The security of witnesses is also important, especially for victims of domestic violence. Other members who preceded me in this debate mentioned this issue. In the south-west, Chief Inspector Norm Webber, who is the uncle of the member for Wyong, was the instigator of a program to provide places of sanctuary and security in courts for victims of domestic violence. Volunteers look after the welfare of victims of domestic violence and make sure that witnesses are shepherded into court.

This amending bill provides an improved level of support for New South Wales courts. It provides security officers with the power of arrest when they or another person are the subject of an assault on court premises. That extends the current powers of arrest, which usually relate to people who are trying to avoid arrest, people after whom the police are in hot pursuit, or people involved in obstruction, failure to obey directions or the destruction of signs. A failure to obey directions often occurs at the point of entry where metal detectors that scan for knives and other weapons are in operation. Importantly, the extended definition of court premises widens the powers of the bill to apply to the court precinct. That is particularly relevant for the Parramatta Court complex because the boundaries of the complex intersect with the offices of the New South Wales Trustee and Guardian. Madam Acting-Speaker, I compliment you on your elevation to the role of Temporary Speaker.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): Thank you.

Mr BRYAN DOYLE: In a number of incidents court security officers have been required to intervene to restrain aggressive clients of the Trustee and Guardian, in spite of security officers' powers technically not extending to those areas. Unfortunately the majority of the clients of the Trustee and Guardian at some stage have suffered severe injuries, so, through no fault of their own, those clients have behavioural issues. Incidents also occur immediately outside court premises on footpaths and on the street. Those areas do not fall within the current definition of court premises. This legislation remedies that shortcoming. Extending the definition of court premises will enable security officers to act within their powers when they are dealing with the types of incidents I have described.

Finally, the Act clarifies that an order made by a judicial officer for a person to leave premises or not be admitted to court premises must be subject to a time limitation not exceeding 28 days. That reflects the fundamental principle of open court. Courts must be open so that justice can be seen and heard to be done. That needs to be counterbalanced against the need for security and safety. The Act currently provides that a judicial officer may order a person or member of the public to leave or not be admitted to court premises if it is necessary to secure the order and safety of court premises. A 28-day exclusion limit is appropriate in those circumstances. For all the reasons I have outlined, it is my pleasure to commend the bill to the House.

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta) [5.05 p.m.]: It is an honour to support the Court Security Amendment Bill 2011. I commend the Attorney General for his dedication and for introducing legislation that returns New South Wales to number one. At the outset I pay respect to the diligence, dedication and hard work of court officers. They do an excellent job. The Court Security Act 2005 provided security officers with a range of powers that are specifically directed at ensuring the secure and orderly operation of courts. New South Wales Sheriff's officers usually carry out court security functions. The Court Security Amendment Bill gives effect to recommendations arising from a five-year statutory review of the Court Security Act 2005. The report has been tabled in both houses of Parliament.

Various stakeholders within the legal profession, law enforcement agencies, the courts and justice-related agencies were consulted regarding possible amendments to the Act. Among other changes that the bill will make to the Act, the bill will amend the definition of court premises to clarify that "court premises" extends to areas used for the operations of the court, or for other purposes. That will enable security officers to intervene when an altercation occurs in an area that is adjacent to the court, such as in a justice precinct or on a footpath. The bill also clarifies that an order made by a judicial officer that a person or persons leave court premises or not be admitted to court premises, when that is considered necessary for securing order and safety in court premises, will be subject to a limitation period not exceeding 28 days. Those orders may be renewed. The bill will also introduce restrictions concerning alcohol and animals, other than assistance animals, being brought onto court premises, and the wearing of helmets that obscure the face in court premises.

This bill is important because it sends the message that courts are not simply the operational areas of the judicial system but incorporate wider precincts that include courts. There can be no better example of that than the Parramatta Justice Precinct. It is a fairly new precinct and more than 1,000 staff of the Attorney General's department who are employed there comprise a fair percentage of the total number of people who work there. The complex accommodates the Children's Court, the Sydney West Trial Courts, the Parramatta Court House and the Drug Court. It is not just a precinct of a single court but rather a conglomeration of courts. It is a major section of the Attorney General's department and it has attracted 500 solicitors and more than 100 barristers to the Parramatta region. It also accommodates police headquarters, the Police State Crime Command, and the Parramatta Community Justice Centre, in which I take a particular interest.

The Parramatta Community Justice Centre was established as a partnership between the University of Western Sydney, the Attorney General's department and the Macquarie Legal Centre. One of the wonderful things about it is that the centre provides free legal advice to disadvantaged people in the community who are unable to obtain proper legal representation. Some proponents include the Macquarie Legal Centre, headed by Maria Girdler. She delivers those services as an integral part of the partnership. The centre also has pro bono volunteers from local law firms: people such as Geoff Roberson, who is the principal at Champion Legal and is a founding member of the Parramatta Justice clinic. The clinic enables placement of university students to obtain valuable work experience, and clinical placements for undergraduates and postgraduate students to gain experience. Some students find it difficult to achieve the valuable experience that this clinic provides.

The centre has other ancillary industries, including storekeepers, postal workers, couriers, catering staff, printers and others that make up the community around the Parramatta Justice Clinic. This bill addresses an important issue: everybody should be entitled to live and work in a safe environment. I also commend the fine contribution of the member for Campbelltown, who reflected on his experience in his local area. His family has a long history in the area, as he recited today. The member for Cronulla affirmed Australia as having the finest legal system in the world and the member for Northern Tablelands also supports the bill. I commend the Court Security Amendment Bill 2011 to the House and trust its passage will be secured.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) [5.11 p.m.]: Like many of my colleagues, I support the Court Security Amendment Bill 2011. The bill contains a number of amendments that reinforce what this new Government is all about: making systems open and transparent, and talking to the people involved. I believe deeply in talking to people at the coalface, such as police officers, court officers or magistrates who deal with court security issues daily. I praise the Attorney General for his fine understanding of these subjects. As one of

the few non-solicitors in this place, I often find the legal jargon of many of these bills difficult to understand. In the past the Attorney General has been able to simplify that jargon to make the wording open and transparent. More importantly, we have been in government for only 40 or 50 days yet we have the ability to listen to the people on the street and transform their concerns into sensible legislation.

The Court Security Amendment Bill will provide security officers with the power of arrest in relation to acts of violence that constitute an offence under part 3 of the Crimes Act. Court security officers form an important role in the court system. At times I have been in the gallery of a court to watch proceedings. It is an emotional time for anyone who has to attend court, particular those dealing with family law and custody issues, as well as the many other issues. Emotions run high and, unfortunately, people often take the law into their own hands. This bill will provide a safe environment for everyone at a courthouse. The member for Parramatta referred to the Parramatta Legal Centre, which provides a vital service for his local area. The bill contains many other provisions that have been covered adequately by previous speakers. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr ANDREW FRASER (Coffs Harbour—The Assistant-Speaker) [5.14 p.m.]: I support the Court Security Amendment Bill 2011. In about 1963 the New South Wales Government built a government office block in Coffs Harbour. Anecdotally, I am told that the officers who were to be employed in that building did not like the accommodation. The decision was made for that building to become a courthouse and it was remodelled. We now have a 1963 building that has been modified many times and operates as a courthouse dealing with minor misdemeanours through to murder trials. The problem is that the building security is second rate. In 1995 the Coalition Government identified the need for a justice centre in Coffs Harbour. The courthouse adjoins the police station and at that time the Coffs Harbour police station cells were rebuilt and a fully enclosed brick walkway to the courthouse was installed.

This was done because the archaic nature of the building required police officers to escort prisoners in custody from the cells to the courthouse. Police officers regularly escorted prisoners from Grafton Jail to Coffs Harbour because the area did not have court officers to fulfil that role. This resulted in Coffs Harbour local police numbers being thin on the ground because at any given time four or five police officers were required to escort prisoners to and from Grafton Jail. After much lobbying by local people and me, especially on behalf of court officers, courthouse security officers, police and members of the public, we obtained courthouse security. A private security firm provided court officers to ensure that prisoner security was paramount at all times.

Unfortunately, the building's security is substandard because members of the public, witnesses and accused people mingle in a general marshalling area outside the two courtrooms. On one occasion when the court was heavily burdened with cases a room downstairs was opened to be utilised as another temporary courtroom. It was probably an office, but technically it became a courtroom and remains so to this day. I recall an occasion when a case being heard involved two fellows charged with attempted murder. This temporary courtroom had no barrier between the accused in the dock and the Crown witnesses for that trial. The magistrate cleared the court as he believed the witnesses as well as the media representatives covering the trial and anyone else in that courtroom may have been in danger.

Due to the intimidating behaviour of the two men in the dock, the witnesses changed their evidence at the last minute and refused to testify to the facts of the case. This resulted in the charges against those two felons being dismissed. Providing court officers with powers to arrest or banish someone from court premises, as this bill does, is commendable. However, in commending the Minister for introducing the bill I highlight once again the need for a justice centre in Coffs Harbour. Our local police commander's office is in a demountable building at the rear of the police station. Anyone wanting to speak with the commander in wet weather, which the coast has experienced a great deal of in the past 12 months, is likely to get drenched going to and from his office. Coffs Harbour is still utilising the archaic government office block as a courthouse where witnesses, friends and relatives of anyone giving evidence or attending court can be intimidated by accused persons.

The opportunity for solicitors to actually brief their clients, be it defence clients or prosecution clients, is extremely limited. There are a small number of anterooms in the courthouse. The judges' chambers are archaic to say the least. I remember on one occasion in 1995 when a previous Minister for Justice, the Hon. Wayne Merton, now retired, visited the chambers. We had morning tea with a judge. The judiciary was extremely concerned about the conditions of the place. Whilst this legislation provides court officers or security staff with the power to arrest or banish people from court premises for a period of 28 days, it does not resolve the very real issues that need to be addressed at Coffs Harbour.

On Thursday I will meet with the Minister for Police and Emergency Services to discuss the replacement of the police station. We need the Attorney General to support a justice centre. A proposal was put

forward by the former Government to build a justice centre that would also include a government office block on a new site on the corner of Beryl Street and the Pacific Highway. I believe the council was in discussions with the former Government's Cabinet Office, and the Department of Commerce, and supported that proposal when it was first put forward but has now decided it wants the facility located in the town centre. I have always believed that any new court house, police station or justice centre should be located in the town centre, not where it is currently proposed, which is adjacent to the showground.

If the justice centre and incorporated police station were built on Beryl Street, a set of traffic lights would have to be erected about 80 to 100 yards from another set of traffic lights, which would make life on the Pacific Highway fairly ordinary. I am digressing, but I have just been informed that the Federal Government does not believe the bypass for Coffs Harbour is imperative. Come 2016, if the funding continues from the Federal Government, and for that matter the State Government, the Pacific Highway upgrade will not incorporate a bypass of Coffs Harbour because four lanes of divided traffic already run through the city, which is something I deplore. I still believe that we are badly in need of a western bypass, as was indicated by the Roads and Traffic Authority sometime in the past.

The courthouse can be developed on the same site and ensure everyone's safety, including court officers, magistrates, witnesses and the accused at all times. We need to guarantee the safety of those who may be visiting the courthouse to see the clerk of the court. To do that now, they have to go up a lift or stairwell, where they are confronted by those waiting for their matters to be heard. As we know, courts are places that attract people of dubious character, so the general public must be protected. The only way we can achieve that is by building a new justice centre in Coffs Harbour. On more than one occasion over the past four or five years prisoners have escaped from the dock and the courthouse. Security staff and police officers have had to apprehend them outside the courthouse.

Unfortunately, the present police station is only 50 metres from the Coast Hotel and quite often, if a court case is delayed, some of those involved in the case will wander up to the Coast Hotel and have one or two too many and then come back to court in a somewhat intoxicated state, or a state that we would not want them in at the courthouse. I commend the Attorney General for bringing this legislation forward. The main problem in Coffs Harbour is the lack of a justice centre. I note that the Attorney General is now in the Chamber. I am meeting with the Minister for Police and Emergency Services on Thursday. I hope the Attorney will be privy to those discussions and that he will work with the Minister for Police and Emergency Services to deliver to us in this term a new courthouse and police station, which were avoided by the former Government purely for political reasons. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr GREG SMITH (Epping—Attorney General, and Minister for Justice) [5.25 p.m.], in reply: I thank the members representing the electorates of Liverpool, Davidson, The Entrance, Oatley, Northern Tablelands, Cronulla, Myall Lakes, Campbelltown, Parramatta, Tweed and Coffs Harbour for their contributions to the debate. I take note of what the member for Coffs Harbour said and I hope that we can do some good in that area as it is long overdue. The Court Security Amendment Bill 2011 updates the powers of security officers under the Court Security Act 2005. The Act currently gives security officers in courts certain powers of arrest. This bill makes it clear that security officers can arrest a person where a person is the subject of an act of violence as provided for under part 3 of the Crimes Act 1900.

Appropriate safeguards will apply and security officers will undergo additional training prior to the amendments being commenced. The bill also extends the definition of "court premises" to ensure that security officers can intervene where altercations occur in areas adjacent to the court. Other minor amendments address some practical issues such as the bringing of animals or alcohol onto court premises. The amendments provided for in the bill will assist in ensuring the continued safety of court premises and the people who use them. I commend the bill to the House.

Question—That this bill be now agreed to in principle—put and resolved in the affirmative.

Motion agreed to.

Bill agreed to in principle.

Passing of the Bill

Bill declared passed and transmitted to the Legislative Council with a message seeking its concurrence in the bill.

WORLD NO TOBACCO DAY

Matter of Public Importance

Dr ANDREW McDONALD (Macquarie Fields) [5.27 p.m.]: Today is a very memorable World No Tobacco Day because Tony Abbott, the Leader of the Opposition in the Commonwealth Government, has announced that he will also support plain paper packaging. It is finally going to happen. The World Health Organization created World No Tobacco Day in 1987, and it is observed around the world every year on 31 May. The aim is to encourage a worldwide 24-hour period without tobacco. The day aims to draw attention to the risk of death—5.4 million deaths every year worldwide—not to mention the negative health effects of tobacco on those who survive.

As part of its World No Tobacco Day awards, the World Health Organization today recognised the Federal Minister for Health and Ageing, Nicola Roxon, by awarding her a Director-General's Special Recognition Certificate in a ceremony in Parliament House in Canberra this morning. The award recognises her unwavering leadership in the field of health. Ms Roxon also received a Nigel Gray Award from the Australian Tobacco Control community and last week she received an award from the Australian Medical Association in recognition of Australia being world leader in tobacco control. New Zealand, Canada, the European Union and Great Britain are considering similar laws to the Federal Government's laws. They are closely watching to see whether Australia succeeds in its fight against big tobacco.

If successful, plain packaging could spread to other emerging markets that are targeted by big tobacco, such as Brazil, Russia and Indonesia. Tobacco is the greatest cause of preventable premature death in the First World. Half of all long-term smokers will be killed by tobacco use and, of that half, half again will lose 20 to 25 years of their lives. Smoking is a serious problem for those who are most economically disadvantaged. It kills 6,600 people every year in New South Wales, more people than any other preventable disease in this State. Australia-wide, smoking kills 15,000 Australians a year, and has killed one million Australians since the dangers of smoking were first discovered in 1950. Smoking is the biggest preventable cause of cancer and heart disease, and is responsible for 150 admissions to New South Wales hospitals each day and more than 750,000 bed days across the country. Many of these hospitalisations result from second-hand smoke inhaled by children under the age of 15 years.

The societal costs of tobacco are enormous: in 2006-07 the total cost for New South Wales was \$8.4 billion, and for the Australian economy about \$31.5 billion. Smoking reduction is life saving and cost effective. That is why on 7 April the Federal health Minister, Nicola Roxon, released a public exposure draft of legislation to make plain packaging of all tobacco products mandatory by July 2012. Taking on big tobacco, the most fearsome lobby in the world, requires bravery. Tony Abbott's support for big tobacco has rapidly waned; he could feel the ground shifting beneath his feet. Today he said his party would not oppose the laws when they came before Parliament. But he may still attempt to make some minor, unspecified changes. I just hope his words are not weasel words for reducing the efficacy of plain packaging. Australia's tobacco market generates total revenues of only \$9.98 billion, which is less than one-third of its total health costs to the community.

However, profits for big tobacco continue to rise: up from \$8.3 billion in 2008, although smoking generally has been in decline, with 22 billion sticks being sold in Australia every year. Mr Abbott's views are held by only a minority of those on his side of the Federal Parliament. I am proud to have introduced the motion supporting plain packaging that was passed by this House on 6 May this year. This was vital support for the Federal Government, and the support of those opposite in this place is acknowledged and appreciated. Every day, including today in the car on the way into this place, one hears the case of big tobacco against plain packaging being advertised on commercial radio, using a front group funded by big tobacco called the Alliance of Australian Retailers. Well, their campaign will not work. I repeat some of the quotes I have previously used from Nicola Roxon when speaking on this issue. She said that the level of animosity that is coming from tobacco companies is a clear measure of efficacy and added:

They have already invested millions of dollars during the last election campaign to oppose this measure, and there is no way they would be fighting so hard if they think this would not have any impact. We know it will make a difference ... every extra life we can save of the 15,000 each year that are lost to smoking-related deaths will be a success.

The current Minister for Health also has acknowledged that tobacco companies are very clever at giving money to third-party groups. We have never previously had any dissent on either side of politics over the need to incrementally restrict the use of tobacco. The group at highest risk in our population is those who are disadvantaged. The most common age of those who commence to smoke is 16 years, and most smokers have

started smoking by the age of 19 years. Under the current health agreement, the Government is committed to reducing the daily smoking rate among Australian adults aged 18 years and over from 19.1 per cent in 2007-08 to 10 per cent by 2018, and halving the daily smoking rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults from 47.7 per cent in 2008 to 23.8 per cent by 2018. Smoking prevalence in New South Wales is the lowest ever recorded, at 17.2 per cent. The previous Government was determined to reduce the rate to less than 10 per cent by 2020, and the rate of secondary school students who smoke has decreased from 14.6 per cent in 2002 to 8.6 per cent. We have come a long way, but there is still a long way to go. As Anne Jones, Action on Smoking and Health Chief Executive, says:

Research evidence shows plain packaging of tobacco products will protect children and increase the effectiveness of health warnings. It will also prevent the use of misleading and deceptive claims and deglamourise tobacco packs and images.

We urge all parties to support plain packaging. It will save lives, protect children and has strong community support.

This is the start of the end of big tobacco in Australia. Plain packaging will be a death blow to its market share. It has fought long and hard against it. Finally, the Federal Liberal Party has decided to do what the community wanted it to do and has abandoned big tobacco. Big tobacco's day is over; the day of health prevention has come, and this is a great World No Tobacco Day.

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) [5.35 p.m.]: I speak today on behalf of the New South Wales Government, which is committed to keeping people healthy and out of hospital and is pleased to support this year's World Health Organization World No Tobacco Day. Over the past 12 years smoking rates in New South Wales have declined. Current adult smoking has dropped from 24 per cent in 1997 to 17.2 per cent in 2009. School students as current smokers were 27.3 per cent in 1984 and 8.6 per cent in 2008. Aboriginal adults who smoke dropped from 41.3 per cent in 2002-05 to 33.9 per cent in 2006-09. Smoking rates generally have declined in New South Wales. That is good news for smokers, their families, the health system and the New South Wales community.

But tobacco-related harm remains the leading cause of preventable illness and death in New South Wales, imposing a huge health cost on families and communities and a substantial economic cost on our health system. Smoking-related illnesses account for approximately 5,200 deaths and 44,000 hospitalisations a year in New South Wales. One in every two lifetime smokers will die prematurely because they smoked. The social costs of smoking in New South Wales, including costs borne by government and individuals, are estimated at more than \$8 billion annually in New South Wales.

World No Tobacco Day is an annual worldwide event to promote awareness about the health effects of smoking and to encourage smokers to quit. The theme for this year's event is the World Health Organization "Framework Convention on Tobacco Control". The World Health Organization Convention sets an international framework for the development of policies and programs to address tobacco smoking. The convention commenced on 27 February 2005 has been acceded to, ratified and accepted or approved by 40 States. Australia has shown that it is at the forefront of promoting the health of its people by signing and ratifying the convention. We are one of the first countries in the world to do so.

The New South Wales Government is strongly committed to the prevention and reduction of tobacco-related harm in New South Wales. As part of a comprehensive approach to reducing smoking, the New South Wales Government supports the Australian Government's move to introduce mandated plain packaging with the inclusion of specified requirements for graphic health warnings. There is much to be done to tackle what are still high levels of smoking, particularly among our most disadvantaged communities. The New South Wales Government will shortly release the New South Wales Tobacco Strategy 2011-2016. This comprehensive action plan will set out the actions that the New South Wales Government will take, in collaboration with key non-government organisation partners and others, to tackle smoking.

However, on World No Tobacco Day, New South Wales should be proud of the initiatives it has implemented to tackle tobacco-related harm. From the development of the first Quit campaign in the 1970s and the introduction of the New South Wales Tobacco Advertising Prohibition Act in 1991, New South Wales has been developing and implementing comprehensive strategies to reduce the harm caused by tobacco. New South Wales was the first State in Australia to introduce a ban on the display of tobacco and smoking products in order to reduce the promotion of those powerful products in the retail setting. The Public Health (Tobacco) Act 2008 provides that, since July 2010, all retail outlets in New South Wales with the exception of approved specialist tobacconists are required to comply with the complete ban on the display of tobacco in their stores.

As a result of this legislation children and young people are now no longer exposed to tobacco products as they move around shops every day. The intention of the display ban is to reduce their likelihood of viewing these harmful products as ordinary consumables such as bread, milk and newspapers. A number of other jurisdictions are now following the lead of New South Wales by implementing similar legislation to prohibit the display of tobacco in retail outlets. Other measures in the Public Health (Tobacco) Act 2008 that aim to reduce young people's exposure to tobacco products include a requirement for a single point of sale for tobacco and greater restrictions on tobacco vending machines.

There is conclusive evidence to show that passive smoking is harmful to the health of children and adults, which is why New South Wales legislated to protect the community from second-hand tobacco smoke. The Smoke Free Environment Act 2000 prohibits smoking in all enclosed public places in New South Wales. Over the past seven years, in my time as a councillor at Kogarah council, we banned smoking in all public playgrounds; on equipment and in canteens; in change rooms and in toilets; on playing fields and in sporting facilities; at swimming pools, beaches, bays and foreshore areas; and in public spaces within 10 metres of all schools.

Banning smoking in all enclosed public places protects people from the adverse health effects of exposure to second-hand tobacco smoke. The Public Health (Tobacco) Act 2008 went further and banned smoking in cars in which children under the age of 16 were passengers. A survey conducted in 2010 found that 92 per cent of the public were in support of these measures. For over three decades NSW Health has been among the world leaders in tobacco control. The New South Wales Government will lead the way in preventative health and take further measures to reduce the prevalence of smoking in the New South Wales community.

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) [5.42 p.m.]: I support this matter of public importance, that is, World No Tobacco Day. The World Health Organization selected the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, the world's foremost tobacco control instrument, as its theme for today's World No Tobacco Day. The treaty reaffirms all signatories' commitments to a higher standard of health and provides new legal dimensions for cooperation in tobacco control. World No Tobacco Day 2011 has been designed to highlight the treaty's overall importance, to stress parties' obligations under the treaty, and to expose the devastating health, social, environmental and economic consequences of tobacco as well as exposure to tobacco smoke.

As the member for Macquarie Fields said, every year over five million people will die from tobacco-related illnesses, and globally some 600,000 people will die from exposure to second-hand smoke. In addition, over 15,000 Australians are killed each year and the cost nationwide is over \$30 billion per annum—\$8 billion for New South Wales alone. In 2008 the New South Wales Labor Government introduced world-class legislation, the Public Health (Tobacco) Act 2008, which banned the display of cigarettes in shops and other retail outlets with the aim of deglamourising tobacco products for children and young people; substantially increasing penalties for offences such as selling to minors; and introducing on-the-spot fines for smoking whilst children are in the car. This legislation complemented the Smoke Free Environment Act 2000 which banned smoking in all enclosed public places and phased in the banning of smoking in licensed premises.

This strong action by the former Labor Government led to councils taking the action alluded to earlier by the member for Oatley. Kogarah council, Bankstown council and others banned smoking in children's playgrounds, sporting fields, public parks, swimming pools and all council-owned facilities. I note that since 2004 the Labor Party has ceased accepting donations from tobacco companies. I question the Coalition Government's commitment towards reducing the prevalence of smoking, given that it continues to accept such donations—recently accepting a donation from British American Tobacco, as per the Liberal Party's 2008 electoral funding disclosure. I note that its Federal counterparts share its indifference and willingness to accept such donations. On 30 April 2010 Tony Abbott stated on Channel 9's *Today* show, "I don't see why, if they want to make a donation, we shouldn't accept it." Perhaps the final word on the Coalition's complicity with respect to tobacco companies is from the Hon. Nick Minchin, a mentor to those opposite, who on 3 May told ABC television, "If people choose to die from smoking, I think as a Liberal that is their choice. If they die early they save us money." Such sentiment sadly demonstrates the Liberal Party's lack of credibility on this most important public health issue.

As the member for Macquarie Fields advised us earlier, today's World No Tobacco Day campaign has resulted in public health advocates in Canberra advocating for plain packaging legislation. Interestingly, Tony

Abbott and the Federal Coalition are no longer opposing the bill that is currently before the Federal Parliament. I suspect that this change of heart is not due to any sudden or genuine concern for the health of the public or our nation; rather it is due to the immense public pressure and political heat that he and the Federal Opposition have been experiencing. It might also be due in part to his trepidation over the Liberal leadership, which is beginning to galvanise the Federal Liberal Party. It appears that this world-first legislation that will introduce plain cigarette packaging in Australia will be passed, which means tobacco companies will lose their last visible marketing tool—a win for public health, the environment and our economy. I commend this matter of public importance to the House.

Dr ANDREW McDONALD (Macquarie Fields) [5.47 p.m.], in reply: I thank all those members who contributed to debate on this matter of public importance. Today is a watershed day for the health of the people of Australia as it will become obvious to everyone that we will now have plain packaging of cigarettes. Australia will lead the world in tobacco control. The rest of the world is now watching for the reaction of big tobacco. I expect that big tobacco, big bully that it is, will not disappear without a whimper as it is a fearsome competitor. We, as taxpayers, pay three times in health care what it earns in revenue. Big tobacco will attack all those who have opposed it. Nicola Roxon is well and truly not on its Christmas card list, and all those in this Parliament who spoke out against it can expect fearsome opposition.

Over many years we have introduced legislation that has given us the lowest smoking rate of all time. In recent years anyone who has travelled would have noticed that smoking is much more prevalent overseas than it is in Australia. However, countries such as Ireland are catching up fast, partly as a result of our example, and some countries are ahead of us. I regularly have dinner with my family in Macarthur Square in Campbelltown, a privately owned shopping centre which, for the past seven years, has provided smoke-free dining areas. It is able to do so because it is located on private property and through the use of private security guards it is able to enforce smoking bans, even in outdoor areas. As this shopping centre is now a non-smoking area it has changed the whole ambience of that area, and young families and others are now willing to sit outside. I think our next big battle will be banning smoking in alfresco dining areas. We have won our first battle but I look forward to taking on big tobacco and winning our second battle.

I am pleased the member for Oatley mentioned that the tobacco strategy 2011-16 is soon to be released. I have read the submission document and I very much look forward to the changes that will occur in tobacco use as a result of the tobacco strategy. No-one will ever know the reason that Tony Abbott has had a vision on the road to Damascus. I expect that Tony Abbott's support for the status quo is because he always supports the status quo even if that means supporting a product that if used as directed will kill 50 per cent of its customers. On a worldwide basis the aim of tobacco prevention uses the mnemonic MPOWER. "M" stands for monitoring tobacco use and prevention policy. Much of the Third World has very poor monitoring of tobacco use and prevention policies and one can only start to act on tobacco use once one knows how many people smoke. Big Tobacco has many plans to target the Third World now that smoking is becoming less prevalent in the First World.

"P" stands for protecting people from tobacco smoke. As I have said previously, we could close half the paediatric beds in New South Wales if the smoking rate in families was zero per cent. "O" stands for offering help to quit tobacco use. Most people who give up tobacco do so cold turkey; however, aids such as medication or nicotine replacement gums can be effective for some. Those interested can join Facebook with Alex Perry in a sponsored site to reduce their smoking. "W" stands for warning about the dangers of tobacco. "E" stands for enforcing bans on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship. Australia has led the world in this area. Finally, "R" stands for raising taxes on tobacco.

We still have a long way to go with tobacco taxation. The total cost to the health budget from the product is three times the total revenue. Big tobacco uses the fact that smokers pay taxes as an excuse for allowing them to continue to smoke. Like most big companies it privatises its profits and socialises the risk of its product. Big tobacco will continue to target young people. As I said, one in 10 year 10 students now take 10 years off their life by commencing smoking. The rate is 8.6 per cent in high school students, which is still too high. Half those students will die as a result of their smoking. Today is a win for us in the battle against big tobacco but the war will go on. I thank all members who have contributed to the debate.

Discussion concluded.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

MACQUARIE FIELDS

Dr ANDREW McDONALD (Macquarie Fields) [5.52 p.m.]: There have been significant changes in the suburb of Macquarie Fields over the past five years. An editorial by Mandy Perrin in a recent edition of the *Macarthur Chronicle* deserves the widest possible audience and I wish to bring it to the attention of the House. She states:

The suburb of Macquarie Fields can take a bow as it is the Macarthur region's real estate hotspot.

Macquarie Fields has turned around its poor reputation after the 2005 riots in the best way possible by establishing itself as a desirable family suburb.

The suburb's reputation, so battered after the days of national media coverage during the riots, is recovering big time.

Macquarie Fields outperformed every other area across the Macarthur region to record more than \$43 million in residential sales from 155 properties in the last 12 months.

With the average Macquarie Fields home sale price at \$302,000, the area is attracting families keen to take advantage of its affordable housing.

Mandy goes on to state:

At the same time, the regeneration of the area, including replacing the troubled public housing estate with a mix of private, public and seniors housing, is creating a more desirable community.

This is a suburb on the way up.

Mandy continues:

The riots of 2005, which involved about 60 people, mainly youths and young men, were in no way representative of the suburb.

But they did focus attention on the need for urban renewal of the suburb's public housing estate.

We are now seeing the results of a revitalised community where there is a greater sense of community pride and ownership.

The State Government, Campbelltown Council and many non-government welfare groups have worked hard to give the suburb a fresh start.

The area has emerged from the riots as a stronger and better community.

Every year we are seeing its young people excel on the sporting field, in the performing arts and in the classroom.

Macquarie Fields High School is often listed in the state's top 100 best performing schools in the HSC.

Northern Campbelltown has plenty to offer, particularly for young families.

Apart from affordable housing, it has convenient road and rail transport links, plenty of schools, a new skate park, a leisure centre, a new library hub and community centre, and a myriad of sports clubs and facilities and shopping centres.

Like every area, Macquarie Fields will have its ups and downs. It never deserved the negative stigma it had forced upon it by the riots but has bounced back as a community-spirited family suburb.

Take a bow.

I could not agree more. This opinion is held by most of the people who live in Macquarie Fields. I only wish I could have put it as eloquently as Mandy did. The Liberal Party campaigned in the 2006 and 2007 elections on the need for urban renewal in Macquarie Fields. It did not campaign on the issue this time around and I look forward to seeing whether this Government will continue the many efforts that have already begun in this area to improve Macquarie Fields. The sale of some of the houses is progressing. The aged care housing being built in the centre of the old estate looks just wonderful and currently is being used. With the intervention of previous housing Ministers I was able to prevent the sale of some of the houses that had been earmarked for sale. These housed many of our long-term residents who are part of the glue of the community. These people, like Barry Crossley, are tribal elders and leaders in Macquarie Fields. I pay tribute to Barry for his activism and leadership on the issue of making Macquarie Fields a better place to live for all. Every day I visit Macquarie Fields I see the signs of renewal. As Mandy says, take a bow, Macquarie Fields.

PENRITH ELECTORATE GOVERNOR VISIT

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith) [5.57 p.m.]: I congratulate Acting-Speaker Mr Lee Evans on his ability to oversee a rigorous debate in the Parliament. I speak about the presence last night of the Governor in the Penrith electorate. She made the trek west to watch the mighty Penrith Panthers come out victors in cold and wet weather over a quite spirited Rabbitohs side. Last night the Penrith Rugby League Club played host to Her Excellency the Governor of New South Wales, Marie Bashir. It was extremely encouraging to see the Governor there in her Panthers scarf and being inducted into the membership of Penrith Panthers. She brought her husband, Sir Nicholas Shehadie, and her grandson, Nicholas, out for the evening. Unfortunately I have to tell the House that Sir Nicholas and young Nicholas are Rabbitohs fans.

I am sure the Governor took personal pleasure in taking her husband and grandson all the way out to Penrith to watch their club get a lesson from the mighty Penrith Panthers. The Governor gave a speech in the chairman's lounge about her love for the western districts of the city, and some of the historical precincts around the Penrith area and their role in the foundation of the colony. She had extremely fine words to say about Watkin Tench, an Englishman who was on the First Fleet and who was given the responsibility of trekking west. He found the Nepean River, and a park alongside the Nepean River is named in his honour. When I was talking to the Governor last night I indicated to her that many schools in the Penrith electorate—one of which is my former school, St Dominic's College—have a sports house named after Tench.

It was a fantastic initiative by the Penrith Panthers and the Penrith Leagues Club to invite someone like the Governor to Penrith. The crowd had to brave some abysmal weather—it was cold and windy. About 5,000 people braved the conditions to come to the ground and the Governor was extremely appreciative of their attendance and their support for a club she obviously has a huge passion for. Her words about the role of club membership were particularly important. She spoke about coming to see an Elvis Presley show at Penrith Panthers. That demonstrates the diversity of the clubs movement across the State as well as the ability of clubs to provide different types of entertainment. The Governor also spoke about the great sporting history of the districts surrounding Penrith. She drew on some historical references to Macquarie and his work in the greater Penrith area, including the founding of the Macquarie towns, of which Castlereagh is the closest to the city of Penrith.

It was good to have someone of the Governor's prestige come to Penrith last night, mingle with people in the chairman's lounge and make herself so accessible to the public. Members in the chairman's lounge and people in the crowd embraced the Governor's presence warmly, and I am sure they will take away fond memories of the occasion. We were also privileged to hear some fine words about Sir Nicholas Shehadie's sporting career. He spoke about his debut with the Randwick rugby side at age 15 and about playing more than 130 games for the Wallabies. Back then not every game was considered a test. He gave some interesting insights into sporting tours—the first tour he was part of lasted nine months. I take this opportunity to thank the Governor and Sir Nicholas for coming to Penrith last night. Their presence was most welcome.

Private members' statements concluded.

Pursuant to resolution business interrupted for the presentation of inaugural speeches.

INAUGURAL SPEECHES

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON (Camden) [6.02 p.m.] (Inaugural Speech): It is a humbling experience standing in this Chamber tonight before my colleagues, family and friends. I would like to start by thanking my parents, Lynn and Stewart Patterson, who have always been tremendously supportive of me, and standing for Parliament was no exception. I remember being at a good friend's birthday one night when I had just left the family hotel after 20-odd years of service to concentrate full time on being mayor and running for Parliament. One of the guests asked dad would he cope without me. Without batting an eyelid, he said, "Absolutely, he is never at work anymore. If he hadn't left I was going to sack him anyway." We all waited for the punch line. It never came.

Move forward 15 months, and it was the Wednesday before the election and all the Coalition candidates stopped at our family hotel in Camden on the bus tour. There dad pulled the then Leader of the Opposition aside and asked him, "Do you think Chris will get elected on Saturday?" Mr O'Farrell answered, "If he doesn't, Stewart, I won't." Dad said, "Good, because I'm not giving him his job back on Monday." That said,

I could not have two bigger supporters than mum and dad. My mother-in-law, Gai Watts, has been extremely supportive of me and her help along the way, in particular with our children, has been invaluable. To Gai and her partner, Kym Peters, I say thank you.

To my four wonderful children, Amelia 10; my twins, Tom and Sophie, eight; and Matthew, nearly three, I thank you for your love and understanding that only children can give. Let me tell you all here tonight that whether it be their school achievements, Tom and Sophie—my twins—winning this year's school cross country, Amelia perfecting her kartas and executing a great round kick, or Matthew coming out with a new expression, I cannot contain the pride I have in my children and the people they are becoming. If they read this speech when they are older, I ask only one thing of them.

Never forget that the only important thing is family. I expect that you will always look after each other and stand side by side in good and bad times alike. To my wife, Vicki, I cannot thank you enough for the love and support you have always given me, for the balancing act you achieve to ensure that our children are our number one priority and for the normality you bring to our household. I would also like to say how proud I am of you for what you have achieved in both your business and personal life. Thank you for your unconditional support.

My predecessor, Geoff Corrigan, who was the State member from 2003 to 2011. Ironically it was Geoff who first suggested to me that I run for council in 2000 in a by-election after the sad passing of a former Liberal member of this place, Phillip White. I only found out later that I was the missing number that Geoff needed that year to secure the mayorship. Geoff continues to be a good friend and I sincerely wish him well in the future. I would like to acknowledge another former member for Camden who I replaced on Camden council in another by-election in 2005 following her sad passing, the colourful Dr Liz Kernohan, AM. I had retired from council in 2004 because my twins were then only nine months old, and with Liz's sad passing I became the first Camden councillor to be elected at two by-elections after the sad passing of two former Liberal members of Parliament. Law of averages says I will not be going back to council after my parliamentary career ends.

Liz Kernohan, in making her first speech, said that she was conscious not only of her loyalty to the party of which she was a proud member, but also of her duty to the electors of the Camden electorate, who had done her the honour of electing her to represent them in this House. As I read her words, spoken here 20 years ago, I realised that they expressed my feelings accurately, and that in tribute to Liz I should repeat them here tonight. Liz is an icon in Camden. I am the first to acknowledge that I will not be filling her shoes, but rather will do everything I can to serve the people of Camden as she did. I must mention a current member from the other place who lives in Camden, Charlie Lynn. Charlie has been extremely supportive of me and I look forward to working with Charlie for the good of the people of Camden as he shares my passion for our area.

I will give an example of Charlie at his best. It was before the 2007 State election at a press conference in Camden when Charlie announced me and Jai Rowell as the candidates for both Camden and Wollondilly, in front of a packed house full of media. Not only were we not preselected at the time, but the newly elected member for Wollondilly did not even run for pre-selection that year. As you can imagine, everyone was aghast at Charlie's announcement. My problem was not with him pre-empting the pre-selection process, but with him announcing that Jai and I were the new Batman and Robin of the south-west. As a result, the local papers were only interested in whom out of Jai and I was Batman and who was Robin.

Now onto Robin, the newly elected member for Wollondilly: I thank you for your support along the way as we are not just geographical neighbours, but now very firm friends. I wish you well in your journey in politics and in life. The final member I mention has been a tremendous support over the last two election campaigns. Her help has been invaluable—and she has a very good sense of timing. I am not singling her out to swing the pendulum back to the left; nor, Mr Acting-Speaker, am I singling her out because my new mode of transport to this place is CityRail. I am singling her out because in two campaigns and post being elected, Gladys Berejiklian has been a tremendous support, and I genuinely appreciate it.

I moved to Camden in 1984 and started at Macarthur Anglican School in year 7 as a foundation pupil when there were only three classes and 93 children. Now the school has approximately 1,100 children, and I am very happy to say that my three school-age children now attend Macarthur. I am very proud that I was the first alumni to be elected to local government, the first alumni to be elected mayor, and now the first alumni to be elected to State Parliament. I know the current headmaster, Dr David Knockles, would be very proud for the school if I was the first alumni to become a Minister. So Premier, for fear of disappointing the school, I thought I would bring that up this evening.

From school I went on and did an Associate Diploma in Hospitality and then went on to manage the family hotel for 20-odd years. I have the utmost respect for anybody who has a university degree. I know a number of my colleagues bring that knowledge and experience to this Parliament. Having tried that for just long enough to have received a Higher Education Contribution Scheme [HECS] bill, I realised it was not for me. I genuinely admire those who have achieved in their studies. That said, I would not have swapped my time in the family hotel for anything and I hope that, if nothing else, it has enabled me to bring the ability to mix with, and respect the views of, people from every walk of life. Each day I went to work I got to deal with, and talk to, a great cross-section of our community. I hope that stands me in good stead to represent those very cross-sections of my community equally.

The hospitality industry, my industry, is one of which I am very proud. I acknowledge Sally Fielke, the Australian Hotels Association chief executive officer, and long-time family friend, Max Hitchens, an icon in our industry, who are here this evening. It is an industry with extremely hardworking people who are very generous and contribute so much to their local communities through providing employment, financial support and in helping to build social fabric within their communities. It is an industry that carries with it a social responsibility. The vast majority of operators understand that responsibility and do the right thing. I say to the minority of operators that do not that there is no place for them in hospitality. This Government and the New South Wales Police Force have my total support in outing them.

The other detractor of our industry is that for far too long people have not been made accountable for their actions. Alcohol use is no excuse for misbehaving, becoming violent and negatively impacting on society. I am proud that this O'Farrell-Stoner Government has done more in two months than my counterparts achieved in four terms of government in bringing responsibility back to the individual for their actions. Mr Acting-Speaker, the job is not finished. This Government must still do more to make people accountable for their own actions. The Camden area has always had a very strong basis of community organisations in which volunteers have worked hard to achieve their shared aims and objectives.

One example of this is the Camden Show Society. This wonderful organisation has just celebrated its 125th anniversary by holding another highly successful Camden Show that was attended by more than 38,000 people. A highlight of the show this year was the visit by Her Excellency, Ms Quentin Bryce, AC, the Governor-General of Australia, who opened the show. The whole district was also delighted when this year the Camden Showgirl, Ms Hilary Scott, won the overall State award at the Royal Easter Show. Camden's proud history of individual achievement is again highlighted by Harrington Park resident Danny Geale, who is the newly crowned Middleweight World Boxing Champion. I single Danny out for the role model he is to all Australians. Graham Annesley and I recently went out to congratulate Danny at the gym where he trains. We were both genuinely impressed by this humble Australian.

Camden is forecast to achieve a population growth from its current 55,000 people to nearly 300,000 people over the next two to three decades. With that comes the huge issue of infrastructure provision, which is by far the biggest issue facing our community. I am very aware that as mayor, the Liberal candidate during the March 2011 election and the Liberal State member of Parliament, I have been the most vocal person in our community about the shortfalls of the former Labor Government in relation to the provision of, and planning for, infrastructure in our community. That all changes now. It is not nearly good enough to talk about former failings. I must now be part of a Government that comes up with and delivers real solutions to the Camden area. Tonight I take ownership of that issue and charge this Coalition Government with working towards providing much-needed infrastructure for the people of my community so that we are not just building housing estates but real communities that families want to live in and are proud to live in.

In relation to Camden, former Premier Bob Carr coined the phrase "infrastructure before people", and it has been used by successive Labor Premiers at will. The people of Camden will not accept that rhetoric any longer. Premier, the people of Camden have put our Government on notice to deliver. We must provide upgraded roads, rail links, new police stations, hospitals and schools to meet the demands of the huge population increase that is being thrust upon my community. Every speaker before me has highlighted the virtues of their electorate. Only today, the member for Kiama told us how his is the best electorate because we all holiday down there. Members will hear me yelling Camden's virtues from a soapbox out the front in Macquarie Street when, and only when, this Government commits to fixing, and fixes, the goat track that is Camden Valley Way. Until that time, I am happy to keep Camden's jewels a secret for fear that Camden Valley Way will not handle the extra traffic. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

I have been extremely fortunate to serve the people of the Camden local government area since 2000 in my capacity as a Camden councillor and for the past five years as mayor. The Camden State electorate takes in

areas outside the Camden local government area—Raby, Eagle Vale, Blairmount, Claymore, Kearns and Eschol Park. I look forward to representing the constituents of those areas, and make them the promise that they are not the forgotten part of the Camden State electorate. I will represent them with the same passion with which I represent the areas within the Camden local government area. I believe that in life it is not the destination that is important but the journey along the way. This journey will not always be easy and at times I will falter. However, I will always endeavour to put the interests of the people of Camden first.

I mention the Camden Council and its entire staff. I thank you for your efforts. It was a privilege to be mayor and to work with you all. I am standing down on Tuesday 14 June and I can say it will be with a heavy heart that I do so. To be elected to Parliament I have had a team of volunteers who have worked tirelessly on my behalf. Together we have achieved a great outcome. If you are one of the doorknockers, booth workers, street stall volunteers, pre-poll workers or letterbox droppers, I truly thank you. Of those groups just mentioned I single out Peter Sidgreaves, Jim Reilly, Talitha Tribe, Daniel Try, Sue Carne, Alex Carne, Brooke Longoetomooa, and David and Charlotte Funnell. Thank you all for your efforts.

Everyone has a doorknocking story, so it is appropriate that I share one with the House. Our current Federal member for Macarthur, Russell Matheson, was a great help in the campaign and is also a good mate. When Russ and I were doorknocking we came to a house where a lady answered the door in the sheerest, holey nightie I have ever seen. She was in dire need of the member for Blue Mountains' skills—a dentist. She said to Russ, "I know you, you are my favourite councillor. Can I have a kiss please?" Russ, always the team player, said "If I do will you vote for Patto?" I am a staunch monarchist, and just as Will and Kate's balcony kiss is indelibly etched in my memory so too is the day that Russ took one for the team and secured a much-needed vote. Thanks mate.

I thank my parliamentary colleagues who wore out their shoe leather in the hot sun: Mike Gallagher, Mathew Mason-Cox, Ray Williams and Natasha McLaren-Jones, I appreciate your support. Peter Johnson, I thank you for all your help and friendship before the campaign and during the campaign. I look forward to our continuing friendship into the future. Your counsel and friendship is greatly appreciated. Lara Symkowiak, I thank you for all the support and advice you have given to me since joining me on Camden Council, and everything you did to help with my campaign. I could not have asked for a better, more loyal deputy mayor. I look forward to the time when you lead Camden Council, as I know you will. Debby Dewberry, thanks for everything you have done for me, not only supporting me on council, but working tirelessly as my campaign manager. I look forward to our relationship growing in the future, with you as my office manager. Finally, John Tooby, thanks for your friendship and support. Your counsel and advice along the way is greatly appreciated.

It is very rare that in life a true friend comes along. The four people I have just mentioned are true friends and offer the one thing that I value—loyalty. Just as you have offered me yours, I want you to know that you have mine. I look forward to working with my new parliamentary colleagues. It is a privilege to serve in this class of 2011 with you. I sincerely wish all my colleagues every success in their parliamentary careers. On our orientation day I was dismayed to hear from former members of Parliament that this is not a place where friendships are formed. I hope I am not being naive, but I disagree and look forward to forging friendships based on trust and respect with many of the people sitting in this Chamber tonight.

I thank the Liberal Party for the opportunity and privilege to stand as its candidate for Camden in 2007 and again in 2011. On both occasions the support I received from head office, the parliamentary team and staffers was outstanding. Jaymes Boland-Rudder [JBR] and Chris Hall were invaluable. JBR assures me that when times got tough, I was not the only Liberal candidate offered a cup of cement and, Mr Acting-Speaker, you know the rest. I must single out the Premier for his support and guidance along the way and state what an honour it is to play a very minor role in this O'Farrell-Stoner Government. Thank you again for the opportunity; it is not something that is taken for granted. I thank my colleagues for their indulgence this evening. On a personal level, our family has just experienced a very sad loss with the passing of my brother-in-law John Dooner on 22 May. To Jacqui, my wife's sister, and your three beautiful children Brianna, Olivia and William, I want you to know that Vicki and I, and Amelia, Sophie, Tom and Matthew love you very much.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Castle Hill) [6.30 p.m.] (Inaugural Speech): It is an honour to stand here in this place today, before this historic institution. I stand here today where the story of our State so far has been written. I stand here today where a new chapter in that story is now just beginning. And I stand here today only because of the power of strong ideals—ideals that have shaped this State and ideals that have shaped my story. And these are the ideals that I wish to speak about this evening. The first ideal is sacrifice. It is the story of my family. We are all here today indebted to those many people who have worked side by side with us for so

many years. My amazing wife, Helen, knows the demands of work and family that we as Australians face in the twenty-first century. For many years while working full time in numerous jobs, including the Australian Federal Police and the Australian Defence Force, Helen also worked late into the night completing a law degree at night school.

She worked hard like so many Australians to better themselves and better their community. Late into the night she applied herself to her studies and cared for her family. I am immensely proud of her as a talented professional, as a soul-mate, and above all as a mother who continues to give everything she has to her two children: Charlotte, who is here in the gallery today, and Amelia, who is due to be born in a few months. To all those parents, particularly mothers, who know the demands and rewards of work, of family and of simply getting through another day I would like to say thank you; we are always in your debt. I had the privilege of growing up in a large family. I am the third of 12 children. As you may imagine, my mother ran a very tight ship. But with so many of us around, she realised very quickly she could not get everything done by herself—and that is where we kids came in.

For most kids, each new school term brought with it a new season. For me—it meant a new job rotation. I polished 12 pairs of shoes in summer. I packed 12 lunches in autumn. I changed 1,200 nappies in winter and then changed them again in spring. My mother took the term "working families" to a whole new level. But it was not just my mother who pushed us hard. My father has always been generous with his wisdom and unstinting in his work ethic. He has worked in small business, in large business, in government business and in non-government organisations to develop our Asia-Pacific neighbours. Dad used to impart his wisdom attained from all his weird and wonderful adventures at our family dinners. In fact, it was at this dinner table where my love of politics began.

From the age of 10, we were required to present an article on current affairs to the family at dinner. I learnt very quickly that current affairs did not include an analysis of the highs and lows of the Balmain Tigers. At a very young age, we were debating a variety of issues ranging from the economic and social developments following the peaceful democratic revolution in Mongolia, to more local issues, such as how the Australian Labor Party could possibly oppose the building of the M2. Such activity, of course, led to some robust political debate. I can often remember being sent to my room from the kitchen table. I only hope that I can prevent the same thing from happening in this place.

It is said that you cannot choose your parents—that they are an accident of birth. Well then, I am the recipient of a very lucky accident. Now that I have a child of my own, I have come to understand that children do not just learn from what parents say, but also from what they do. And if there is one value that my parents, through their example, have personified for me it is sacrifice. They have sacrificed the big houses. They have sacrificed the expensive holidays. They have sacrificed many small and large things that would have made their lives much easier and more comfortable over the past 30 years. And they have sacrificed these things willingly and happily because they chose instead to make an investment in us—their children. I can never repay that investment. But I can acknowledge it and hope to imitate it, not just in my own family but also in the service I give to the people of Castle Hill and to the State of New South Wales.

My second ideal is generosity. It is the story of my electorate. It is customary in these speeches to pay tribute to the beauty of one's electorate. Castle Hill possesses natural bushland, market gardens and State forests, but they are not the qualities that make my electorate special, nor should they. Castle Hill is not defined by its geography, but by its people and, more specifically, by the character of the people who live there. And the defining element of that character is generosity; a generosity, informed by a spirit of service, and expressed through a recognition of our greater obligation to help those in need. This is why I can proudly say that my electorate has one of the highest levels of volunteering not only in the State, but in the entire country. This spirit of service is expressed in spite of the many challenges the residents of my electorate have to deal with on a daily basis.

They face the challenges of rising interest rates. They face the challenges of crippling tolls. And they face the challenges of the ever-increasing cost of living. When Tony Abbott talks about the forgotten families of Australia, he is talking about the families of the Hills district. The families of the Hills are generous by nature. They do not complain. They give of their time. They contribute much through their taxes. And they ask for little in return. Yet I am sad to say that the previous Government took this generosity for granted. For far too long, the blatant neglect of the Hills district has meant our vibrant local community has grown without any adequate growth in infrastructure. Nothing further illustrates this than the failure to build the north-west rail line.

As families from across New South Wales flocked to the Hills district, the Labor Government acknowledged back in 1998 the need to deliver a rail line to the north-west and 13 years later we are still waiting. The Coalition Government is determined to right this unacceptable wrong and my commitment to my

electorate is to see this project through. It will be a proud moment when I stand alongside my parliamentary colleagues of the north-west when the first train pulls into Castle Hill since Labor closed our line back in 1932. The community of Castle Hill has always been defined by the principles of honesty, hard work and generosity. Great communities are built on these qualities—and great States as well.

My third ideal is freedom. It is the story of my political beliefs and the party to which I belong. I believe in freedom, because it is only by exercising freedom that individuals can develop the habits of generosity, hard work, fairness and concern for others. I believe that these habits have made our country great and are ultimately the foundation for the pursuit of the good life. You cannot do good without striving to be good. You cannot do good without knowing what is right and then having the courage to do it. And that is what freedom is. It is incumbent on people in this place to lead the way. True leadership in this place requires knowing what is right and doing what is good. And that is what service is.

I have been inspired by many great people to set goals, take on challenges and "give it a go". As the youngest member of this place I feel a special responsibility to encourage other young people to set ambitious goals and embrace big challenges. After leaving school I visited Santa Teresa, a small Aboriginal mission outside Alice Springs. The experience was enriching, not because I was made to attend through some kind of arbitrary curriculum, but because I was inspired to do it myself. The experience helped me shape my goals and aspirations. I embarked on travels overseas, I joined Charlie Lynn on the Kokoda Trail, and I have encouraged others to do the same. I encourage all young people to follow their ambitions and dream of how they might influence others for the good.

I pay special tribute to Ian Campbell, who passed away earlier this week. Ian was a great man; he was the former co-ordinator of the Hills St Vincent De Paul Society and he introduced me to the society. I am of the firm conviction that it is the Liberal Party that best embodies those ideas of freedom and service. John Howard called the Liberal Party "the political custodian of the liberal conservative tradition". Traditionalism with its emphasis on virtue and libertarianism with its foundation of freedom are both vital and necessary strands of the fabric of conservative thought. I believe the Liberal Party is at its best when it embraces both. In my time here I intend to draw on both of these traditions that have guided my own beliefs. I believe that the family is the cornerstone, the nucleus, of our society. As John Paul II said:

As the family goes, so goes the nation and the whole world in which we live.

I believe that true social justice is one that is built on the foundation that respects the dignity of every human being without distinction of race, gender or colour, whether they are born or unborn, whether they are infant or frail aged, whether they are sick or healthy. I believe that every human being has equal dignity and intrinsic value. I strongly support the principles of free markets—we are the party of small business, of enterprise and of wealth creation. And I agree with Churchill when he calls the socialist model the equal distribution of poverty, not wealth. I oppose plans for more social engineering, more welfare handouts and the continual obsession with our rights at the expense of our responsibilities. These toxic ideas signal the death of the opportunity society.

I acknowledge and pay tribute to the role that faith has played, particularly our Judeo-Christian heritage, and the role that it will continue to play in our development as a people. Values like compassion, tolerance, diversity and respect for human dignity are all virtues drawn from this rich heritage. And I am passionate about the ideals of a free society, with limited government; I reject calls for more government spending and intervention in our lives. These are the ideals that inform me. These are the ideals that animate my party. These are the ideals of mainstream Australia. And these are the ideals that will make New South Wales number one again. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

My fourth ideal is opportunity. It is the story of my State. Perhaps no other idea divides the modern Liberal and Labor traditions more than our concept of opportunity. Whilst Labor believes in equality of outcomes, we as Liberals believe in equality of opportunity. Milton Friedman says that "equality of opportunity is an essential component of liberty". I say it is also an essential component of good governance. We have enormous opportunity here in New South Wales. We are fortunate that our State has all the ingredients for success. We have boundless economic potential. We have a superior climate for agriculture, with a large quantity of productive land. We have a capital city that is the financial services centre of the nation and a hub for the Asia-Pacific. At the same time we are well positioned on the tourism front, possessing spectacular scenery, mountains and beaches. We have major seaports. We have multiple regional centres. We have a diverse and growing population.

And yet with all these resources at our disposal, and all these opportunities, it is clear that New South Wales has failed to live up to its reputation as the premier State. We have an urgent need for fresh ideas to

revitalise our communities—fresh and clear ideas that make sense to the farmer, to the factory worker and to the philosopher. Our goal here in New South Wales should be, as Tony Abbott says, to create the opportunity society. And to do this, we must do three things. First, we must give businesses the freedom to achieve. It is small businesses that are the engine room of our economy. To that end, we must do all we can to reduce the burdens on them—by cutting red tape, by reducing taxes such as payroll tax and by simplifying regulation.

Secondly, we must give our communities the freedom to achieve. Many areas in our State—and I hold up my electorate as an example—are crying out for much-needed infrastructure. The north-west rail line is our start, but it will not be our finish. Thirdly, we must give individuals the freedom to achieve. Our party platform states that governments should encourage citizens through initiative, not limit them by excessive taxes and a stifling bureaucracy. Some say an opportunity society is an impossible dream. Others say that the obstacles are too big and the time too short. I say it is only the opportunity society that guarantees our future prosperity and lays the lasting foundations of our freedom.

There are a number of people who have assisted me on the path to Parliament whom I would like to acknowledge. Whilst I may not have been able to choose my parents, I certainly chose my wife. And I chose very well. I may be new to this place, but I have been involved in politics for many years. And over the past couple of years there have been many ups and downs and some very difficult times. Throughout all of this my beautiful wife, Helen, has been there. She has supported me, advised me, and importantly been there to listen. Darling, you are my rock, and without you I would not be here today.

To my gorgeous daughter, Charlotte, thank you for filling our home with laughter with your constant entertainment. I know that you will be a fantastic big sister to Amelia, when she hopefully arrives sometime in September. To my mum and dad, and all my brothers and sisters—Madeleine, Alexander, Charles, Joseph, Julian, Sophia, Oliver, Gabriel, Francesca, Veronique, Jean Claude and Natasha—thank you for your encouragement, your relentless competitive spirit and overwhelming affection. I would like to particularly single out my brother Charles, who has worked alongside me in politics. We have been a team from the start and will be a team to the finish.

I have been blessed to have many great mates whose friendship and support I truly value. Many of them do not share my love of politics, nor in fact my politics. I thank them for making me even more stubborn in my beliefs. I would also like to thank the following people for their friendship, guidance and advice: Noel McCoy, Steve Joseph, Kyle Kutasi, Nigel Freitas, Thomas Tudehope, Damien Tudehope, Joe Suttie, Phillip Elias, Pat Doherty, Gary Doherty, Tim Abrams, Gerard Abrams, Tony Montgomery, Michael McAuley, Joe Zady, Eddie James, Nat Smith, Anthony McFarlane, Nick Santucci, Richard Fowler, David Ramadge, Jake Hanson, Paul McCormack, Mitch Leach, Steve Dejong and Tamer Masry.

To the members of the Liberal Party who have supported me, and without whom I would not be here, Peter Poulos, Jai Rowell, Dr Peter Phelps, Lynne Webster, Arthur Sinodinos and Scot MacDonald; to the Castle Hill Campaign Committee, my campaign manager, Geoff Clarke, Renate Britton, Julian Whealing, David and Wendy Faulkner-Dick, David York, Ryk and Celia Dabrowski, Riccardo Alloggia, Greg and Monica Guy, Andrew Paddon, Larry Bolitho, Matthew Battersby, Steven Treloar, Les and Gil Dyball, Albert Jaucian and Ronald Azar; to all the members of the Castle Hill conference and the team of volunteers who transformed the electorate of Castle Hill into a sea of activity; to the team at Henry Davis York who provided me with the professional training, discipline and critical thinking to stand me in good stead to make a strong contribution to this place—I thank you all for your friendship and support.

I would like to thank the members of the Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council who have assisted me in my political endeavours. Thank you for your encouragement and most of all for your loyalty. In particular I thank the Premier, Barry O'Farrell, the Attorney General, Greg Smith, the Minister for Resources and Energy, Chris Hartcher, and the Minister for Fair Trading, Anthony Roberts. I would like to thank members in the other place, the Leader of the Liberals in the upper House and Minister for Police and Emergency Services, the Hon. Mike Gallagher, the Hon. David Clarke, the Hon. Charlie Lynn, the Hon. Marie Ficarra and the Hon. Matthew Mason-Cox. I finally wish to single out and pay special tribute to my predecessor Michael Richardson. Michael was a strong advocate of the Hills district in this place. I wish Michael and Cherry all the very best in their future.

I conclude as I began, by saying that I stand here today only because of four ideals: the sacrifice of my family, the generosity of my constituents, the cherishing of freedom within my party, and boundless opportunities that exist within our State. These ideals will continue to guide my decisions each and every day as

I begin my journey in this place and for as long as I am worthy to serve my constituents. Our work here is pressing and our time in this place is short. It is time that we move from words to actions. It is time that we put these ideals to work. And it is time that, together, we write a new story for the State of New South Wales.

[Business interrupted.]

LIBRARY AMENDMENT BILL 2011

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

INAUGURAL SPEECHES

[Business resumed.]

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills) [6.57 p.m.] (Inaugural Speech): I rise in reply to Her Excellency's address to the House on 3 May 2011 and appreciate this opportunity to make my inaugural speech to the Legislative Assembly. Like so many members of the Class of 2011, I am humbled, if not a little surprised, at the size of the endorsement the Liberal and National parties received on 26 March. Having survived a couple of attempts at preselection, it is indeed a great honour to serve the people of my community in this, the oldest Parliament on the continent. I vividly recall visiting this place as a young boy on excursion from Picnic Point Public School in the late 1970s. Even then I realised the importance of our parliamentary democracy as a safeguard to our way of life, and this place personified the fact that people are the centre of the Westminster system, a system that I will defend until my last breath.

My presence on the conservative side of politics is another surprising aspect of modern politics considering, like so many other liberals today, I am the grandson of trade unionists. I am proudly wearing the gold watch given to my late pop, Arthur Frederick Elliott, in July 1966 for his 25 years of diligent service as an electrician with Standard Telephone and Cables. Arthur and my maternal grandfather, Andy Arbuckle, were proud advocates of organised labour. I, however, had a different experience when, as a teenage labourer working to put myself through university, I was locked out of a construction site when the union bosses called a snap strike because there was no salt and pepper on the meal room table. Since then, whenever I need direction in my political activities, I recall that mindless act of thuggery.

I have the honour of representing the people of Baulkham Hills. It is an electorate populated by the type of people Sir Robert Menzies would have labelled as "forgotten". It is an electorate nestled peacefully within the garden shire of Sydney's Hills district and the historic second oldest Australian settlement, Parramatta. But you cannot inherit a Liberal seat unless your predecessor has served it well before you. Tonight I want to pay tribute to one of the Parliament's favourite sons: a man who diligently and passionately advocated for the people of Carlingford, and then Baulkham Hills, for nearly a quarter of a century. A man who lived the Christian message silently, honoured the institutions that made this State great, and who, with his wonderful wife and trusted advisor, Olwyn, worked tirelessly to ensure so many of us western Sydney Liberals never lost sight of the winner's circle. Tonight I formally acknowledge and thank my friend and mentor Wayne Merton.

During the election my predecessor was called upon to assist other candidates across western Sydney so his experience was complemented locally by the Baulkham Hills conference of the Liberal Party which put together a team entrusted with our message. And what a team it was. Tonight I wish to recognise the hard work of my campaign director, Mr Ken Norris, for his zeal and loyalty, my campaign manager, Brad Williams, for his unruffled and objective advice, my operations manager, Keith Topolski, for his understanding of modern day campaigning, my community liaison officer, Jacqi Walker, for her dedication and humour and, of course, the whole team would have been in real trouble without the professionalism of our treasurer, Ben Potts.

Members of the Liberal Party would readily identify that three of my campaign team are, like me, alumnae of the Young Liberal movement school of politics so it would be remiss of me not to thank Young Liberal President Scott Farlow for the high quality of graduate he is producing. I must say, given that I spent my Young Liberal years under the presidency of Senator Marise Payne, the Hon. Catherine Cusack and the Hon. Don Harwin, nothing proved to me more that times had changed than when, at the Saturday afternoon campaign debriefs at the Bull and Bush Hotel, an icon in The Hills, all my Young Liberals ordered diet coke or orange juice, not even a mineral water. As a club director and former hotel industry lobbyist, you can imagine my surprise.

But that was not the only surprise I had during my campaign. Indeed, as I doorknocked along Windsor Road, Northmead, one summer's afternoon I recall entering the home of a family who proudly displayed its surname on the front porch. At the time I did not think much of the word "Lang" when I noticed it and it was not until I observed what could only be described as a shrine to the former Premier that, after brief questioning, I found I had called upon the granddaughter of the "Big Fella" himself. As a clear omen to what later became Labor's worst ever result in western Sydney I am pleased to report that on leaving that house I was told by Mrs Lang that she would, in fact, vote Liberal.

Like the Army and the Returned Services League, the church and my family, the Liberal Party has been one of the great constants in my life. Joining Bankstown Young Liberals as a 16-year-old student at Christian Community High School, Regents Park, I immediately announced to my family, friends and teachers that I wanted to serve my party in Parliament. It has been an eventful journey and one which I believe has well equipped me to assist in the job of making New South Wales number one again. Like most new members, I arrive at this place with preconceived notions of how modern day liberalism should be interpreted. The strength of liberalism is its ability to evolve. That is what sets us apart from other political theories.

We are called a "centre right", or in my case "conservative", party which, however, ended the White Australia Policy and recruited the first Aboriginal and Chinese Australians into the Parliament, and it is our party which introduced economic policies such as the universal old age pension. It was our party that so courageously reformed firearms laws in this country, and it was a Liberal Government that committed Australian forces to the liberation of the East Timorese. At every level our party has engaged with the community and agitated for change as the times dictated. We must continue this approach into the future if we are to survive. Our approach to government is simple: If your ship does not come in, swim out to it. I, for one, am at the coast of New South Wales waiting for the next big ship.

My 20 years in the workforce have been both professionally and personally rewarding. I am thrilled at the fact that nearly every former employer of mine has worked, in some way, towards my election to this place. Leaving school at 17 and working as a labourer, gardener, television extra and bank teller reinforced my desire to capitalise on any opportunity so, as an 18-year-old arts undergraduate from the University of Western Sydney, I was privileged to work in the Parramatta offices of then Senator Bronwyn Bishop. Mrs Bishop was the first female conservative senator from New South Wales and remains one of Australia's most energetic parliamentarians. Her friendship was never more appreciated than years later when I was a nervous and newly commissioned army officer and then defence personnel Minister Bishop visited my unit in the field. She brushed past senior officers to come and give me a hug and to ask how I was going. Needless to say I did not get much trouble from the brass after that very public display of affection from the Minister.

One of the greatest professional honours I have had was the opportunity of serving Australia's second longest serving Prime Minister, the Hon. John Howard, AC. Readers of history may recall that working for Mr Howard for four years in the early 1990s would have been a very lonely time but, as one of only five employees, I had the opportunity to observe and befriend a parliamentarian of Churchillian proportions. Given I was working towards a degree in modern Australian history at the time, it also allowed me access to what I often cited in essays as "primary sources". Mr Howard's support of my studies, and more recently my campaign for preselection, was one of those extraordinarily generous acts that can never be repaid.

A desire to "get a real job" resulted in my appointment to the New South Wales Police Media Unit which, in the mid-1990s had the unenviable task of steering our major law enforcement agency through the backpacker murders investigation, as well as the Wood royal commission. Much has been said about both these blots on our State's history, and the royal commission into police corruption was both a just and essential means of reminding those entrusted with enforcing the law that they are not above it. However, whilst a member of this House, I will use every opportunity to remind the people of New South Wales that a very small number of untrustworthy individuals should not discredit the work of the majority of police who, from my experience, are brave, compassionate and professional custodians of statutory and common law.

Given my first childhood dream was to serve as an Australian Army officer, I cannot miss this opportunity to commend and congratulate the men and women who serve our nation in peace and war. I recall my first day as a student of the Royal Military College, Duntroon, as a humbling one given that, like this place, so many great Australians had perfected the art of leadership at that institution. I have to admit that my military career was an unremarkable one with two notable exceptions. I did have the great privilege of once answering to a genteel brigadier named Peter Cosgrove who, in 1996, told me that he was grateful to have reached his ceiling rank and that he would probably retire very soon. History was to prove somewhat different and General Cosgrove later became a household name following his outstanding achievements as a military commander.

In January 2000 I was also posted to the multinational Peace Monitoring Group in Bougainville as a staff officer attached to the headquarters. Serving on a military operation in a Third World country recuperating after an eight-year civil war was a life-altering experience and I was thrilled to learn recently that our own Parliament is now working with the House of Representatives of the new autonomous province of Bougainville to assist it in achieving its democratic dream. Soldiering can be a dangerous occupation, and I would seek your approval to acknowledge the service of Lance Corporal Shane Lewis, who served with me and whose life was so tragically cut short on 20 May 2000 whilst serving his country and the Peace Monitoring Group in Bougainville.

One of the great political debates of our time has been the role of the Crown in our Constitution. In 1999 the people of Australia were given the chance to reaffirm their commitment to the current constitutional arrangements and I was thrilled to have been asked by Professor David Flint, AM, and Mrs Kerry Jones to lead the national no case campaign. Needless to say, it was also an interesting year for me to have chosen to write my masters thesis on political communication. Nevertheless, the result in New South Wales was decisive and any politician who chooses to dismiss the result of the 1999 referendum does so at his or her own risk. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

After 16 years of republicanism by stealth, I am very much looking forward to the O'Farrell Government's renewed commitment to our constitutional monarchy, starting with the returning of the Governor to Government House. In recent years I have been fortunate enough to work for a number of associations, including the Order of St John, and I commend to the House the work of this important charity. The charity started in the industrial revolution when workers had little occupational health and safety protection. I acknowledge the leadership of St John Ambulance, including former President Sir Laurence Street, AC, Chairman Mark Compton, AM, Commissioner General Warren Glenny, AO, and chief executives John Davies, AM, and Mr Sean Gavin.

Longstanding members of this House will also recall the hardworking former hotel industry advocate John Thorpe, AM, whom I had the privilege to serve for more than four years. Mr Thorpe's commitment to the hospitality and tourism industry is legendary and I will be forever grateful for his personal support and advice over many years. I should also acknowledge so many other friends and supporters from the hospitality and tourism industry, including Arthur Laundry, AM, George Thomas, George Bedwani, Patrick Griffin, OAM, Scott Leach, Anthony Ball, Jayson Westbury and Bill Galvin, OAM. For all the challenges facing the hospitality industry it should be noted that many of these individuals serve their industry association without payment.

Finally, it would be remiss of me not to acknowledge the Civil Contractors Federation. For just over three years I was honoured to serve this industry association as its chief executive and I thank the federation's board for its commitment to improving the quality of infrastructure in New South Wales. Life member Don Stein, AM, former president Joseph Cato, serving president John Wade and Andrew Gifford are known to some members of this House, and I suspect that their presence will remain prominent over the course of my term in this place.

The best thing about being a Liberal backbencher is the universal right, if not obligation, to speak freely on all matters of policy. One of the most disturbing things I observed during my time with the Australian Hotels Association and the Civil Contractors Federation was the way business in this State has become fearful of government. It is gut-wrenching to see men and women who have taken significant personal risks in establishing businesses only to have them threatened by punitive and arrogant government departments. I want all businesses in this State to now know that they have an advocate against bureaucratic bullying. We need to return the word "service" to the public service and return confidence in our government agencies through transparency and simplicity. I will be using my time in this place to agitate for a bigger role for the non-government agencies in providing community services. Too often we have seen government fail the poor and destitute, whilst charities are forced to do more with less.

As a director of Life Education Australia, a charity committed to educating our youth of the dangers of illicit drugs, I will be working to make zero tolerance the norm when it comes to drug education in this State. As someone who has worked in various combat agencies, I will be working to provide more recognition of our volunteer emergency service workers—volunteers who regularly put their lives on the line without thought of payment or personal safety. I will spend my time in this place advocating for practical reconciliation with Indigenous Australians, a cause to which I have been deeply committed since I was a 15-year-old volunteer at the Bimbadeen Aboriginal Bible College near Cootamundra. During this time, I was able to experience firsthand

how the commitment of Pastor Jacques resulted in a positive and tangible response from Aboriginal young people under his care. This emphatically demonstrated to me the benefits that can be obtained when an Aboriginal elder has the determination to teach personal responsibility to his own people.

As for those who have fallen foul of the criminal law, it is the role of the State to punish and correct offenders. Australians have different views on what punishment should be enforced on so-called white collar criminals, many of whom have no prior criminal record and do not present a danger or a threat to the community. I believe that we should look at providing a sentencing mechanism that involves a period of custodial detention, but mixed with a stronger emphasis on fines. This penalty could be paid in lieu of time served. Why should the taxpayer spend up to \$80,000 a year on keeping a non-violent criminal in jail? Indeed, surely white collar criminals should pay for the cost of incarceration as well as the cost of their criminal activities. It makes no sense to see corporate criminals cost the State only to be picked up in their limousines and return to their affluent lifestyle.

A hefty "pay or stay" policy would not only save taxpayers, but also act as a necessary deterrent factor, which is essential within our criminal law. As members of the Coalition are well aware, the growth of New South Wales is interdependent with the growth of our regional centres. For far too long governments thought that NSW stood for Newcastle, Sydney and Wollongong. The decentralisation of our State should be the main focus of a government committed to the whole State's prosperity and that can begin with a staggered taxation policy. It is unjust for businesses in remote areas to be burdened with Sydney rates of State Government taxes and charges when they are receiving only a fraction of the service levels enjoyed in our capital city.

Most members would be reluctant to use their inaugural speeches to thank friends and family lest they forget someone of great significance. I will, however, make an attempt. From the local community I begin with thanking Jenny McCarthy, Alan Manly, Rudy Limantono, Alan and Karen Ward, Tom Moore, Bob Dwyer, Rees John, Linda and Joseph Seagrove, Dr Jim Taggart, OAM, Brian McHenry, Reverend Ross Hathway, Rahul Jethri and the local Indian community, Fred Lloyd, Colonel Don Tait, OAM, Joan Andrew and Roz Rigby. I am forever grateful for the support and brutal honesty of local councillors Michelle Byrne, Greg Burnett, Justin Taunton, Andrew Jeffries and Scott Lloyd, as well as my peers Ray Williams, Alex Hawke and Dominic Perrotet. As the team knows, I would not have survived without the support of my long-suffering secretary, Rachael Taylor.

It would not have been a competition without competitors. I was fortunate enough to have three of the finest individuals as candidates in Baulkham Hills. I thank my great friend and fellow rugby enthusiast, Tony Hay, the Labor candidate, the ever-smiling Kiai Thorpe from the Christian Democrats and the plain-speaking Dr Mick Hollins from the Greens. The Liberal Party excelled itself during the 2011 State election campaign and that could not have been achieved without the professionalism of Mark Neeham, the Hon. Natasha Maclaren-Jones, Nick Campbell, Michael Photios, Arthur Sinodinos, AM, and the irreplaceable Paul Nicolaou, whose remarkable drive and energy exhausts the rest of us mere mortals.

This entire Liberal team would have worked in vain if not for the superior leadership skills of the Premier, Barry O'Farrell. I have known Barry for some 20 years and he has been a great mate. I say "mate" because he has helped, advised, forgiven and encouraged me at times when many others might have hoped I would simply go away. Now that my mate is the Premier I am confident that he will do one more thing for me and I look forward to commuting on the north-west railway with him before my time in this place expires.

To my parents, Noel and Yvonne, who have shared this dream with me for some 25 years, I hope I have not been too much of a disappointment to you both. To my mother-in-law, Laraine, and my father-in-law, Fred, thank you both for your endless support and encouragement. My sisters, Megan and Donna, have both, at some stage, been dragged into campaigns to fill gaps and are no doubt relieved to be released from servitude. I am compelled to thank my dear friends David and Gina Jehnic as well as Helen and Simon Kelava, Paul and Sophie Nicolaou and Colin and Julie Parras for their constant support. To my close friend and former boss, the Hon. Peter Collins, AM, thank you for making me an adopted member of your family and for your never-ending generosity and advice. To the member for Lane Cove, with whom I have shared so many of life's joys, disappointments and challenges, I suspect that the best days are ahead.

I was amused to be warned upon election to this place that members of the media are not our friends. I will therefore have to reject the first lesson of New South Wales politics by thanking a prominent media identity who joined me on this journey 20 ago years when we were both unremarkable wannabes. It is appropriate therefore that Jason Morrison also started a new career this year and I wish him every success and

thank him for his ongoing friendship. It was just over a year ago that, having suffered yet another setback in my political apprenticeship, I had strong doubt as to whether I would ever get to this position. It was at that time that my then eight-year-old son, Lachlan, came up to me and said "Dad, you know you are only a quitter when you stop trying". For that reason I have to dedicate my inaugural speech to my two sons, whose presence in my life gives me reason. Unfortunately for Lachlan and William, they will have a similar response from me should they ever feel the need to walk away from a challenge later in life.

To our little angel, William, who asked so many questions during the campaign that I expect he could now lecture in politics at Oxford, I thank him for his energy and humour beyond his years. William will, I am sure, spend many years in this place later in his life but I just warn members of the House that it may, unfortunately, be in the press gallery. Finally, to my beautiful wife, Nicole, who, against my family's advice, made me the happiest man alive 15 years ago. She nursed and supported me through professional ups and downs, one bout of pneumonia, two post-graduate degrees, three attempts at preselection, packed me off peacekeeping with six days' notice and gave me two healthy sons, all while trying to manage her own career. In fact, every morning when I wake up I almost half expect her to have ridden off into the sunset. As we settle into this new chapter of our lives I remind Nicole, Lachlan and William, as well as the good people of Baulkham Hills, of Napoleon Bonaparte's advice when he said to the French army, "Impossible is a word to be found only in the dictionary of fools."

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Menai) [7.27 p.m.] (Inaugural Speech): This building, with its rich history, is an interesting place for someone like me. I am a student of history, particularly modern history and Australian political history. The year 1988 was a big year for an Australian and political history buff. It was when the Liberal Party last won government from Labor and, as a country, we celebrated our bicentenary. I was in primary school and, along with my family, I had the opportunity to go to Government House in Parramatta as part of a reunion for the descendants of Governor King. Governor King was the third Governor of New South Wales and operated an office not far from this building.

During Governor King's posting on Norfolk Island, he had two children with a convict lady, Ann Inett, and I am one of their many descendants. To me, Ann Inett sadly is a forgotten woman in our history. There is no real mention of her in the official history of Government House. But on her return to Sydney she became a landholder and even a publican—unusual occupations for a woman in the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century—the first trailblazer in my family in a modern Australia. I hope tonight I begin to live up to her legacy.

We are still in a Parliament with few women—but we only have to look at Parliaments of years past and the pictures hanging on the walls of this building to see how it is changing, as it has in other institutions in our community. I am proud to have served as a councillor on Sutherland Shire Council for the past seven years. As you walk up the stairs to enter the Chamber, there is a picture frame with photographs of the first seven shire representatives. They are all older men. Every time I enter the council chamber I think of how far we have come and how in those years somebody of my age and gender would never have been considered suitable to run for office, no matter the level of passion I have for my community.

The Chamber we are in has admitted some amazing women over the years. I am proud that we are making steps towards bringing diversity and equality into the Parliament. This Parliament, the Fiftieth-fifth Parliament, highlights this progress with women like Shelley Hancock, who is our first female Speaker and who is a dedicated local representative. Madam Speaker, I am honoured that you are in the chair for tonight's speech, and congratulations.

The SPEAKER: Thank you.

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS: The Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party, Jillian Skinner, has long been a role model, and Gladys Berejiklian, whose guidance and friendship I appreciate, are at the helm of this Government. As part of the O'Farrell Government, they are not only part of the change: they are leaders of it. In no small part the women of this party have set the agenda for a new, fresh and positive Government. I am here in part because of what they have done, and they have my deepest and sincerest thanks. Women's voices may now be heard as a matter of course, but that movement came about because there were many who were able to stand united and raise their voices when they were expected to stay quiet.

While that is one positive change in society, I am particularly concerned about another area that needs reform. How Government and society deal with people with disabilities needs to change. There must be a focus on how we manage and deliver our help and support for people with disabilities and for their carers. I will judge my time as a parliamentary representative, and the performance of this Government, by how successful we are in supporting those living with disabilities. The benchmark must be by how much we have improved their lives and delivered greater independence. Through my career while working as the development manager at Technical Aid to the Disabled, through my family and time spent as chair of the council's aged and access committees, my eyes have been opened to the unfairness and difficulties that the elderly and many people with disabilities face on a daily basis.

We should strive to ease this burden wherever we can. It is our responsibility to help those who need it. With this in mind, we need to drive our accessibility building codes and standards. We need to reduce the occurrences of broken lifts at train stations and, most importantly, we need to know that our actions and decisions can impact others and hold them back, or give them their own independence. But most important of all we need to realise that those with disabilities need to be listened to. They know the issues, and often they can also provide the solutions. We must engage more than ever before in a meaningful dialogue with those with disabilities, the non-government sector and the service providers to ensure their needs are being met.

I have spent the most rewarding 3½ years working at Technical Aid to the Disabled, or TAD, and I am thrilled that many of my former colleagues are here tonight. Technical Aid to the Disabled is a not-for-profit organisation that makes and creates innovative devices for people with disabilities to help them be more independent. I was always so impressed by the hundreds of volunteers that give up their time and effort to help people they have never met. The Technical Aid to the Disabled volunteers saw a need and they worked together to find a solution. They highlight that this Government's plan to let people have more control over their own lives will work.

Technical Aid to the Disabled is successful at modifying bicycles so that kids with disabilities can ride with their friends and family. One of the most heart-warming parts of the job was watching children who were unable to walk be helped out of their wheelchair, have their feet placed on the pedals, and then be able to ride a bike for the first time. It is a rite of passage we all go through, but which these children would otherwise have missed out on. Watching a child ride for the first time—they are the smiles that stay with you for life.

My grandfather had the same idea some 60 years ago for his son, my uncle and my inspiration, Bourke Gibbons, OAM. In those days my grandfather was told that putting my uncle, who has cerebral palsy, on a bike would hurt him and that he should stop—now we know it can strengthen muscles and balance. We have come a long way from the way we used to treat people with disabilities, and our attitudes towards their treatment and care have changed. Again it has shown me that those closest to the issue almost always know the solutions. But there is still a long way to go and, while women were able to bond together to speak up, many people with disabilities rely on advocates to speak for them. It is a responsibility that I hold dear and that I will be a champion for.

I will work towards better health care, and more support for our doctors and nurses. And better health care also includes mental health. I know that people do get turned away from being admitted to hospital and getting the care they need because mental health care beds are full or because they are assessed to not be at a high enough risk. I have seen the stress that places on both the person and their loved ones—and, unfortunately, the consequences. They say, "Life was not meant to be easy" but during my time in Parliament I would like to make life just a little easier for people—to help them to feel that someone is there to stand up for them, someone is there to listen, and someone is there to make a difference.

I am proud to live in Menai, and I am even prouder to now be its representative in this place. The electorate of Menai is a young electorate, and we are lucky to have a high rate of employment. But many in our community are on fixed incomes, and they are concerned about the rising cost of living. The Menai electorate is bounded by Heathcote Road and the Georges River and is split right down the middle by the Holsworthy Army land. It is half in Liverpool council and half in Sutherland, giving it two distinct sides—both as important as each other but with different newspapers, different train lines, and more than a 20 minute drive in between.

Let me assure my constituents that each part of the electorate matters as much as the other. I want to particularly mention Hammondville and Holsworthy though. Holsworthy is a special place. The army base gives it a transient nature but also an amazing community feel. I recently attended the fiftieth anniversary of Holsworthy Public School. I met a lady who taught there during the Vietnam war. At that stage the school was

mostly made up of children whose fathers were serving our country in Vietnam. She spoke to me of how news of injuries and deaths rippled through the community, and about the effect it had on the children she was teaching.

This was echoed when I met with the principals of Holsworthy public and high schools and the principals of Hammondville and Wattle Grove primary schools. I found it interesting to talk to them about the unique pressures they still face by having so many of their students with parents in the army. One of the things they spoke about was how they feel when they hear the news on the radio or television of someone being hurt or killed while serving overseas. They spoke of how, when they arrive at the school gate, they can tell if it involves someone from their own school population just by the feel and interaction between the parents. They spoke of how they all band together to help the child and the family. They spoke of how they support the children if their mum or dad is deployed overseas and, interestingly and importantly, about the challenges and needs for further assistance that arise when they return.

It is a special community and a special school that combine to help each other. I know the community is banding together once again after the terrible news of the death last week of Sergeant Brett Wood, who served with the 2nd Commando Division at Holsworthy. I, too, wish to pay my respects to this man and my condolences to his family for such a tragic loss of life. Members would be aware that today we also heard the news of a further two deaths in Afghanistan. This should remind us all of the debt we owe our members of the armed forces, their families and the communities that support them.

I recently met with the General Manager of Hammondcare, Keith Morgan. Hammondcare is located within walking distance of my electorate office in Hammondville. The centre offers a high standard of aged and dementia care. Whilst there I was told an inspiring story of a Minister, Robert Hammond. Minister Hammond, in the days of the Great Depression, noticed how many men were out of work once the Sydney Harbour Bridge was completed. He purchased substantial landholdings and divided them into parcels, selling them to men on the condition that they were unemployed, married, and had at least three children. They also had to be homeless. The need was so great that the demand outweighed the supply. However, Minister Hammond was able to assist many families. What an amazing contribution to make and a legacy to leave.

I grew up in the Menai electorate on the Woronora River. It was a fabulous childhood of playing in the bush and kayaking. I still think it is one of the most beautiful places, and when I can I like to buy a coffee from the fish and chip shop and just sit by the river and relax. When I first went to school I used to walk over the one-way bridge that went across the river. Investment in infrastructure and the growing Menai population soon saw the one-lane bridge replaced with a two-lane bridge. Then, in 2001, the opening of the new Woronora Bridge meant that cars no longer had to drive down "the bendies". Population expansion saw the creation of the townships of Bangor, Menai and Barden Ridge.

We still have a natural beauty in Menai, all the way from Sutherland down the Woronora and Georges Rivers to the Chipping Norton Lakes. Menai has a great deal of wildlife and bird life. It is a beautiful place to live. My family has not come from "easy street". I am so proud of my parents. My dad, Scott, grew up in a Housing Commission house and along with my mum, Rhonda, opened his own business and became Australia's number one real estate agent. To say I am proud of him is an understatement. I do not think there is a house in the Menai district that he has not sold, or at least been inside. It came in handy when I was doorknocking.

My dad was not the stereotypical real estate agent but someone who really created a relationship with his clients. Most days I am stopped by people wanting to ask me how he is and what he is up to now. People have always asked me if I am "Scott's daughter". Well, now he is finally getting, "Are you Melanie's dad?" Sorry dad. My mum is the most caring, giving and beautiful person I know. When I was young she worked so hard to help make the family business a success—and I can say that I never noticed the juggling act she must have been performing to ensure that everything ran smoothly for us. She has really made me who I am, and yet I can only hope and strive to be more like her.

My parents, who very quickly became known as "campaign mum and dad", taught me the value of service; they taught me to help others, and to speak up. They are both very involved in fundraising for charities. They give so much of their time and effort to helping others, and they remain my inspiration. I have not seen enough of my parents throughout the long campaign, or of my aunties and uncles, and cousins—I come from a close family. I want to thank them for their understanding throughout the campaign. *[Extension of time agreed to.]*

They have given me so much support, they worked on polling day, and they are here tonight. Also here tonight are my godparents, Graham and Colleen Jackson, and my godson, Will Thatcher—he is peeking over the top there—and his big sister, Annelie. I have loved watching them grow and become talented, funny and good people. There are four friends in particular that have given me the understanding and love to follow this dream: Lauren Benikos, Brett Everett, and Halley and Simon Chan. Thank you. I look forward to being a better "Aunty Mel" to Lachlan and little Lucinda Chan, and I cannot wait to see what their passion is in life.

My parents, unbeknownst to them, instilled a passion for politics in me. I can still picture my father with Nick Greiner on the back of a truck in the 1988 campaign, standing up to campaign for the betterment of the Menai area. My parents took me to political fundraisers, one of which was for the former member for Sutherland Lorna Stone, who is in the gallery tonight, and they spoke to me about politics and current affairs around the dinner table. As an only child, it all felt very grown up. I was reminded recently of how the dinner table conversation must have rubbed off on me. While talking to my best friend from kindergarten recently she mentioned to me that her mum always thought that I was destined for politics. Apparently at all of seven or eight years old I was talking to her about Barrie Unsworth and the fact that I liked her "Bye Bye Barrie" car bumper sticker. I also think some of my interest in politics came from the education I received.

I was lucky enough to attend public, private and Catholic schools. I have experienced different education systems and I think I have a pretty good idea of the pros and cons of them all. A lovely congratulations card told me that I am Danebank's first old girl to be elected to Parliament: it is an honour. I believe I may be the third member of Parliament to come from De La Salle Cronulla—but the first of my political persuasion. It was at De La Salle Cronulla that I really learnt to put across my point of view. I studied three-unit modern history and we focused on Australian political history. Of the eight students, I was the only one writing my essays with a differing point of view. I have Mr Adrian Brown to thank for encouraging me to make my argument and to think differently.

I have mentioned him once already in this speech but once is never enough when speaking of inspirational people. My Uncle Bourke Gibbons is a member of the Order of Australia, a dual Paralympian and an amazing fundraiser. I believe he is one of the reasons I am who I am. Working for a charity assisting people with disabilities was a natural area for me to work in: I felt I could make a difference. On election night my Uncle Bourke told me that I was helping to fulfil a dream of his and doing what he always wanted to do. Life has not been easy for Bourke, as he has written in his book: he needs to rely on the Government and his elected representatives. Our decisions affect his life and his wellbeing.

I saw the impacts of decision making while working for the Hon. Dr Brian Pezzutti some 10 years ago in the other place. During that time Dr Pezzutti chaired the parliamentary inquiry into mental health. One aspect of that inquiry addressed housing options for people with mental health issues and disabilities. My eyes were opened to how important it is to understand the impact of government decisions on those whom governments are meant to protect. Governments can do great good, but they can also do great harm. I thank Dr Pezzutti and his wife, Christine, for giving me my start working in politics, and for igniting the spark that helping people could be a career and an option for me. I am privileged that Dr Pezzutti is here tonight from Lismore.

It was at this time that I joined Andrew Constance, now the member for Bega, on his Young Liberals executive and met many of the people who also were elected at the last election—Mark Coure, the member for Oatley; Gareth Ward, the member for Kiama; Natasha Maclaren-Jones in the other place; and Matt Kean, the member for Hornsby. It has been a treat to share this exciting time with so many old friends. Many people have more recently helped this opportunity and spark to become a reality. As Leader of the Opposition, Barry O'Farrell came to Menai many times to see the different parts of the community. I think the whole parliamentary team came to Menai during the long campaign, but I particularly thank the frequent visitors: Chris Hartcher, Mike Gallacher, Mike Baird, Katrina Hodgkinson, Catherine Cusack, Gladys Berejiklian and Pru Goward.

Jillian Skinner is by my side tonight, as she has been for so long. She has encouraged me since I first came to work in this building. She looked after me during the campaign and all the years in between. Thank you also to my guardian angels from her North Sydney conference: my good friends, Marilyn Cameron, Neville Mitchell, Simon Moore, Felicity Wilson and the energetic and tireless Bob Eustace. I thank from the Liberal Party and the leader's office State Director Mark Neeham, Chris Stone, Richard Shields, Lisa Maree Schell, Jeremy Vine and Penny George, Matt Cross and Jaymes Boland Rudder for their guidance and words of advice. Thank you to Chris Hall, a hard worker who coordinated many campaigns, including Menai, and yet somehow remained my friend. I thank the members of the State Executive and, in particular, the former member for Ryde Michael Photios and Kelly Knowles.

There are many people to thank locally for putting me in these responsible shoes. These people dedicated hours and hours and deserve to be thanked publically. My State conference president and friend Matthew Minehan; Chris Downy the former member for Sutherland, who gave me reassurance; Louise DeDomenico, who kept me eating good food; and Justin DeDomenico, who was my go-to guy; the interstate team of Ian Zakon, Felicity Stevenson, Mitchell Clout, Angela Samuels and Megan Purcell; and the dynamic Young Liberals who were the core of the campaign from start to finish—Kate Schouten, John Riad, Amy Cook, Dan Nicholls, Danial McGilgorm, Olga Stouchlina, Rob Leigo, Michelle Minehan and Libby Ryan

My thanks also go to long-term supporters who continue to provide that support: Matt Daniel, Hussan Awada, Elizabeth Hughes, Peter Tilley and David "Stretch" Maher. Dave Maher gave us the best quality A-frames in the State election. I thank also the treasurer and level-headed Simon Newport and his treasury colleague Russell Vickers. My deepest thanks also go to Leasa Newport, Alison McInerney and her parents, Alison McNicol, Troy Loveday, Scott Williams, Susan Kelly and Brett Thomas, Frank Zumbo, and the Federal member for Hughes, Craig Kelly. The campaign truck came in handy again. I also thank Kenny and Matthew Johns—Kenny especially for lending us his ute "Wedges", even though it did break down twice.

My deep thanks go to the Hon. John Ajaka, MLC, who was a constant campaigner in the south. It is good to see that his hard work has been rewarded with so many new members. I thank also the Hon. Don Harwin, MLC, for his sage words of advice. Thank you to Marc Landrigan who gave up so much of his time and energy—week days and weekends. Your sacrifice ensured our success. My council colleagues have given me a great deal of support—Councillor Craig McCallum and Bruce Walton; and Councillor Kevin Schreiber, who gave me the opportunity of chairing council's community services committee, the honour of being his deputy mayor and always offered his support. I thank also Councillor Steve Simpson, who has been a gentleman and freely gave his assistance and advice.

Liverpool City Council is just as ably served by some passionate local councillors: Ned Mannoun, Tony Hachiti, Mazhar Hadid and Garry Lucas. These men were my guides in the Liverpool council area. My new Menai team comprises Jeff Page, who has many years experience in this place, and Natalie Peterson, my colleague at TAD, a woman who shares my passion for disability services, and who I am proud to say is helping me deliver on my commitments. My final thank you goes to my campaign director and my mate Councillor Kent Johns. As much as I try, I will never be able to thank you enough for your guidance and patience—even though I know I tested it an awful lot. Your campaigning skills are legendary and I was so lucky that someone I have trusted for many years agreed to direct this campaign.

The Liberal Party had never before won Menai, but under Kent's guidance we manned every booth—in fact, we won every booth. Kent, your legacy of never losing an election remains, on both sides of politics. We had so much support on election day that we managed to be the first seat called on the night, and I am proud to say we achieved a swing of 27.4 per cent. That is a lot of trust from people who have never voted Liberal. I thank the people of Menai for voting for me, and everyone who helped to make this dream a reality. I will work hard to make sure that you feel that your time and effort, and particularly your trust, was all worthwhile. It is an honour and a humbling responsibility.

Politics is an interesting occupation choice: it is a hard job to get but an easy one to lose. It is only through doing everything you can do, putting in all the time and effort, that a member of Parliament can feel that he or she has achieved all that they set out to do—no matter how long we each are here to represent our constituents. I have been given an opportunity and a responsibility that comes to few people. I will never take it for granted.

I started my speech acknowledging some strong women who have guided my life. I get misty very easily but I want to chance it to mention one other woman, my grandma, Freda Johnson—a woman who gave me so much love. I know she is here with us tonight. Thank you.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to resolution, at 7.48 p.m. until
Wednesday 1 June 2011 at 10.00 a.m.**
