

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Thursday 2 June 2011

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

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

## BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

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

#### Motion by Mr Brad Hazzard agreed to:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended for general business to take precedence of the Address in Reply for the remainder of the autumn sittings.

## BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

### Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders: Inaugural Speeches

#### Motion by Mr Brad Hazzard agreed to:

That the business before the House be interrupted at 11.30 a.m. to permit the presentation of inaugural speeches by the members for Coogee and Monaro.

## WATER FLUORIDATION

**Mr JOHN WILLIAMS** (Murray-Darling) [10.06 a.m.]: I move:

That this House requests that the Public Water Supplies Act 1957 be amended to give local water authorities the ultimate power to make decisions concerning the addition of fluoride to public water within their locality.

It is my duty as a member of Parliament to advise the House of some of the objections that I have received from communities in my electorate in regard to the fluoridation of water. When this motion was listed on the Business Paper prior to the election I promised I would raise this matter in the House on behalf of the community of Balranald, which is concerned about different aspects of water fluoridation. That concern has been driven primarily by internet-generated reports, which members in my community believe are a credible reason to cease the fluoridation of water supplies. I have indicated to them that I do not support their view. However, today I will do my duty as a member of Parliament, bring this matter to the attention of the House and provide clear evidence why water fluoridation is an important health provision. I have delayed debate on this motion to enable the member for Blue Mountains to contribute to it.

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

**Mr JOHN WILLIAMS:** Many members would be aware that the member for Blue Mountains has spent much of her working life as a dentist and obviously will have strong views about and firsthand knowledge of the benefits of fluoridation. Although 97 per cent of the electorates in New South Wales currently engage in the fluoridation of water supplies, at some point they are challenged by people presenting them with information that has been sourced from the internet, which they believe is credible and scientifically based because someone has put his or her name to it and acknowledged that he or she is qualified to hold such an opinion. For some time health professionals have stressed the importance of inoculating children against disease. I have no doubt that they will stress also the importance of water fluoridation.

Many internet campaigns have identified the source of naturally occurring fluoride in our water supplies which has had an effect on the health of our communities. They have acknowledged that the removal from our water supplies of such naturally occurring fluoride would reduce health risks in our communities. Scientific evidence supporting water fluoridation dates back as far as the 1950s. Reputable scientific health and

health-related professional organisations throughout the world have recognised the importance of water fluoridation due to the oral health and economic benefits it confers. These organisations have separately endorsed fluoridation of drinking water as a desirable public health policy based on numerous scientific studies carried out throughout the world.

In Australia this includes the National Health and Medical Research Council, the Australian Dental Association, the Australian Medical Association, the Public Health Association of Australia, the Cancer Council, Diabetes Australia, the Australian Academy of Science, the Australian Centre for Human Health Risk Assessment, Osteoporosis Australia, Arthritis Australia, Alzheimer's Australia and the Australian Academy of Paediatric Dentistry. Internationally this includes the World Health Organization, the United States Public Health Service, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the International Association of Dental Research, the FDI World Dental Federation, the Royal College of Surgeons, United Kingdom and the Royal College of Physicians, United Kingdom. In 2010 the World Health Organization reiterated its support for the extension of water fluoridation programs and said:

Water fluoridation is one of the most cost-effective public health measures to improve dental health and reduce inequities through benefiting disadvantaged populations.

In 2008 the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in the United States of America released data that showed that almost 70 per cent, or approximately 210 million people in the United States with reticulated water supplies, had water fluoridation. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention called for a further extension of water fluoridation in those States with lower coverage levels. In 2007 the Australian National Health and Medical Research Council conducted a systematic review and released a public statement entitled, "The efficacy and safety of fluoridation 2007". The recommendation made by the National Health and Medical Research Council, after examining all the studies on water fluoridation, is as follows:

Fluoridation of drinking water remains the most effective and socially equitable means of achieving community wide exposure to the caries prevention effects of fluoride. It is recommended that water be fluoridated in the target range of 0.6 to 1.1 milligrams per litre, depending on the climate, to balance reduction of dental caries and occurrence of dental fluorosis. There was also no negative health impact from optimal water fluoridation at 1 milligram per litre.

In November 2006 researchers from the World Health Organization, the World Dental Federation and the International Association for Dental Research met at the Global Consultation on Oral Health Through Fluoride. Those researchers said:

Taking account of the scientific evidence, as well as several World Health Organisation World Health Assembly resolutions and other technical reports, the experts reaffirmed the efficiency, cost-effectiveness and safety of the daily use of optimal fluoride.

In 2006 Australia's Research Centre for Population Oral Health reported the conclusion of the consensus Workshop on the Use of Fluorides in Australia and stated:

Water fluoridation should be continued as it remains an effective, efficient, socially equitable and safe population approach to the prevention of caries in Australia and water fluoridation should be extended to as many people as possible living in non-fluoridated areas of Australia.

The 2004 United States surgeon general's statement on community water fluoridation is as follows:

Since the 1950s each US Public Health Service Surgeon General has committed his or her support for community water fluoridation. In 2004 Richard H Carmona joined previous Surgeons General in acknowledging the continuing public health role for community water fluoridation in enhancing the oral health of all Americans.

In 1999 the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention rated water fluoridation as one of the top 10 public health measures for the twentieth century, alongside the eradication of poliomyelitis and smallpox. It is evident that credible health bodies throughout the world have a similar opinion about the fluoridation of water. For me, it is more about allowing someone to have his or her say. This has gone on for too long in communities that are opposed to fluoridation. None of the claims that has been made on the internet are based on any scientific evidence. Since raising the matter in this House, I have received a firm written commitment from the Chief Health Officer that no community would be forced to upgrade its water processing and distribution systems to include fluoride. [*Time expired.*]

**Dr ANDREW McDONALD** (Macquarie Fields) [10.16 a.m.]: I thank the member Murray-Darling for moving this motion and appreciate his reasons for doing so. All members have to represent their constituents without fear or favour, even though they might not agree with the views that have been expressed.

I would like to hear what the member for Blue Mountains has to say about this important issue as she knows much more about fluoridation than I do. I extend best regards to the Balranald community. Last year I visited the Balranald multipurpose service and was very impressed by the town and its new multipurpose service. Fluoridation, which was first introduced in 1945 in Grand Rapids, Michigan, is simply an adjustment of public water supplies to the optimal fluoride level—which is 0.7 to 1.2 parts per million. Fluoridation was originally noticed when areas with high fluoride content were found to have less dental caries than areas with low fluoride content.

There is absolutely no doubt in any of the scientific literature that community water fluoridation is the single most effective public health measure to prevent tooth decay. Public water fluoridation reduces dental caries by 20 to 40 per cent, even in areas with other widespread fluoride sources, such as fluoride toothpaste. This motion is a Trojan horse because it hides the fact that, if it were successful, it could have significant adverse effects on public health. As a result of opposition to fluoridation of water supplies, even within Australia, access to fluoridated water can vary. In 2007 it was only 5 per cent in Queensland because local councils often are responsible for the fluoridation of the public water supply. This compares to 75 per cent in most of Australia. The National Health and Medical Research Council indicated that communities that have ceased water fluoridation experience a demonstrated increase in caries. Advice received from the National Health and Medical Research Council reveals that the evidence does not support any adverse event, and that water fluoridation should remain unchanged until there is additional evidence to show that further action on fluoride exposure is required.

The consensus in the scientific literature is strongly towards water fluoridation. There is insufficient evidence to establish any link between fluoridated drinking water and an increase in bone or other cancers. Members should be aware that the cancer rate in our population is increasing associated with longevity and there is no evidence that there is an increased risk of osteoporosis from exposure to drinking water fluoridated to optimal levels of 0.6 to 1.2 parts per million subject to climate. The National Health and Medical Research Council recommended the need to develop a strategy to reduce the possibility of excessive ingestion of fluoride by young children. Its advice is that toothpaste for young children should be clearly labelled for adult or child use and fluoride supplements should not be recommended for children under the age of three years except under the supervision of a dentist. In 2007 the Australian Dental Association, Queensland Branch, position statement on water fluoridation in Queensland stated:

The fluoridation of public water supplies is acknowledged as one of the ten greatest public health achievements of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Optimally fluoridated water is currently available to over 300 million people worldwide including 75% of Australians living in states other than Queensland. Only 5% of Queenslanders have access to optimally fluoridated water.

There was a much higher rate of dental caries in Queensland than in any other State. Australia's National Oral Health Plan 2004-2013 advocates water fluoridation of public water supplies for communities across Australia with populations of 1,000 or more. The association also states there is no credible evidence linking optimal community water fluoridation to any adverse health effect. The Australian Dental Association, Queensland branch, endorses optimal community water fluoridation as the safest, most effective and most equitable means of improving the oral health of Queenslanders regardless of age, educational level or socioeconomic status. The incidence of dental caries remains strongly socioeconomically determined.

The Australian Dental Association, Queensland Branch, also noted that Justice Cripps said that passing the authority for fluoridation to local government or the electorate is not a resolution of the question but an avoidance of it. When I was Parliamentary Secretary for Health I signed more letters relating to opposition to fluoride than any other health issue. The opponents of fluoridation of water supplies are highly vocal, highly organised and well and truly able to threaten local councillors with loss of their seats in local government. They certainly have the ability to do that. Allowing local councillors to regulate water supplies is to ensure there will be a reduction in community water fluoridation in some of our more isolated areas and those with lower population. This is tragic because every dollar invested in water fluoridation saves \$38 in dental costs. According to the latest Australian Dental Association statement:

The use of fluorides in dentistry is one of the most important ways of preventing dental caries and has the support of all peak public health and dental authorities. International bodies such as the US-based Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], the World Health Organisation and the US Surgeon General actively promote water fluoridation. The CDC placed water fluoridation in the top ten public health achievements of the 20th Century. Similarly, scientific bodies in Australia, recognised public health groups and professional organisations support water fluoridation. Community water fluoridation continues to be the most cost-effective, equitable and safe means to provide protection from tooth decay and has been successfully utilised in Australia for over 50 years.

The Australian Dental Association said that fluoridation of community water supplies is safe and effective in reducing the prevalence of dental caries in all age groups, although it stipulates that where fluoridation of water supplies is effected there must be adequate control and supervision of the procedure. This may not be possible for local governments, which is why it is important that the ability to fluoridate water is not devolved to their level. The association states:

Governments must adopt water fluoridation as part of Health Policy and actively promote its introduction, where it is feasible, as a public health measure.

Today is the day for members of Parliament to state publicly to every member of their electorate that they personally support water fluoridation and support it for their constituents. I note the member for Grafton has put up his hand already. This is the time for every member of Parliament to stand up and be counted because politics is all about the common good and the opponents of fluoridation are highly organised and highly vocal, and certainly able to threaten local councillors. The support of dental authorities worldwide is based on the overwhelming rate of peer-reviewed credible scientific evidence. The big problem with the internet is that if one Googles "fluoride supplies in water" most of the hits that come up are for anti-fluoridation sites. The reality is there are three stages of any truth, be it immunisation, fluoridation, evolution or climate change. The first stage is ridicule, the second stage is opposition and the third stage is the acceptance that the truth is self-evident.

Most of us have moved on to the recognition that the fluoridation of water supplies is self-evidently helpful to the common good. However, there are still those who are unable to accept that and who continue vigorously to oppose fluoridation. There are also people who believe other things that are not in the common good. Those people are entitled to their beliefs, but if those beliefs were transferred to the rest of the population it would cause an increase in dental caries, particularly for those at greatest risk. As I said, dental caries is strongly socioeconomically determined and there is an increased rate of dental caries in rural and remote areas. Those who oppose water fluoridation are certainly entitled to their views, which are respected, but this is a matter of common good and all members of Parliament should stand up in support of water fluoridation.

**Debate adjourned on motion by Mrs Roza Sage and set down as an order of the day for a future day.**

### **MACULAR DEGENERATION**

**Mrs BARBARA PERRY** (Auburn) [10.27 a.m.]: I move:

That this House notes that:

- (1) Macular Degeneration Awareness Week 2011 takes place from 22 to 28 May;
- (2) macular degeneration (MD) is the leading cause of blindness in Australia, affecting central vision; is primarily age related most frequently affecting people over the age of 50; and that one in seven people over the age of 50 is affected by the disease and the incidence increases with age;
- (3) calls on the House to raise awareness about MD; and
- (4) calls on members to encourage people to have their eyes tested.

The precious gift of vision is taken for granted by most of us. Like other members of this House, recently I received correspondence from the Macular Degeneration Foundation, which is a national organisation based in Sydney dedicated to promoting awareness of macular degeneration, which is the leading cause of blindness in Australia. That correspondence calls on members of Parliament to be a voice and to promote this important health message to our communities. Until recently I knew little about this disease and the information provided by the foundation increased my knowledge. Recently I also noticed, as a result of the campaign being run in conjunction with Macular Degeneration Awareness Week, the very effective advertisements, particularly on television.

**The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George):** Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber. The member for Auburn will be heard in silence.

**Mrs BARBARA PERRY:** Elizabeth Carr, the foundation's chairperson, states:

The foundation was established in 2001 and already has travelled a remarkable way. When we started hardly anyone had heard of the disease. It was not on the Government's radar screen and yet it was, and still is, by far the leading cause of blindness in this country.

Ms Carr also said:

In the last couple of years we have considerably raised awareness of the disease and assisted many thousands of people who have Macular Degeneration, their families, supporters and carers.

Calls to the foundation hits on our website are increasing dramatically.

That is testament to the hard work of the staff, the volunteers and all associated with the Macular Degeneration Foundation. On behalf of this Parliament I thank them for their passion and commitment to education, awareness, research and support services that are provided to those suffering from the disease and to their families and carers. It is also significant to note that this year is the tenth anniversary of the Macular Degeneration Foundation providing support to the macular degeneration community in Australia. Although I was not able to attend, I note that there was a One Decade Gala fundraising dinner to celebrate 10 years of the foundation's achievements. The celebration at the Sydney Hilton also acknowledged some very important people, including the founding director, Dr Paul Beaumont. It is important to note that Dr Paul Beaumont served as the chairman in the first term of the foundation, from 2001 to 2004. As Australians, we should be very proud of Dr Beaumont's achievements. He is imparting his knowledge to the next generation of doctors, not only in Australia but world wide.

The theme of this year's Macular Degeneration Awareness Week is "Don't let macular degeneration take away the centre of your world." It is important to take the opportunity at all times, not just during Macular Degeneration Awareness Week, to heed the message of the Macular Degeneration Foundation. The message is simple: Have your eyes tested regularly—"How's your macula?" Age-related macular degeneration affects one in seven Australians over the age of 50. The chance of being affected by macular degeneration increases with age. Macular degeneration destroys the sharp central vision that is necessary to see objects clearly and to perform tasks such as reading and driving. It is a progressive disease and treatment options are limited, depending on the stage and type of the macular degeneration. There is no known cure.

Macular degeneration affects the central area of the retina called the macula, causing it to thin and bleed. It generally affects both eyes at the same time, but not always to the same extent. There are two forms of macular degeneration, dry macular degeneration and wet macular degeneration. Dry macular degeneration develops slowly and results in vision impairment. This is the most common form of macular degeneration and there is no effective treatment for dry macular degeneration at present. Wet macular degeneration develops more rapidly and occurs when abnormal blood vessels develop beneath the retina and bleed, yet it may be treated to hold or slow its progression by sealing abnormal blood vessels using laser treatment. Without proper diagnosis and treatment this form of macular degeneration can cause blindness within days.

People with macular degeneration have peripheral vision only and many are considered to be legally blind. It is startling to know that this disease accounts for more than two-thirds of legal blindness in Australia. Even though macular degeneration is more prevalent in people over 50 years of age, the foundation highlights that more and more younger people are reporting symptoms of the disease, which include blurred or distorted vision, straight lines appearing wavy or bent, having problems distinguishing faces, dark patches or empty spaces appearing in the centre of one's vision, needing increased light, slow recovery of visual function after exposure to bright light, difficulty discerning colours, and reduced central vision. Those symptoms may indicate that there is something wrong, and contact with an eye care specialist should be made immediately.

In the twenty-first century health is about prevention and early intervention. Clearly, early detection of this disease is the key to protecting sight. Ongoing research is being undertaken into the causes of age-related macular degeneration, but evidence suggests that the condition has a genetic link. People with a family history of age-related macular degeneration have a fourfold increased risk of developing the disease. Recently we marked the occasion of World No Tobacco Day when we discussed the issues surrounding tobacco smoking and its associated health problems. Tobacco smoking plays a role in macular degeneration by increasing threefold the risk of contracting macular degeneration, which is a matter of great concern. However, as I stated earlier, early intervention and prevention are the keys to slowing the progress of risk of vision loss caused by macular degeneration.

It is also known that a healthy diet consisting of fresh fruit and leafy green vegetables and other foods that are high in antioxidants may help to reduce the risk of developing age-related macular degeneration. Other preventive measures are not smoking; protecting eyes from sunlight exposure, especially when people are young; and regular eye tests. Having the macula checked will assist in early detection of the condition. Research

shows that the risk of progressing from early to late-stage macular degeneration can be reduced by 25 per cent by taking high doses of antioxidants. Of course, that should be done in consultation with one's doctor. Progression is reduced by up to 30 per cent if the sufferer quits smoking.

There is no doubt that the best method of prevention or early detection is having eyes tested regularly by a specialist—at least every two years, particularly for people over the age of 50 or when there is a family history of the condition. The Macular Degeneration Foundation provides a fact sheet on its website that outlines a very simple test. It does not take very long and people can test themselves. Of course, that does not replace the need to have a regular professional check-up. I urge members to continue to talk about this condition in our communities, not just during Macular Degeneration Awareness Week. We are leaders of our communities and we are in a position to highlight this important information.

I urge members to convey to their communities the simple testing task that takes less than a minute and can be done anywhere. It is known as the Amsler grid eye examination. Importantly, as simple as that test is, it should not be depended upon for any diagnosis. People should consult an eye doctor for a thorough examination. The aim of the foundation is to help people who are suffering from macular degeneration to maintain their independence and their dignity. Today I congratulate the foundation on its work, for its recent success with Macular Degeneration Awareness Week and for all the activities that are associated with it. I call upon all members of this House to have their eyes tested and I encourage people in their communities to do the same. I urge members to continue to raise awareness about macular degeneration.

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER** (North Shore—Minister for Health, and Minister for Medical Research) [10.37 a.m.]: It gives me great pleasure to contribute to debate on the motion. It is a pity that debate had to be postponed and that Macular Degeneration Awareness Week has passed. I launched Macular Degeneration Awareness Week at the Macular Degeneration Foundation's dinner. The function was organised by the fantastic foundation committee, whose membership includes Elizabeth Carr, who would be known to many people of this House as she previously worked for a former Leader of the Opposition. The celebration was attended by many leading luminaries in the eye treatment world, and the foundation's many supporters put their hands deep into their pockets to raise funds.

The launch of Macular Degeneration Awareness Week coincided with the launch of Macular Degeneration Foundation Research Grants 2011 and the Paul Beaumont Research Fellowship 2011. Dr Beaumont was present on that occasion, and I am very pleased that the member for Auburn highlighted his wonderful contribution to the treatment of macular degeneration. Dr Beaumont was a founding director of the Macular Degeneration Foundation, and he is my ophthalmologist. I am in the very early stages of dry macular degeneration, which makes me very conscious of the need to support members of the House and members of the public having their eyes tested. The onset of my condition was picked up through a routine visit to an optometrist. With the fantastic cameras they have now, they can pick up when signs of the disease begin to appear.

As the member for Auburn indicated, not much can be done for dry macular degeneration except by way of diet and taking supplements. I recommend to everyone the following procedure, because my dry macular degeneration has not progressed since it was discovered about three years ago. A diet including lots of leafy vegetables, especially spinach and other green vegetables, helps and an egg a day is worthwhile, as are lots of hazelnuts and other nuts, fish and the particular supplementary medications Lutein-Vision and Macu-Vision developed by Blackmores following representations from Paul Beaumont. Paul Beaumont is considered somewhat of a world leader in macular degeneration disease. We are lucky to have his services. He is a modest man. At the dinner to honour him through the establishment of this research fellowship in his name he sought to play down his achievements by saying that they were largely due to the work of foundation members who had over the past 10 years—the foundation's tenth anniversary is this year—put a great deal of effort into fundraising and increasing awareness of the disease.

Last year the Parliament hosted macular testing. I hope that many members of Parliament took the opportunity to be tested, as many staff members did. I am aware that at least two people had macular issues detected. Testing is worthwhile, especially when treatment is available for wet macular degeneration and preventative measures can be taken for dry macular degeneration. During Macular Degeneration Awareness Week parliamentarians, optometrists, ophthalmologists, libraries and pharmacies took part in raising awareness of macular degeneration. They promoted the message "Don't let macular degeneration take away the centre of your world"—a symptom of advanced macular degeneration is that peripheral vision remains unaffected but central vision is impaired. We are not allowed to display props in this place but I shall briefly hold up the poster that I will display in my office. This disease has a profound impact on people's lives.

I also have in my office a copy of the Amsler grid, which is also on my refrigerator at home. The grid can be used as a quick test to determine whether someone is beginning to suffer from macular degeneration. The graph shows the stages of visual distortion that are the early symptoms of macular degeneration. I am happy to provide a copy of the grid to anyone who wants one. It is worth examining the causes of macular degeneration. It affects one in seven Australians over the age of 50, and symptoms increase with age. It is hereditary and a family history of the disease increases to 50 per cent the chance of developing it. I recall talking to Dr Beaumont when I was diagnosed because I did not recall any macular degeneration history in my family. He asked me particularly about my mother and whether she ate butter or margarine. I said, "Oh, yes. I remember she only ate butter. She hated margarine." He said that that may well account for it.

The jury is still out, but there is much thought that some margarines—and certainly some of the oils they contain—could contribute to the increased onset of macular degeneration. As the member for Auburn said, studies show that those who smoke are three times more likely to develop macular degeneration, and may develop the disease earlier than non-smokers. Those with a specific genetic predisposition to macular degeneration and who smoke have a markedly increased risk of developing the disease. The advice of the Macular Degeneration Foundation is that people should have their eyes checked regularly, not smoke, maintain a healthy lifestyle, control weight, exercise regularly, eat a healthy and well-balanced diet, and consider taking zinc and anti-oxidant supplements. My optometrist stresses the importance of protecting your eyes from sunlight exposure, especially in the case of young children. I am pleased to see so many young children—even very young children—wearing sunglasses these days when they are outside. That was unheard of when I was young.

**Mrs Barbara Perry:** It's probably a bit cool to do it now.

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER:** When I was young one probably would have been considered a bit of a poser for wearing sunglasses. These days it is more of a health issue. Anyone with young children or grandchildren, as I have, should take that on board. Except for taking preventative measures very little else can be done for dry macular degeneration, but treatments are available for wet macular degeneration, particularly injecting treatments. That treatment has been helpful in halting the disease's progress for some people. My very good friend and a man whom I revere has undergone macular degeneration treatment from early diagnosis and he told me that it had made a huge difference to his life in preventing progression to total debilitation.

The Agency for Clinical Innovation, which is part of the Health portfolio, works closely with Sydney Hospital, Sydney Eye Hospital and the Save Sight Institute at the University of Sydney to develop a model of treatment care and ongoing management of patients with age-related macular degeneration. Macular degeneration is an important degenerative disease about which we should all be aware. I urge every member of this House to raise awareness of this disease in their communities, and amongst their families and colleagues. The more we do to ensure that people take preventative measures and undergo testing followed by treatment the better the outcome.

**Dr ANDREW McDONALD (Macquarie Fields)** [10.47 a.m.]: Vision loss for the elderly comes like a thief in the night. The fact that we are living an extra 14 years means that we are about to enter an age where macular degeneration will become increasingly common. Macular degeneration is a degenerative disease of the central portion of the retina, the macula. This is the area where all light is focused, and is vital for central vision. About one-third of macular degeneration is the dry or atrophic variety, to which the Minister alluded, and about two-thirds is the so-called wet macular degeneration, which is also called neovascular or exudative. Macular degeneration is progressive and painless and never leads to total or black blindness. However, because the macula is affected one has no central vision and most colour vision is lost also. Central vision is vital to read, recognise faces, drive a car, see colours clearly or perform any activity requiring fine vision.

The rest of the retina is the so-called peripheral retina and is used to see general shapes. It is responsible for the so-called "get-about vision", or side vision. This is not affected by macular degeneration. The macula comprises only 2.1 per cent of the retina but takes up about 50 per cent of the visual cortex of the brain, which is used to process the information from the macula. That is why the loss of central vision profoundly affects all visual functioning. As I have said, it is not possible to read without central vision. Major macular degeneration symptoms include distortion, where straight lines are wavy or bent; difficulty in reading or anything else that requires fine vision, such as sewing; difficulty distinguishing faces; and the appearance of dark patches or empty spaces in the centre of the field of vision. Early symptoms include the need for increased illumination, sensitivity to glare, decreased night vision and poor colour sensitivity. All of those indicate that there may be something wrong and if people are over 50 years of age they need to see an optometrist or an ophthalmologist as soon as possible.

In wet macular degeneration vision loss can be sudden and severe. The risk of macular degeneration increased with age. It is not a natural consequence of ageing and can be modified by controlling the risk factors, the major one being smoking. However, cardiovascular disease and heavy alcohol use—more than three drinks per day—are also associated with an increased risk of early macular degeneration. The risk may still occur even after a person has stopped smoking and there does appear to be a dose-response relationship. Unfortunately, nothing can be done about one's genes, and an abnormality in the CFH gene accounts for about 50 per cent cases of acute macular degeneration.

As I said, early detection is crucial because there is no proven effective treatment for dry macular degeneration. In wet macular degeneration the new blood vessels cause bleeding, leakage and scarring, and that causes a sudden loss of central vision. The new blood vessels are promoted to grow by a protein called vascular endothelial growth factor and can be treated with a variety of drugs. The most commonly used drug is ranibizumab, which is marketed as Lucentis, and is a recombinant human modified antibody that needs to be injected into the eye every six weeks. This is the most appropriate treatment for patients and is the only one currently approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration.

Investigations of a much cheaper and similar drug called bevacizumab, or Avastin, is being investigated as an alternative. However, even though it appears to be nearly as effective there are still some concerns, which means that Lucentis is still the treatment of choice for Australia. Close follow-up and monitoring with the attending eye specialist is vital in order to determine whether further treatment is required because there is a 50 per cent recurrence rate even with treatment. I wish the Macular Degeneration Foundation the best on its 10-year anniversary. It has done an amazing amount of work so far and its website is very impressive and helpful. In the next 10 years the foundation is asking all Australians to help raise \$10 million to find a cure for blindness for the disease, and I wish it the best.

**Mr KEVIN HUMPHRIES** (Barwon—Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Healthy Lifestyles, and Minister for Western New South Wales) [10.52 a.m.]: I support the motion moved by the member for Auburn in relation to Macular Degeneration Awareness Week. Macular degeneration is the leading cause of blindness and severe vision loss in Australia, with 48 per cent of all blindness attributed to this disease. We know that the risk of depression among sufferers of macular degeneration is increased threefold. We know also that the availability of, and access to, optometrists for people living in rural areas can be a challenge, as on average those in rural communities are older than those who live in urban areas.

I support the Royal Far West's Outback Eye Service that is coordinated by Professor Minas Coroneo from the University of New South Wales and managed by Joanna Barton. They provide an enormous service, which is growing, in western and remote parts of this State. People from remote and rural parts of New South Wales who find it difficult, or who cannot afford, to access those services in the city can go to the Outback Eye Service, which is now evolving into the Fred Hollows Outback Eye Service. Research into macular degeneration is an ongoing priority as we need to know more about this disease and the risk factors for it, as well as implement treatment options and strategies to manage patients with wet age-related macular degeneration. While there are genetic links for the disease and it is also age related, we know that some of the risk factors are modifiable.

Smoking is a known and agreed upon modifiable risk factor for age-related macular degeneration. The New South Wales Government is leading, and will continue to lead, the way on preventative health issues such as tobacco smoking and will take further measures to reduce the prevalence and uptake of smoking in the New South Wales community. The New South Wales Department of Health has done a great job. It has been among the world leaders in tobacco control for more than three decades and continues to lead in this field, with a number of programs and policies developed and implemented to promote cessation of smoking and reduce the harm caused by tobacco.

Key achievements in this area include the development of the first Quit campaign in the 1970s and the introduction of the strong regulatory measures that place restrictions on the sale, display and advertising of tobacco products. The Public Health (Tobacco) Act 2008 bans the display of tobacco in retail outlets, restricts the operation of tobacco vending machines and introduced a retailer notification scheme. The Smoke-free Environment Act 2000 protects the community from second-hand smoke by prohibiting smoking in all enclosed public spaces in New South Wales, with the exception of the private gaming areas of Star City Casino. The New South Wales Department of Health is responsible for monitoring and enforcing compliance with this legislation. There will be no let-up in government efforts to reduce the incidence of smoking. As the Minister for Healthy Lifestyles, I will be driving a number of significant policies in health care to reduce the burden on the New South Wales hospital system.



Tuesday was World No Tobacco Day and I was pleased to attend an event in the community centre at Redfern to draw attention to the high prevalence of smoking amongst Aboriginal people—it is three times the national average. We know that dietary interventions may help to prevent the onset of macular degeneration or prevent its progression, but further research in that area is needed. In particular, the links between the protective benefits of a diet rich in omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids, particularly long-chain fatty acids, is a subject that needs to be explored further. On Tuesday 1 July I attended the Flemington fruit and vegetable markets. Today my colleagues in The Nationals and I attended the Sydney Fish Markets. We aim to promote and use opportunities to highlight the health benefits of including omega-3 rich food, such as fish and leafy green vegetables, as part of a healthy diet to target macular degeneration.

The O'Farrell-Stoner Government provides funding to the Macular Degeneration Foundation that supports patients with macular degeneration. The foundation plays a key role in raising awareness of the disease and driving research and services for sufferers. Funding of \$1.5 million has been earmarked over three years to find ways to reduce the incidence and impact of the disease in Australia. I congratulate the Macular Degeneration Foundation on its ongoing work, and all the people who work in that space. The new Government looks forward to working with them and is committed to further research and strategies to prevent macular degeneration.

**Ms ANNA WATSON** (Shellharbour) [10.57 a.m.]: I support the motion moved by the member for Auburn in relation to macular degeneration, which is the name given to a group of degenerative eye diseases that affect the central area of the retina. The macula provides central vision, allowing people to read, drive and undertake other day-to-day activities on which we rely. Without straight-ahead vision, people who suffer from macular degeneration struggle to lead a normal life and often require the assistance of others to perform routine tasks. Other impacts of this disease include lower employment rates, high use of services, social isolation and emotional distress. The disease prevents ageing people who are otherwise healthy and independent from leading a normal life.

For example, the risk of falls is doubled, the risk of depression increases threefold, the risk of hip fractures increases four to eight times, admission to nursing homes, on average, occurs three years earlier, social dependence increases twofold, and social independence decreases twofold. Macular degeneration is responsible for more than two-thirds of legal blindness. There are, in fact, close to 400,000 people in Australia who suffer from the effects of macular degeneration. By itself it will not lead to blindness. In fact, only a very small number of people with visual impairment are totally blind. In almost all cases some vision remains. Other complicating conditions may lead to such an acute condition—for example, a severe stroke, a trauma or untreated glaucoma—but few macular degeneration patients will suffer total visual loss. Macular degeneration is devastating to patients due to the nature of visual loss.

As discussed earlier, the causes of macular degeneration are: ageing, a family history or a macular degeneration gene. Ageing accounts for approximately 10 per cent of patients aged 66 to 74 years; the prevalence increases to 30 per cent in patients aged 75 to 85 years. The risk of developing macular degeneration for people who have a relative with the condition is 50 per cent, compared with 12 per cent for people who do not have relatives with macular degeneration. The risk for people with relatives who have macular degeneration is fourfold. Early detection and timely treatment are credited with a superior visual outcome for patients. Macular degeneration is the leading cause of blindness in Australia. The costs involved are \$2.6 billion every year, which is expected to grow to \$6.5 billion in 2025. The cost to the community will be about \$59 billion over the next 20 years.

Macular degeneration can be devastating to patients. People should have their eyes checked regularly and make sure their macula is checked. People should adhere to some lifestyle options such as not smoking; maintaining a healthy lifestyle, controlling weight and exercising regularly; eating a healthy, well-balanced diet by eating fish two or three times a week, dark green leafy vegetables such as spinach, fresh fruit daily and a handful of nuts every week; limiting their intake of fat; and consulting their doctor. People should consider taking zinc and antioxidant supplements. Proper diet and supplements may play a role in reducing the risk of macular degeneration and in slowing its progression.

Eating a healthy diet high in antioxidants, vitamins and other nutrients can help keep our eyes healthy. Foods such as spinach, silverbeet, turnips, sweet corn and capsicum all have high concentrations of lutein. Omega-3 fatty acids are also important to eye health; they are found in high levels in the retina and are involved in cell renewal and development. They can be found in oily varieties of fish such as salmon, anchovies and sardines. The challenge is to adjust to new circumstances, and loss of vision is no exception. People can

experience different feelings, from acceptance to disbelief. But with support, assistance and the right advice, these challenges can be overcome to maintain a quality of life. Services can provide advice, information and solutions to overcome the issues of day-to-day life living with macular degeneration. Individual counselling and group support can contribute to finding the right solution for each patient and provide practical assistance.

**Mrs ROZA SAGE** (Blue Mountains) [11.02 a.m.]: I am pleased to speak about the important topic of macular degeneration awareness. I thank the member for Auburn for moving this motion. As previous speakers have said, awareness of macular degeneration is incredibly important as it is a major cause of blindness in older Australians, and older people generally. This year marks the tenth anniversary of Macular Degeneration Awareness Week. We ask: What is macular degeneration and why is it important? I thank the member for Shellharbour for her comprehensive list of dietary considerations that will help and the way she outlined how macular degeneration affects people. As has been said, the macula is a portion of the retina of the eye that is important for central vision, which is what people see in front of them, as distinct from peripheral vision, which is what people see from the corner of their eye.

As the macula breaks down, central vision is lost. If it is allowed to progress, the patient will become blind. As has been said, macular degeneration is a degenerative disease predominantly affecting older persons. Therefore, it is often called "age-related macular degeneration". However, it is not confined to older people. With the population ageing, this will present an even greater problem in the future, as do many degenerative diseases such as heart disease and the like. The major danger is that macular degeneration is progressive and painless. Because the disease is painless people do not know that they have macular degeneration. Macular degeneration begins when the exchange of nutrients and the elimination of waste products from the retina breaks down and the waste products build up in the layer just underneath the retina.

These waste products can be seen as deposits in the eye—yellow spots—and they can be easily seen by eye care professionals. That is why it is important to have check-ups with eye professionals. As has been described, there are two types of macular degeneration: the dry, which is slow, where the cell dies and leaves patches of missing retina. This is untreatable and leads to gradual loss of vision. Then there is the wet, where there is a proliferation of blood vessels underneath the retina growing wildly and leaking blood and fluid—hence the reference to the word "wet". This leads to scarring and loss of vision. As the member for Macquarie Fields said, there is good treatment for the wet form of the disease: the injection of medication into the eye every four to eight weeks.

A new medication, Lucentis, has been found to be particularly effective in this way. Lucentis has been shown to stabilise vision in more than 95 per cent of patients and to significantly improve vision in about 40 per cent of patients. However, the medication is costly and multiple treatments are required for each eye. Lucentis is available through the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme. However, public hospitals are not funded to provide Lucentis as New South Wales, unlike Victoria, Queensland and Western Australia, has not yet signed up to pharmaceutical reforms under the Australia Health Care Agreement. The use of Lucentis has revolutionised the treatment of macular degeneration, such that sight can be saved with early detection.

As has been said, macular degeneration has many symptoms, especially difficulty with reading, the distortion of straight lines appearing bent and the inability to distinguish faces with dark patches of empty spaces appearing. As has been discussed, the contributing factors are age and family history, as well as smoking and obesity. Genetics pose a 50 per cent greater chance of people developing macular degeneration. As with many of these diseases, maintaining a healthy lifestyle and doing the right thing will make a big difference to the lives of people with macular degeneration. I support Macular Degeneration Awareness Week. I thank the member for Auburn for moving this motion.

**Mrs BARBARA PERRY** (Auburn) [11.07 a.m.], in reply: It was wonderful to hear the significant contributions of the shadow Minister for Health, the member for Shellharbour and the member for Blue Mountains, and particularly the Minister for Health, and Minister for Medical Research and the Minister for Healthy Lifestyles. Each member spoke on a different aspect of macular degeneration. Before I summarise the debate, I congratulate the Macular Degeneration Foundation on its great achievements over the past 10 years. I am sure that all members of Parliament look perhaps to getting to know the foundation. Most importantly, today's debate centred on raising awareness, research and prevention.

All those key elements must work together to combat macular degeneration disease or at least slow the risk of progress of the disease. It was interesting to hear the personal comments of the Minister for Health about her own health and macular degeneration issues, as well as what her department will be doing in partnership

with the Sydney Eye Hospital and other organisations to work on raising awareness of macular degeneration. I will concentrate on the contribution of the Minister for Healthy Lifestyles. I note that the Government has outlined a commitment to reduce smoking rates in New South Wales and to working further to prevent smoking. Having formerly for a very short time been the Minister Assisting the Minister for Health (Mental Health and Cancer) in this State, I take this opportunity to thank on the public record the Department of Health.

The Department of Health has done incredible work in this State to reduce the incidence of smoking. In particular, I thank those working in the department's population health sector led by Kerry Chant and all those in the department working generally around cancer issues. Kerry Chant has been a leading driver in population health issues, one of which is smoking. The reason smoking was mentioned today is that it is a risk factor in macular degeneration. As the population is ageing, the incidence of macular degeneration will increase. I noted in my contribution that the Macular Degeneration Foundation has found that more people under the age of 50— younger people—are now reporting symptoms of the disease, and that is of concern. There is evidence of some genetically related reasons for this, but also ample evidence to show that it is diet related.

Earlier we heard discussion about the Public Water Supplies Act that was brought on by the member for Murray-Darling, but unfortunately did not continue. I support adding fluoride to water. Evidence as to why fluoride should be in the water is overwhelming, but that debate—as is this debate—is important because it goes to prevention. Equally important, as members of Parliament, is talking to members of our community, our families and organisations in the community, and sending them material about these types of issues, particularly macular degeneration. I found out about this disease through the Macular Degeneration Foundation sending material to my electorate office. Before that, I had heard of it but I had never really taken the time to consider it.

I thank every member who made a significant contribution to this debate. In anticipation, I thank every member of this Parliament who will spread the word and support the work of the Macular Degeneration Foundation in New South Wales and in Australia. I again thank Dr Paul Beaumont, who has been a leading expert in this field in Australia and now world wide. Most importantly, I thank him for sharing his talents world wide. This has been a significant debate in this House. One reason why this House exists is to discuss these important issues, and hopefully this matter will get attention.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

### **CARY STREET, TORONTO**

**Mr GREG PIPER** (Lake Macquarie) [11.13 a.m.]: I move:

That this House:

- (1) notes that Cary Street, Toronto, carries a daily traffic volume approaching 30,000 vehicles;
- (2) notes that Cary Street, Toronto, is part of Main Road 217 and State Route 133;
- (3) notes that acquisition has been finalised on all but one of the properties necessary to accommodate road widening;
- (4) calls on the Government to expedite improvements to Cary Street.

Main Road 217, which is signposted as route 133, is the major State road servicing residents in the Lake Macquarie electorate. It connects Morisset to Toronto, Speers Point and beyond, including the suburbs of Arcadia Vale, Rathmines, Balmoral, Buttaba, Awaba, Blackalls Park, Bolton Point, Bonnells Bay, Booragul, Coal Point, Cooranbong and Fassifern, and further to the south the Morisset peninsula, which has some 11 localities, Wangi Wangi, Woodrising, Wyee and the growth area of southern Lake Macquarie. It is the only alternative to the limited access F3, the only direct connection between many suburbs and the major route for many commuters.

The western side of Lake Macquarie has a significant population, which is set to grow significantly over the next 25 years, in particular to the south around Morisset, Cooranbong and Wyee. Growth in those areas has been strong for some years, but it has been significantly boosted and will be ongoing under the Lower Hunter regional strategy. Infrastructure and services for current demand and future growth should be provided sooner rather than later, and addressing an existing urgent problem, such as Cary Street, is an obvious place to

start. The short stretch of Cary Street between The Boulevarde and Bay Street has five intersections within 400 metres and it becomes rapidly congested due to the lack of dedicated turning lanes, the merging of lanes—both northbound and southbound—and apparently the poor phasing of traffic signals. In peak periods and at many other times, this strip is subject to gridlock, with the intersections holding up enough traffic to block one another.

Roads and Traffic Authority figures show an average daily usage of 26,000 for the section of Main Road 217 immediately north of Bay Street, but this would exclude traffic exiting Cary Street to The Boulevarde, Thorne Street, James Street, Donnelly Avenue, Victory Parade and Bay Street. Properties needed for the widening of this section of Cary Street are already substantially in public ownership, with the frontage of only one property yet to be acquired to allow this work to proceed. This property was relatively recently redeveloped in a configuration that will allow the Cary Street frontage to be acquired. As no action has been taken to acquire this small parcel, I can only surmise that it is a deliberate action so that it remains an impediment to doing the job. This traffic bottleneck is close to being solved and it should be a simple matter to make the next big step forward. It is expected that intersections in built-up areas will cause delays, but this stretch of Cary Street has an unacceptable effect on journey times. At the most congested time during the morning peak, traffic can be banked up a further 400 metres southward to Excelsior Parade.

Cary Street simply does not meet the needs of motorists and the situation is becoming increasingly worse. Most worryingly, time pressures created by this bottleneck exacerbate the inadequacy of the road and result in a very high level of risk-taking and dangerous driving behaviour. This is borne out by the high number of collisions in this short stretch of road. The Main Road 217 Route Development Study carried out by the Snowy Mountains Engineering Corporation in 1996 identified this particular section of Cary Street as one of two problem sites on Main Road 217, with crash rates above the State average. The widening of Cary Street at this location fits with the study's recommendations on a route from Toronto to Fennell Bay. Since the time of that study, accident rates have continued to increase. For the section of Cary Street in central Toronto, the number of major crashes—and please note that these are major accidents—has increased from 13 in 2006 to 19 in 2007 and 21 in 2008, which clearly shows an upward trend. The most recent data I have confirms 64 major traffic crashes in the period from January 2006 to July 2009.

The last substantial improvement to the alignment and carriageways of Main Road 217 was the Five Islands Road, officially opened in March 2007. In 2000, while planning the Five Islands project, the Roads and Traffic Authority claimed the following as benefits: decreased travel times and increased travel efficiency, reduced vehicle operating costs, improved connectivity throughout a region characterised by a dispersed settlement pattern, improved safety through reduction in accidents, and increased accessibility between Toronto and Newcastle. The same five criteria highlight the ways in which the Toronto section of Main Road 217 currently fails the residents of Lake Macquarie and detracts from their quality of life. The Roads and Traffic Authority also said of the Five Islands project that the improvements to the road would generate economic growth in communities along the western shore of Lake Macquarie through influencing traffic flows to future growth areas. That future growth has now arrived.

It is time for Main Road 217 to meet current demands. When planning the Five Islands Road, the Roads and Traffic Authority anticipated that traffic volume would grow at 1.6 per cent per annum from 1996 to 2009, in line with historic growth from 1982 to 1995. This may have been a valid view back in 2000, but in 2011 it clearly does not match the rapid residential growth that is occurring and has been recognised by the Lower Hunter regional strategy. Late last year, the Roads and Traffic Authority completed a resurfacing project at this location with a reconfiguration of turning lanes and re-phasing of traffic lights. The result initially drew a hostile response from a number of residents and at best could be described as failing to improve the situation. Operating within the existing space constraints renders substantial improvement impossible.

In terms of Roads and Traffic Authority projects, this is a relatively simple project that can be commenced with the acquisition of one parcel of land. The dissatisfaction of local residents with traffic problems here is exacerbated since the conditions can be remedied quite easily by road widening, allowing for dedicated storage and turning lanes and reducing the need for lanes to merge in a constrained circumstance. This work would reduce the number of motor vehicle accidents, improve traffic flows generally, fit with future planning to extend road duplication to Fennell Bay and, most importantly, reduce the risk to pedestrians crossing a main road. Cary Street, from the intersection at The Boulevarde through to Bay Street, is an unnecessarily complex section of road. It is a bit of a dog's breakfast that puts car occupants and pedestrians at risk due to growing car numbers, numerous intersections and driveways, poorly phased traffic lights and the

need to merge lanes in a complex environment. Rather than tinkering at the edges any further with signage and line markings, I urge the Government to allocate funds in this year's budget to allow commencement of a proper upgrade as a long-term solution for the problems at this section of Cary Street.

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

### **CONDUCT OF MAGISTRATE BRIAN MALONEY**

**Mr Greg Smith, by leave, tabled:**

Report of an Inquiry by a Conduct Division of the Judicial Commission of New South Wales in relation to His Honour Magistrate Brian Maloney, dated 6 May 2011.

Copy of the Judgement of Justice Clifton Hoeben of the Supreme Court in the case of *Maloney v The Honourable Michael Campbell, QC, and others*, dated 24 May 2011.

Submission on behalf of Magistrate Brian Maloney, dated 25 May 2011, in response to the report of the Conduct Division of the Judicial Commission of New South Wales.

**Ordered to be printed and published on motion by Mr Greg Smith.**

### **CONDUCT OF MAGISTRATE BRIAN MALONEY**

#### **Ministerial Statement**

**Mr GREG SMITH** (Epping—Attorney General, and Minister for Justice) [11.14 a.m.], by leave: Members would be aware that I have recently tabled a report of the Conduct Division of the Judicial Commission of New South Wales in relation to Magistrate Jennifer Betts. Members may be aware that Magistrate Brian Maloney is also the subject of a report of the Conduct Division and that this matter has been the subject of recent proceedings before the Supreme Court of New South Wales. Today I table both the Conduct Division report and a document prepared on behalf of Magistrate Maloney at my invitation, being the Magistrate's response to the report.

The report of the Conduct Division, dated 6 May 2011, found a number of complaints against Magistrate Maloney to be partially substantiated, and also found that he had breached an undertaking given by him in 1999, but that the breaches were substantially caused by his Bipolar II disorder. The Conduct Division found that Magistrate Maloney is and will remain incapacitated for the performance of judicial duties by his Bipolar II disorder and that the matters referred to in its report could justify parliamentary consideration of his removal from office on the grounds of proved incapacity.

I have previously outlined for the benefit of members the procedures for investigating complaints against judicial officers as provided for under the Judicial Officers Act 1986. Relevantly, part 6 of that Act sets out the procedures to be followed when a complaint is made in relation to a judicial officer. The function of the Conduct Division is to conduct an examination of complaints referred to it by the Judicial Commission. For this purpose it may initiate such investigations into the subject matter of the complaint as it thinks appropriate. The jurisdiction of the Conduct Division is not disciplinary; it is protective and is designed to protect the public from judicial officers who are found to have misbehaved, rendering them unfit for office, or who are suffering from incapacity and therefore are unable to discharge the duties of office. It also protects the judiciary from unwarranted intrusions into judicial independence.

If the Conduct Division is of the opinion that a judicial officer about whom a complaint has been made may be physically or mentally unfit to exercise efficiently the functions of a judicial office, the Conduct Division may also request the officer to undergo a medical or psychological examination. If the Conduct Division decides that a complaint is wholly or partially substantiated, it may form an opinion that the matter may justify parliamentary consideration of the removal of the judicial officer from office. If it forms such an opinion, the Conduct Division must present a report to the Governor setting out its findings of fact and opinion as to whether the matter could justify parliamentary consideration of the removal of the judicial officer from office.

Section 41 of the Judicial Officers Act 1986 and section 53 of the New South Wales Constitution Act 1902 provide that a judicial officer may only be removed from office on the grounds of misbehaviour or

incapacity. The provisions of the New South Wales Constitution Act 1902 cannot be invoked unless and until the Conduct Division of the Judicial Commission of New South Wales has made a finding that the matter could justify parliamentary consideration of the removal of the judicial officer from office. Under the New South Wales Constitution Act 1902, a holder of judicial office can be removed from office by the Governor on an address from both Houses of Parliament in the same session seeking removal on the grounds of proven misbehaviour or incapacity.

For the assistance of members, I will now provide an overview of the factual context of the Conduct Division's report. The Conduct Division considered a number of complaints relating to incidents that occurred between 2002 and 2010. The Conduct Division was requested to consider these complaints having regard to the undertakings given by Magistrate Maloney to the Conduct Division in respect of his conduct referred to in an earlier report from 1999. That undertaking was that he not be loquacious, not interrupt solicitors, and not introduce matters reflecting his personal experience; and be more judicial and allow matters to run their course without interfering. The Conduct Division accepted that Magistrate Maloney's inappropriate behaviour had been substantially caused by his Bipolar II disorder.

However, the Conduct Division expressed the view that if Magistrate Maloney continues as a magistrate there is a very real risk that he will suffer hypomanic attacks, or mood changes, which will result in events such as those reflected in the complaints considered by the Conduct Division. The report of the Conduct Division stated that the likelihood of such attacks or changes, taken together with their probable consequences, constitute an unacceptable risk that would have to be taken for Mr Maloney to continue as a magistrate. The Conduct Division found that Magistrate Maloney is and will remain incapacitated for the performance of the office of magistrate and formed the opinion that that incapacity could justify parliamentary consideration of the removal of Mr Maloney from office on the ground of proved incapacity.

Magistrate Maloney recently brought proceedings in the Supreme Court seeking a declaration that the decision of the Conduct Division and Judicial Commission that he is incapacitated for the performance of the office of magistrate is invalid and an order quashing this decision, and a declaration that the act of the Conduct Division and the Judicial Commission in referring its report to the Government of New South Wales is invalid. The case was restricted to issues of law arising under administrative law principles. The judgement of the court was that the errors of law identified had not been made out and the court dismissed the summons. Also tabled is a copy of the judgement.

The court had previously lifted a restraining order preventing me from tabling the report of the Conduct Division in both Houses of Parliament. The Judicial Officers Act requires that the report be tabled as soon as practicable and I meet that obligation in tabling the report today. I will shortly give notice of a motion to invite Mr Maloney to appear at the bar of the House to show cause why Parliament should not request the Governor to remove him from office. I ask members of the House to consider in detail the report of the Conduct Division.

**Mr PAUL LYNCH** (Liverpool) [11.30 a.m.]: I note with regret the tabling by the Attorney General of the report of the Conduct Division of the Judicial Commission concerning Magistrate Maloney, his response and the Supreme Court judgement by Justice Cliff Hoeben. Judicial officers can be removed only by an address of both Houses of Parliament. That stems from the Act of Settlement 1700 and is entrenched in section 53 of our Constitution following the 1995 referendum. The infrequency of these events underlines just how serious are the matters that will now be for consideration by this House and the other place. They are very serious in their individual impact on the magistrate, on the magistracy generally and, in a sense even more importantly, on the perception of the magistracy by the community.

When I spoke briefly in relation to the tabling of the papers concerning Magistrate Betts I indicated then that I did not think these were matters for a partisan debate. I am happy to confirm that members of the Labor caucus will all be exercising a non-party vote, that is, a conscience vote, in relation to these matters. I think that is the only way of dealing with it and I suspect that is a view shared by other members of this House. Broadly, I think members will have to act, in a sense, judicially. I notice when matters concerning Justice Vince Bruce were dealt with, the then Attorney General referred to members of Parliament acting as members of a jury. Whichever analogy one wishes to use, members will have to assess carefully all the material that is in front of them, consider it very carefully and perhaps not be guided by a whole range of extraneous matters concerning various opinions expressed in the media.

The issue is very much the material in front of us and we have to make individually serious assessments about it. I apprehend from the Government that it proposes to deal with it procedurally in much the

same way that Justice Bruce's matter was dealt with; that is, the two Houses dealing with it separately. There was some suggestion in 1998 that there be a joint sitting. I think that was wrong then; I think that is not what the law requires. I assume that when the magistrates address at the bar they will not be subject to questioning. That was certainly the precedent previously and it makes sense to me for that to be the way that it is done now. As I say, it must inevitably be a matter of regret that these documents are tabled, but this is an extraordinarily serious constitutional responsibility of these Houses, which each member regards very seriously.

**Mr GREG SMITH** (Epping—Attorney General, and Minister for Justice) [11.31 a.m.], by leave: I confirm that these matters will be dealt with separately by each House and it has been made clear that Government members will have a conscience vote on this matter as well as the Magistrate Betts matter.

### 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 Coogee.

**Mr BRUCE NOTLEY-SMITH** (Coogee) [11.32 a.m.] (Inaugural Speech): I congratulate you, Madam Speaker, on being the first female Speaker of the House in its history. I stand here today truly humbled by the honour of being elected to this House as the Liberal member for Coogee. I want to acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land, but also those of Coogee, the Bidjigal people, their elders, past and present. The name "Coogee" is believed to be derived from a Bidjigal word meaning the smell of rotting seaweed. It is not the most poetic of images, but it is a description you are never likely to forget. In inaugural speeches to this House new members have waxed lyrical about the attributes of their respective electorates. Over the past few weeks I have searched high and low for that which is uniquely Coogee, and it hurts to me to confess I do not think I have found it.

Coogee being the smallest electorate in New South Wales, I considered a walk around the electorate may be beneficial in my search for inspiration for this speech. I fuelled myself with caffeine at Bazura Café next to the Coogee Surf Club. The sands of Coogee Beach were full of nippers training to take their place as lifesavers. Ross Freeman, the last Liberal to win Coogee back in 1973, was a regular at the club. I set off and glanced back out to Wedding Cake Island, just off the coast. It is a stunning sight and it protects the beach from the most violent of swells. I stopped across the road from the Coogee Bay Hotel, whose part 3A application was the source of much community angst during the election campaign, but I was pleased that our election commitment to scrap part 3A had been fulfilled.

Throughout my campaign I spoke of the pressing need to reduce the incidence of alcohol-fuelled antisocial behaviour, a problem which has plagued Coogee for many years. When I was Mayor of Randwick I called for a 1.00 a.m. lockout at Coogee pubs, and the situation has since improved. Some have cruelly suggested that the improvement is largely due to me no longer going out drinking in Coogee on Saturday nights. Be that as it may, the Liberal Party's increased move-on powers for our police and our Three Strikes and You're Out policy will further improve the situation for long-suffering Coogee residents. So I was able to tick the boxes of two of my election commitments in the first 150 metres of my walk.

Coogee Bay Road still retains the character of a small beachside village of yesteryear. It is where my grandparents, Neville and Lillian Notley-Smith, lived in the 1920s and where they opened an electrical contracting and appliance store. Neville's business went well enough for him to buy a brand new car in the mid-1930s. Every afternoon arriving home from work he would stop the car at the foot of the hill and beep the horn, and dozens of kids would run out, climb aboard and ride to the top of the street. In 1940 Neville volunteered to go and fight in the war, but was refused entry as he was considered too old at 40. This was easily fixed by going to the next recruitment post and lying about his age—a scandalous thing to do, lying about your age. I would never do that. After action in the Middle East, he was captured and spent the next three years on the Thai-Burma railway.

In Neville's absence, Lillian became the area commandant for the Voluntary Aid Detachment, assisting veterans with nursing care and first aid, and running the Randwick Municipal Council child immunisation program, a job she hated, she told me, sticking needles into toddlers every day. Little Nan, as we called her, taught me the art of bandaging and caring for a wound. Some years later, albeit for a short time, I became an ambulance officer. It was she who inspired me. Neville died just before I was born, but I was always immensely proud when people would walk up to me and ask if I was related, and then tell me how wonderful a person he was.

I return to my walking tour. I left the beach and ascended Dolphin's Point, where the stunning bronze sculpture stands in memory of the victims of the Bali bombings. Coogee lost a lot that day, and now this special place honours the memory of all those from New South Wales killed in Bali. Further up the hill sits the fine 1916 home of the Wirth family, owners of the famous Wirth's Circus that toured the country in years past. Often they would rest their circus animals, including elephants, in the grounds of the house.

My other grandfather, Allen Peisley, was as proud a railwayman as you would ever find. He spent five years of his 42-year New South Wales Railways career as the guard on the Wirth's Circus train. Pa Peisley was elected to Griffith City Council in 1949, representing the Australian Labor Party. He was a unionist, fierce anti-communist and a loyal Jack Lang man to the end, thus he became one of the strongest Liberal Party supporters you could ever meet. In fact, a Peisley ancestor served in this House in the 1860s, the son of convict parents. It was a handy fact to remind my Dad that Mum's side of the family had an elected member of Parliament and his did not. This cruel fact assisted him to open his wallet again and again to boost my campaign funds to address the imbalance. Pa Peisley taught me a lot of things, but one thing will always stick with me. "Son", he said, "whenever you've helped somebody out, forget about it straightaway, because if you think of it as a favour it means that you expect something in return."

Descending through the melaleucas to Thompson's Bay, a small inlet with fishing boats stowed upon the beach, I remember as a boy exploring the vast derelict mansion Cliffbrook that commanded views across this bay. Maybe that was what kindled my interest in the history of Coogee. I joined the Randwick and District Historical Society and teamed up with a range of community activists who campaigned to protect our natural and built environment. Nellie Peisley, or "Big Nan" as we called her, would sit for days with me at the State Library, without a word of complaint, as I pored over books on Australian history. But back to my walk: Passing the safe sheltered cove of Clovelly, I crossed the newly opened elevated walkway passing below Waverley Cemetery. It has the best ocean views for all those great Australians who lie there, such as Henry Lawson, Dorothea Mackellar and the aviation pioneer Lawrence Hargrave.

But it is time to stop for a coffee, a latte of course—it is Coogee—at relaxed Bronte Beach, home to the world's first surf lifesaving club and the favourite swimming haunt of Paul Pearce, the former member for Coogee. Paul is a good man, principled and respected by all, and I want to thank him for his genuine affection for, and his dedicated service to, our community going back over many, many years. I wish him, his partner, Ingrid, and all his family a happy and prosperous future. Passing Tamarama and its leafy gully that soars up behind me, I climbed the headland, like thousands of others do every summer, and marvelled at the Sculpture by the Sea exhibition. Coogee loves its culture—the Spot Film and Food Festival and the Australian Film Walk of Fame, Waverley and Randwick councils' literary awards, and so much more.

The long walk up Bondi Road to Bondi Junction, and the bustling mini-metropolis that has some of the finest shopping in the country, is testament to what a heavy rail line can bring. The Eastern Suburbs Railway was first considered in this House in the 1870s. Stations in Waverley, Randwick, Kingsford and beyond were planned. We are a patient people in Coogee; we are still waiting for our railway to be finished. One week after I was preselected, Bondi Junction was awash with Liberals spruiking our cause, one whole year before the election. Candidates do not win elections, campaign teams do. From the start were Young Liberals Sam Ison, John Koutsoukis, Rohan Alexander and Andrew Hay; and, of course, my trusty lieutenant for over eight years, James Farrar. The not-so-young Liberals were Nandan Wandakan, Belinda Archer, Jono Elias, Angela Burrill, Hugh Ellens and Peter Wessels, who sadly passed away during the campaign.

I want to thank my ongoing Liberal Party supporters and workers: former Senator Chris Puplick, Greg Hamilton, Patricia Peisley, Tony Gentile, Grace Guerrero, Rosemary Colman, Professor Bruce Warren, Patricia Murrell, Phillip Boyle, Christie Hamilton, and of course Dominic Kelly and the Mosman Young Liberals, for their tireless work as well as my great mate, Nick Wright, for all his incredible insights and his calming, sound advice when it was all going pear-shaped. Today Gresta Semmens has come up from Melbourne to assist me, just as she has done for every election since 1995. She is my good luck charm.

But every campaign team needs a decisive captain at the helm. I believe that if the Allies had had Bev Martin in charge, they would have won World War II within weeks. Bev moves, talks and thinks faster than the Porsche she drives. Her stamina is more than a case of energy drinks could ever deliver. I first met Bev in 1998 when I volunteered for the Coogee campaign. She is a self-made successful business woman, who has worked tirelessly for 20 years to bring Coogee back into the Liberal family. The former Liberal Mayor of Randwick, Margaret Martin, who has been a supporter and friend of mine over many years, also ran for the seat of Coogee and came to within a whisker of winning it. I thank all of you who assisted me in this campaign. And Bev, this



is as much your victory as it is mine. I left the busy Oxford Street Mall and headed for some respite amongst the tranquillity of the undulating hills and freshwater ponds of Centennial parklands. While Centennial Park, the home of our nation's federation, is not strictly in the Coogee electorate, it marks its western border.

It is the playground of my constituents—thus it should be in Coogee. Note for the next redistribution. The noise of the crowd across the road at Royal Randwick Racecourse, which is Australia's oldest and most famous racecourse, took me back within Coogee's borders. Kensington still retains its strong links to racing. Million-dollar racehorses clop along the street every morning. I joined Anzac Parade, Sydney's widest boulevard that snakes its way from the city to La Perouse. The Paragon Seafood Restaurant, which was the set for the series *Underbelly*, is just across the road in Heffron. And that great Australian actor, Roy Billing, is with us today in the gallery. Running up the hill from Anzac Parade towards that world-class medical precinct of the Prince of Wales Hospital is the University of New South Wales, Australia's finest tertiary institution. Maybe one day I will finish one of those degrees that I started there. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

Fifty years ago Sydney's last tram trundled its way past here on its final journey. When you see the thousands upon thousands of bus travellers that use this route almost every day, you know that the tram's time has come again. I campaigned to bring back light rail along this boulevard to the University of New South Wales, and I aim to see that long-held dream come true. Lunch-time in Kensington and Kingsford is always a challenge: Which Thai, Chinese, Indonesian, Mexican or Greek restaurant do you choose? The streets teem with students from all over the world. Such a diversity and critical mass of people from near or far always ensures a vibrant town centre, full of the finest authentic cuisine—and students always ensure the food remains cheap.

Heading along Rainbow Street, the southern border of Coogee, I passed my old school, Randwick Boys High. Randwick Boys was always great at rugby, but that is no surprise because Randwick's rugby team has always been the world's best. And Coogee is the home of the former Wallaby Captain, Simon Poidevin, who is here with us today in the gallery. More recently, Randwick Boys High, together with Randwick Girls High, won the New South Wales Rock Eisteddfod twice. It is little wonder, though, because Randwick Boys most famous son is Jim Sharman, director of the greatest musical ever, the *Rocky Horror Picture Show*.

Further down Rainbow Street is my family home. My parents, Alan and Gloria Notley-Smith, bought this home in the 1950s. They recently moved away, allowing a new young family to enjoy growing up there just as much as we did. My Dad, Alan, left school at 15. He applied to be a bookbinder, but they had only one position, and that was for an apprentice compositor. "That'll do", his mum told the boss, and his future was sorted. Dad thrived in the printing industry and soon bought an old pedal-powered printing machine of his own. He established his own part-time printing business and laboured long into the night in the garage. Maybe it is in his DNA, maybe it is in my DNA, but as far back as we can discover, Notley-Smiths have always been self-employed. So with a mortgage, three kids, and another one on the way, he left his job and set out on his own.

Our home was always a hive of activity, being blessed with a work-at-home dad and a stay-at-home mum. My mum, Gloria, spent her time raising her five boys, looking after her hardworking entrepreneurial husband and always volunteering at Coogee Public School where later she was made an Honorary Life Member. As we boys became teenagers, there were always unannounced guests for dinner. Mum never disappointed. "Duck down the road and get another leg of lamb, please", she would say, and the eight or nine uninvited guests were catered for with yet another roast dinner. Every one of my mates wanted my parents as theirs, they were always so welcoming. One mate of mine came to stay for a weekend and he did not leave for two years. But nothing challenges and defines a family more than adversity. When my youngest brother, Anthony, was tragically killed, just before his seventh birthday, I really learnt the true value of love and of human life. We will always miss you, Doodie.

My mum and dad are Liberal to the core, not through membership of the party but because of how they live their lives. They did not need to read Adam Smith, Mill or Menzies to know that determination, optimism and sheer hard work can deliver a life far beyond their modest expectations. No political dogma taught them that unqualified love for your family builds society's strongest bonds, no matter what the make-up of a family may be. They know that charity for fellow citizens should not come through some philosophical sense of obligation, but rather through a heartfelt sense of humanity. They know that no matter how difficult our lives become, there is always someone else who has less—someone who is doing it tougher than us. The values passed down to us from those we respect, those who live by what they say, I believe, are the strongest guide to a good life.

I am very proud of my brothers Greg, Stephen and Paul and their partners and wives Michelle, Sue and Ly. I am proud not just of what they have achieved but of the values by which they live. They will ensure that

my gorgeous nieces and nephews Lauren, Lilley, Stewart, little James and Benjamin will inherit the same. Mum and dad are nearly 80 years old, but they still spend most of their time giving to others, organising social and fundraising events at their retirement village. Thank you, mum and dad, for the trust shown and freedom given me, and for always loving me.

At the top of Rainbow Street, I had enough of walking and sat and enjoyed the spectacular view from Blenheim Park up along the coast, across the valleys to Bondi Junction and west to the university. You can almost see the entire electorate. It gives me time to thank the many other people who have assisted me to get to this place, the many members and Ministers who supported me throughout the campaign, with Jillian Skinner, Gladys Berejiklian and Mike Baird making repeat visits. Thanks also to the inspiring leadership of Barry O'Farrell. I thank my former boss Malcolm Turnbull for his support. No member is more deserving of my gratitude than the Hon. Don Harwin, MLC. I am told that he is a bit busy in the other place. Don is the President of the Legislative Council. I thank him for his friendship, his outstanding intellect and his unwavering support of me over so many years.

Thanks also go to Nick Berry, Ron and Dianne McDonald, Sally Cray, Trent Zimmerman, Dr Brian Lindsay, Simon Moore and Michael Photios, Mark Neeham, Chris Stone, Lisa-Maree Schnell, Paul Kaspar and Sam Paino. To Libby Lambert, nee Bowen, who was my closest mate and partner in crime when I was a young boy, who sadly passed away last year, thank you. I thank also my fellow councillors Ted Seng, Scott Nash, Kiel Smith, Robert Belleli and Her Worship the Mayor of Waverley, Councillor Sally Betts. Thanks to all the branch members in Coogee and beyond, to Randwick City Council General Manager, Ray Brownlee, and all 500 of council's staff and, of course, Jaymes Boland-Rudder—JBR—who is a top bloke.

I have to confess that I did not complete my walk around the electorate all in one day; my partner would burst into fits of laughter at the thought of me walking 16 kilometres. But the journey Paul Weston and I have made together is much longer. I met Paul in London 20 years ago, just weeks before I left to return to Australia after a year of backpacking. I only got as far as Bangkok when I was on the phone sobbing that I missed him and convinced him to come to Australia. He arrived two months later. We were just a couple of kids. I set up my business a couple of years later, and Paul went to law school. Paul encouraged me to run for council when the opportunity arose. He and I ran the entire independent campaign in 1995, staying up late into the night utilising his artistic skills at designing brochures.

Politics is always hardest for politician's partners. They put so much of their lives into our careers, and they silently suffer the stresses and frustrations, the setbacks and the difficulties that a life in politics inevitably brings. After a long day of campaigning, Paul and I would sit on the balcony with a glass of wine and judge the success of the day by the number of times we broke up. If we broke up only three times, that day was a pretty good day. Just as no parent deserves a child like me, nor does anyone deserve a partner like me. Any achievement of mine over the last 20 years has been in partnership with him. I stand in the shadow cast by Paul's amazing talent and intellect. I am dwarfed by his clarity of thought, compassion and honesty. I am engulfed by his love, his loyalty and affection.

So much needs to be done in New South Wales to make it the place we all know it can be. I bring to this House experience, strong views and sound ideas for reform in this State. I recently received an SMS from an old customer of my cleaning business. It said, "Darling, I have just updated my phone contacts. You've gone from Bruce my cleaner, to Bruce my mayor, to Bruce my member." It was a short, humorous message, but one that speaks volumes of the opportunity that this great State offers all those who persevere. Today I have chosen not to rake over the past 16 years; the people of New South Wales said it all on 26 March. For now, this is the time to offer my constituents, those who have placed their trust in me to represent their interests in this House, my deepest appreciation, and give them my word that I will tirelessly discharge my duty with integrity, honesty and enthusiasm.

My journey across Coogee turned up nothing unique. Other electorates have a university, rugged coastal scenery, sparkling beaches and sheltered coves, a racecourse, a major hospital stunning vistas, great shopping and restaurants, world-class rugby teams, multicultural populations and proud public schools. Perhaps none of these things matter. Electorates may or may not be showpieces in the eyes of others but, most importantly, they are our home. Home is a place to feel safe and comfortable, to raise our family and to share life's experiences with those we love. It is a place where we can work and prosper, become part of a community, contribute to that community, a place to grow old and recall memories. Home is where we are free to be ourselves. Whether you have recently arrived or have lived in Coogee for decades, it is my job to ensure that Coogee remains the best home we could ever wish for because Coogee is my home.

**Mr JOHN BARILARO** (Monaro) [12.01 p.m.] (Inaugural Speech): Mr Deputy-Speaker, congratulations on your election and also congratulations to the Hon. Shelley Hancock on being elected Speaker of the Fifty-fifth Parliament of New South Wales. It should be noted that the Coalition did not require affirmative action to appoint the State's first female Speaker. It is very humbling to make my first speech in this Chamber in the company of my parliamentary colleagues, my dearest friends, my hardworking campaign team and my loving family. When my parents, Domenico and Anna Maria Barilaro, arrived in Australia from Italy in 1968 they would never have imagined that one of their children would be standing in the oldest Parliament in Australia delivering his inaugural speech. I acknowledge their sacrifice and courage, heading to a foreign land with no family support and an unfamiliar language, but with a dream, hope and desire for a better life. Mum and dad, thank you.

My parents are fundamental in my being in this Chamber today. My father, whom I admire, has always been my hero and, as a small boy, all I wanted was to be just like him. He is a hardworking and selfless man, who will always be characterised by his generous nature. My mother, who has always put the family first and is the foundation of the Barilaro clan, continues to support all her children in reaching their goals. They both instilled in me the value of family and community service and also their thirst for building a better life here in Australia. The family discussions and arguments around the kitchen table over a plate of mum's lasagne certainly gave me an early baptism in politics, even though not quite the Bear Pit of this great place. I am very fortunate to have been elected to represent one of the most beautiful and diverse regions in the State. Banjo Paterson's iconic poem *The Man from Snowy River* best sums up the Monaro electorate:

And down by Kosciusko, where the pine-clad ridges raise  
Their torn and rugged battlements on high,  
Where the air is clear as crystal, and the white stars fairly blaze  
At midnight in the cold and frosty sky,

But beyond its rugged beauty, the Monaro is about the fighting and pioneering spirit of the people and the strong sense of community and mateship. I am blessed to call Monaro my home and honoured to have been sent to this place by the people of my community. At the apex of the electorate is Queanbeyan, a vibrant and culturally diverse city where the vision for the nation's capital was cultivated—a place I call home. Heading east is Bungendore, a growing major tourist centre expanding rapidly in recent years, popular with visitors from Canberra. As we continue on the Kings Highway we find historic Braidwood, the first town to receive heritage listing, and a lovely reminder of days gone by. Heading south down the rolling hills of the Monaro plains is the heart of the Monaro and capital of the State's alpine area, Cooma—an Aboriginal name meaning "open country"—and the gateway to Australia's winter playground, the majestic Snowy Mountains.

At the foot of the mountain is of course picturesque Jindabyne, beautifully framed by Lake Jindabyne. And in the manner of all things Australian, we find Adaminaby, home of the big trout that now appears on the back of Redhead matches as part of the company's "Australia's Big Things" theme that pays homage to some of the country's most iconic attractions. And we could not talk about the Monaro without mentioning platypus country in the hardworking town of Bombala, a town that embodies the fighting spirit of the Monaro, resilient in the face of the many broken promises and setbacks of the past 16 years but ready for a Government that will back the strong timber industry and get on with creating jobs. Monaro is also the home of the mighty Snowy Hydro scheme, a symbol of what this country can achieve. A symbol of vision, leadership and community banding together for the enrichment of this country—unlike the short-sighted policies and wasted opportunities of past governments, with one eye on the election ahead. In the words of James Freeman Clarke, an American preacher and author:

A politician thinks of the next election—a statesman, of the next generation

Many people have asked me why I would leave a successful small business and become a member of Parliament. My answer is that the influence of my family, a career in small business, my community service through my passion for football—go the mighty Monaro Panthers—and kids and time as a local councillor have contributed towards developing a desire to serve the community at a higher level. But they are the positive drivers in my life. The negative drivers can be summed up as follows: I have had a gutful of a Government, led by the vocal minority, selling out our hopes and dreams; a Government that was infected by a corrupt culture, which was attacking and abandoning the virtues and qualities of this once-great State.

When I look across this Chamber I struggle to find a politician on the other side who will take responsibility for driving this State to its knees or one who is accountable to New South Wales families and not one who cowers to his or her factional masters. Why did those politicians who had their hands on the controls

for so long keep looking away as prosperity was squandered and our future abandoned? Unfortunately for many on the Labor side, they adhered too closely to the words of former New South Wales Labor Premier Jack Lang, who said:

Always back the horse named self-interest, son. It'll be the only one trying.

Perhaps if they could think back to when this country was built, on honesty, integrity and hard work, they would have done the job they were elected to do. I was ashamed of a Government that was so self-serving, so caught up in the power struggle that it did not realise the impact it had on the good men and women of our great State. On 26 March 2011 the people of my electorate endorsed my vision for the Monaro and gave me a mandate to make it a reality. My simple vision is for a more prosperous, healthier and happier Monaro. I have a vision of a Monaro where tourism is thriving, leading to prosperity and growth. My electorate is blessed with a unique tourism product that I intend to champion.

The New South Wales ski fields have been forced by successive governments to compete with one hand tied behind their back. My vision is to make the New South Wales ski fields number one again, by removing barriers, aligning government policy and industry opportunity, creating a level playing field and engaging all stakeholders to develop a strategic plan to deliver a world-class alpine experience to rival the best ski resorts in the world. I wish to see the Monaro's farming region once again given the respect and support it so rightly deserves. We need to tackle issues around land use, native vegetation, biosecurity, water and infrastructure.

I look forward to the review of the Livestock Health and Pest Authorities boards, which will restore the confidence of our farming sector. I am excited about communities having a say in the delivery of health care through local district boards, where election promises such as fixing issues at Queanbeyan Hospital, a satellite dialysis centre for Cooma and new building works at the Multi-Purpose Service in Braidwood are being driven by the community. I am determined to address issues around infrastructure for roads, sports fields, and educational and community facilities, with a new emphasis on regional communities given priority and returning more planning powers to communities by empowering and supporting local government.

I am a steadfast supporter of government easing, through good government policy and strong fiscal management, the cost-of-living pressures that have stretched the family budget to breaking point. That may at times require tough decisions, but there will be long-lasting benefits for the future. The overwhelming message I received from the people of Monaro is that they are passionate about their community but they were discouraged by a Government that just stopped listening. They understand the local issues and they want to be part of the solution. I do understand that government is seen at times to hardly ever be the solution to the problem but quite often the cause, but this can change by allowing common sense to prevail and restoring accountability and transparency to government.

As I campaigned, I was inspired to find out about the passionate work and efforts of groups such as Home in Queanbeyan, the Australian Capital Territory Eden-Monaro Cancer Support Group, the Cooma-Monaro Renal Dialysis Group, the Monaro Early Intervention Group, the Queanbeyan Children's Special Needs Group and the Doug Smith Committee—to name just a few—that are finding local solutions where government had not and are ready to partner with government to continue this good work. I also met with many great local businesses in the Monaro that are passionate about their communities. As a small business owner, I have a great deal of empathy for farmers and small business people, as I have experienced the pressure of the bank knocking at the door and having your home and livelihood on the line, all in the name of being part of the thriving small business economy, which is so important to many regional communities.

I see small business as the engine room for growth within the Monaro electorate and this State. I will be a strong advocate for the local chambers of commerce, the business enterprise centres, industry associations, tourism, farmers and all small business, because if they are allowed to prosper, the region and State will prosper. I welcome our election commitment of giving small business a real voice with the appointment of a small business commissioner as well as government leading the business sector through a decade of decentralisation and our Jobs Action Plan. Red tape needs to be slashed and disincentives removed that will allow small business to do what it does best: create prosperity and jobs.

Even though the Leader of the Opposition claims to represent the working class and blue collar workers, who are the heart and soul of small business, I do not believe he understands the honest and trusting relationships that small business owners have with their staff. He is happy to criticise successful local small

businesses, those who are proud to be local and Australian, those who give back so much to their community and those who offer their employees more than just a job. In an article in the *Queanbeyan Age* of 26 March 2010 the Leader of the Opposition, for petty political advantage, attacked my candidacy by attacking my business and its integrity—something that I can and have rebuked. To actually attack the integrity, work and pride of my workers is shameful.

The fundamental threat to business and industry is the issue of the skills crisis we are facing in this country today. Many young people are turning away from trade apprenticeships. The financial burden has become such a disincentive that many apprentices just do not last. Unfortunately, the rates of pay for apprentices have not changed in line with the shifting profile of an apprentice. They are older, most have large financial commitments and many no longer live at home; all these factors have made the completion of an apprenticeship almost financially impossible.

If we do not address this issue we will continue to lose industry overseas, as well as lose valuable skill sets that we will never be able to replace. It is time to draw a line in the sand and get rid of the antiquated apprentice award system, as well explore a Higher Education Contribution Scheme style loan system to cover study, accommodation and personal equipment costs during the term of an apprenticeship. We need to look at the way training is delivered and we need to be flexible in regional communities in how training can be provided locally. We have a responsibility to get this right for the sake of Australian industry and our kids.

My background in manufacturing energy-efficient building products, and my passion and interest in innovation and discovering practical measures in sustainable building practice drive me to believe that we can be leaders in industry and we do not need to sell our jobs offshore. It is this same passion for sustainability that is core to my approach for the environment of being green, not extreme. We need a balanced approach in caring for the environment but not obstructing the production of food and fibre, industry and destroying jobs through another big fat tax, which is an attack on many families and regional communities.

I am also concerned with the over-zealousness of the National Parks and Wildlife Service over national parks in the electorate. National parks should not only be well managed but be open for everyone to enjoy, not only for appeasing the chardonnay socialist types in Balmain who only ski in Saint Moritz. I value our Federation and the sovereignty of New South Wales. I honour and respect the Australian way of life and will fight to uphold our traditions, symbols and system of government. I am conservative by nature and I stand in this Parliament as a strong advocate for the family unit, Christian values and a fair go for all. I was taught at an early stage of my life about the value of respect and the need to be honest, reliable and hardworking—values I bring with me to this job. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

At this point I pay tribute to two former members for Monaro—Peter Cochran and Peter Webb. Both were very good local members who worked very hard and achieved a great deal for the Monaro electorate, and it was disappointing that they were not given the acknowledgement that they rightly deserved by members of the Labor Party. I also commend the former Federal member for Eden-Monaro, Gary Nairn, whose record of achievement was remarkable and his support invaluable. He is here in the gallery today. Unlike previous practice, I acknowledge the former member, Steve Whan, for his service and work as the member for Monaro over the past eight years, as well as the sacrifice of his family, especially his wife Cherrie, as it is a team effort. I wish them all the best in their future.

Many people have contributed to The Nationals' fantastic win in Monaro on 26 March, but I acknowledge three strong women who have been part of this journey, the highs and lows of a 12-month campaign and my life. First of the divas three is Melinda Pavey, who has painstakingly represented the Monaro electorate as the duty member of the Legislative Council for the past eight years, with a real enthusiasm for the people of Monaro. It was the work that Melinda did that laid the foundations and formed the relationships that made my job as a candidate easier—all of this at the cost of time away from her family, a sacrifice worthy of note. Most importantly, she always believed in me, regardless of the polls or what she was being told. Melinda Pavey is one of the reasons I am part of the strong Nationals team of today. Thank you.

Also, to our extraordinarily hardworking State Chairman in Christine Ferguson and State Director Ben Franklin and his team, Greg, Nathan, Felicity and Laura, just to name the few whom we pestered over the course of the campaign: Your guidance, wisdom and leadership is the reason I can stand here today as a member of an O'Farrell-Stoner Government. Thank you. I pay special gratitude to my friend George Lemon, a long-serving member of The Nationals, who encouraged me to run for State Parliament, seek nomination for The Nationals and stayed firm with me on this very long journey. Be it our passion for football, the council election of 2008 or

all things Nationals, you have been there with me. Thank you. It was a very easy decision to join The Nationals, the grand party of New South Wales politics—one with a platform, philosophy and ideals that sit well with my own beliefs. Perhaps the following helps sum up why The Nationals are the party of choice for so many. It is part of an extract that was published in the *Sydney Morning Herald*:

Opponents of the present Labor Government must find some common progressive ground of union, not a confession of faith on every conceivable political theme, but a fighting platform, dealing with essentials, and offering sane and definite progressive legislation, in contrast to the ill-considered experiments with which we are further threatened.

Much that the Labor party professes to want to do must be done. The trouble is that in doing it present Governments adopt methods which lower the tone of public life, which weaken individual sense of social responsibility, which kill initiative and enterprise, and which intensify sentiments of intolerance and class hatred.

Now one may have thought that this extract was about the previous Labor Government, but it was not. It was actually penned by the rascal George Beeby, a patriot of our party, back on 26 April 1915. Unfortunately for the Labor Party, the extract indicates that not much has changed for Labor in 96 years—a party that has learned so little from its past mistakes, a party that continues to fail the very people it claims to represent. I acknowledge The Nationals' supreme historian, Paul Davy, for this background information. I also acknowledge the work contributed to my campaign by my hardworking campaign committee: Emma Watts; George Lemon; Peter Langhorne; Jen Southwell; my sister, Angelina Pavan; Henry Pike; Aaron McDonnell; Erin Adams; Beth Wright; Andrew Heath; Alistair Coe, MLA, and in particular someone who sadly is not here today, Gaye White, who kept me going and whom I affectionately now call my "campaign mum".

Most importantly, I must pay tribute to the second of the divas three of my campaign, Emma Watts, for her leadership and commitment as my campaign director. She is a woman of strength and integrity, a woman who gave up part of her life over the past two years for me and this campaign but, more widely, her commitment to The Nationals in her role as the Vice State Chairman. She is selfless and deserves special thanks. Thank you. I am also indebted to the members and branches of The Nationals and the Liberal Party both in the Monaro and the Australian Capital Territory, who proved that The Nationals and the Liberals can work together. They are an example of the spirit behind the O'Farrell-Stoner Coalition.

I pay tribute to the hundreds of volunteers who helped me in the campaign, with special thanks to Richard Coventry, Sam Jackson Hope, James Howlin, Jeff McCormack, David Pavan, Alex Tine, Neil Thompson, Andrew Constance MP, Niall Blair MLC, Senator John Williams, Councillor Bronny Taylor, Sue Lichfield, my brother Tony Barilaro, Gary Wadsworth, Velice Trajanoski, Ilije Tomeski, Duncan Osborne, Jesse Robinson, Jimmy Kiplox, Elizabeth Biggs, Kerry and Merry Watts, and of course Rachael and her team from Quizine Cafe and Catering; and to the wider membership of the Monaro Nationals, who kept the faith, who turned up to shows, stands and meetings and who are the reason why our party can proudly celebrate more than 90 years of existence. The party in New South Wales was formed in 1919 by representatives of the Farmers and Settlers Association. Their platform was to create a progressive party, unlike the project-centralist Labor Party that was controlled by union organisations, and that platform is as relevant today as it was then.

To my party leader and a good man, Andrew Stoner: Thank you for your trust, support and leadership. I am proud to serve with you. Premier Barry O'Farrell, thank you for your leadership, strength and support of a united Coalition, backing The Nationals in Monaro and your personal belief in me. Thank you also to my parliamentary Liberal and Nationals colleagues who made the trek to the Monaro in support of the campaign. There are far too many to name, but I give special acknowledgement to the Hon. Jillian Skinner for the many trips to the Monaro and the Deputy Leader of the New South Wales Nationals, Adrian Piccoli, whom I count as a friend and who is part of the ever-growing Italian faction of the National party, which now stands at two—it maybe two and half if we count Melinda Pavey, because she is an Italian wannabe.

Most of all, I thank the people in the Monaro electorate for their vote of confidence. My commitment to them is that I will fight to ensure that their voice will be heard, their concerns addressed and their hopes realised. Most importantly, I would not be here today without the amazing support of my loving family. To my parents, my brothers, Sandro and Tony, but most importantly my sister, Angelina, and her husband, David, who always without reservation are there for Deanna and me. At times I do not quite thank them adequately. My father-in-law and his wife, uncles, aunties, cousins and all the extended family, thank you. You are all very special to me. A special thanks to my uncle Frank, who voted Liberal and Nationals for the very first time, which almost killed him.

To my precious daughters, Alessia my eldest, my angel, a shining light with such a gentle and generous soul, and my youngest, Domenica, my little princess with a heart of gold, a spirit so strong and a smile so soft.

Thank you so much for your sacrifice, support and love. I am so very proud of you and today I stand here because of you, and as a symbol that anything is possible. Do not settle for anything less than what your heart desires. Dream big, aim high, because anything is possible and I have no doubt that you, too, will leave your mark in this world.

Last but not least, the third of the divas three and the pillar of my existence is my beautiful wife, Deanna, whom I love and cherish; a woman who continually allows me to follow my dreams and desires, a woman who has been my foundation of strength and a woman without whom my life thus far would not be. She is a wife, a mother, a daughter, a sister, a friend, a soccer coach and a business woman. She is a strong woman who, in the face of adversity, still stands strong with her head held high and is the essence of many women and values that should be celebrated by society today. Finally, to all members of the O'Farrell-Stoner Government who have been given a vast mandate from the people of New South Wales, the job ahead is immense and fixing the damage of 16 years of Labor will take time. This sentiment was well embraced in the words of President John F. Kennedy:

All of this will not be finished in the first one hundred days, nor will it be finished in the first one thousand days, nor in the life of this administration, nor even perhaps in our lifetime on this planet. But let us begin.

I am looking forward to forming lifelong friendships with members of the Coalition, but particularly new members of The Nationals class of 2011, good men and women, champions and strong advocates of their communities—Leslie Williams, Troy Grant, Paul Toole, Stephen Bromhead, Andrew Gee, Kevin Anderson and our new upper House members the Hon. Sarah Mitchell and the Hon. Niall Blair—and members of my staff, Henry Pike, Romney White and Emily Sharp. I conclude by reminding everyone in this House: Let us not lose sight of what we have been elected to do on behalf of our communities. The job of a local member is simple: Speak with the people's voice and promote the vision designed by them. Our job is to enhance the communities and lives of those who live in this great State and we cannot become skewed by the game of politics or become indulgent in its pomp and ceremony. In light of this, let me finish with this quote:

Being in politics is like being a football coach. You have to be smart enough to understand the game, and dumb enough to think it's so important.

Thank you and God bless.

## **CRIMES AMENDMENT (MURDER OF POLICE OFFICERS) BILL 2011**

### **Agreement in Principle**

**Mr GREG SMITH** (Epping—Attorney General, and Minister for Justice) [12.25 p.m.]: I move:

That this bill be now agreed to in principle.

As the bill was introduced in the other place on 26 May 2011 and is in the same form, I refer members to the second reading speech that appears at pages 3 to 5 of the *Hansard* galley for that day. I commend the bill to the House.

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

## **INFRASTRUCTURE NSW BILL 2011**

### **Agreement in Principle**

**Debate resumed from 1 June 2011.**

**Mrs BARBARA PERRY** (Auburn) [12.27 p.m.]: I wish to add my voice to those of my Opposition colleagues who have spoken to the Infrastructure NSW Bill 2011 to date and who have expressed grave concerns about particular aspects of it in its current form. I share those concerns, as would our respective constituencies, should awareness of the proposed concentration of power in the hands of the Premier become widely known. Members of this House come to this House knowing that our political system is built on values that all in our society hold dear and which they, as political representatives, should be vigorously committed to

protecting and promoting. It is an instinct that should arise naturally within us all, most strongly at times that potential threats to the democratic and transparent nature of the highest form of political governance in our State become apparent.

The bill, as it stands, represents such a threat, and it does so on a scale of considerable magnitude. I urge the House to consider that the proposed Infrastructure NSW agency is to be established with express authority to unilaterally control projects in excess of \$100 million. There is no doubt that governments and Oppositions, individual members of Parliament and everyone else wants to see infrastructure in local communities—and that is fine. But let us be clear about what is happening here. We are talking about very significant sums of money and State resources climbing into the hundreds of millions, and perhaps beyond—such will be the reach and power of this agency. Accordingly, it would seem to me that the responsibility weighs heavily. So let us consider this matter with the great prudence and sound judgement that it deserves.

On 26 May the Premier stood before this House and stated in his second reading speech that the bill would create an independent agency that would, "Take the politics out of infrastructure decision-making and put infrastructure planning and decision-making where it should be, in the hands of experts." That is a statement that I may wish to take on face value, but to do so would be to neglect my responsibilities as an elected member of this House and to betray the trust placed in me by the people of Auburn. It is incumbent upon all of us to undertake our own due diligence and to determine if the promise made in this statement is reflected in the substance of the bill itself.

In addressing this matter, I begin by referring to the question of public scrutiny, as this aspect is of prime significance in determining the strength of the democratic fabric and intent of the bill. The sole provision for public scrutiny can be found in the vagaries of the Premier's adopted strategies and plans. That is, public scrutiny and public opinion become activated only after the point at which the Premier has already decided what he wants to do. According to the proposed bill, the express will of the people, garnished through the public debate and discussion, will be submitted to the Premier for consideration and adoption with or without amendments.

Part 4 Division 1 clause 18 and part 4 Division 2 clause 21 appear to add weight to the process of public consultation by stating that any adopted strategy, plan or statement by the agency must then be made public. However, this pretence is quickly undone by way of the following clever device that effectively neutralises the initial promises and reassurances of the bill. Part 2 clause 8 unequivocally states that should the agency not agree with the Premier's amendment "the board may advise the Premier that it does not agree with the amendment and make that advice available to the public." But the Premier made his position clear on 26 May before this House when he claimed that this provision is proof of transparency. I cannot concur with that position, nor can members on this side of the House. I urge the House to consider that the use of the words "may" and "make that advice available" is far from a sufficiently clear and binding directive that the information must be made available.

The Premier's control over the process is further heightened by his self-appointed authority to appoint a chair and non-government board members and decide upon their remuneration. Unlike the Independent Commission Against Corruption, the proposed agency will not be subject to the independence of the Governor on such critical decisions and in many other respects it appears to be very far removed from the image of an independent and accountable body as reflected in the structure of the Independent Commission Against Corruption. I note further that the proposed agency will also have the power to step in to other infrastructure projects and acquire land. In relation to sectoral plans not one of the service delivery departments such as Transport, Health, Education or Ports will be represented on the proposed agency board. One has to ask why is that so.

Additionally, the Premier intends to reserve the right to ask the proposed agency to review completed projects and to provide advice on any matter to infrastructure that the Premier requests. Part 2 clause 7 provides perhaps the most stark and explicit indication of where the ultimate power and control of the proposed agency will lie. Part 2 clause 7 clearly states that Infrastructure NSW is subject to the control and direction of the Premier in the exercise of its functions. I think that says it all.

**Mr Ray Williams:** I do too: it's called leadership.

**Mrs BARBARA PERRY:** No, the difficulty here is that the public statements are different from the intent of the bill. That is the concern here. The public statements of the Premier and the intent of the bill are



different and in fact contradictory. Therein lies my grave concern, which is shared by my Opposition colleagues, and, I hope, by every political representative in this House who loves democracy. The facts are clear. Infrastructure NSW as envisioned in the current bill will be born as an agency of tremendous power and reach affecting the everyday lives of communities across our State. It is going to decide on projects worth hundreds of millions of dollars that are essential to the very fabric and design of our suburbs, cities, regions and rural areas. I do not quibble with the fact that we need infrastructure in our communities; it is how that process operates that I quibble with.

As such, we must exercise as much caution and due diligence as we can muster in ensuring that appropriate and robust measures are put in place to protect the transparency, the accountability and the democracy of the agency. The bottom line is as simple as it is sobering. The proposed agency has the potential to become a mechanism to be used at the whim of the Premier, according to his own agenda without any effective restraint and accountability. That is the issue pure and simple. The Premier will, for all intents and purposes, be entirely at liberty to select which infrastructure projects in New South Wales should be adopted and what information is made available to the public regarding a 20-year strategy, five-year plans or sectoral plans. All that is within his power.

As the member for Auburn, today I stand here with grave concerns for my community that wants to be reassured that they are going to get fairness and equity. They want to know how decisions are going to be made. Are they going to be truly independent decisions? How are projects going to be determined and why are certain projects going to be determined the way they are? With a bill like this where the Premier can make any direction that he wishes to this body, how will they be reassured? How will they be reassured that they will get the infrastructure they need in their community?

The grave and justified concerns of the Opposition, which undoubtedly reflect the interests and concerns of the people of our State, must be allayed. Solid assurances must be given that not only pass the test now but will also stand the test of time in future, and public and parliamentary scrutiny. The bill must pass the test of the everyday man and woman, and in its current form it clearly does not. I have no doubt that were the average person made aware of the real implications of the bill they would be naturally alarmed. Unfortunately, the Government has not communicated the fact that the Premier will have all the power and Infrastructure NSW will march to his tune.

I do not know whether that is about fairness and improving infrastructure in all our communities; it sounds political to me. It does not sound like a proper process. I urge members to be mindful of their great responsibility—the responsibility we all bear to reflect the concerns, the will and the interests of our respective constituencies, and to protect the democracy and transparency of government. I hope this will be a joint venture. Accordingly I call on Government members with a conscience to join the Opposition in seriously examining the matter at hand.

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD** (Myall Lakes) [12.42 p.m.]: In speaking to the Infrastructure NSW Bill 2011 I refer first to the comments of the member for Auburn. I think she must be suffering from amnesia. Labor was in power for 16 years and completely failed to deliver infrastructure in New South Wales, so much so that on 26 March a tsunami washed the Labor Party out to sea and left the little rump we see on the Opposition benches. The member for Auburn has obviously forgotten about part 3A, the device used by Labor to garner donations to the party by approving projects in New South Wales. One of the first things we did was to do away with part 3A. With this legislation we are showing leadership and good government. I will talk about Labor's failure to deliver infrastructure projects a little later.

New South Wales lacks a dedicated statutory body to oversee infrastructure development. In June 2009 the New South Wales Liberals and Nationals committed to establishing an independently chaired body called Infrastructure NSW, through which we will raise up to \$5 billion to spend on infrastructure. As a representative of regional New South Wales I am pleased to say there is \$1.6 billion for regional New South Wales. We have been treated as second-class citizens for far too long, particularly for the last 16 years under Labor.

Infrastructure NSW will improve the identification, prioritisation and delivery of critical infrastructure across the State. Infrastructure NSW will identify public infrastructure needs, establish priorities and recommend time lines for delivery; advise on project procurement, contractual arrangements, best practice delivery and funding modes; and ensure the Government is armed with the necessary information to re-energise and deliver the State's infrastructure program. Major infrastructure projects—road and rail transport links,

energy networks, water and sewerage systems, healthcare facilities, and recreational facilities such as stadiums and parklands—are critical to the social and economic wellbeing of the community, particularly in regional New South Wales.

Infrastructure NSW is built on the successful Infrastructure Australia, Partnerships United Kingdom and Partnerships Victoria models. In other words, we are not reinventing the wheel; we are looking at best practice. Our approach to Infrastructure NSW builds on the priorities established in our economic framework, Planning for Prosperity, and social policy framework, Smarter, Stronger, Healthier, Safer. Our plan to establish Infrastructure NSW also builds on our other policy initiatives, including our plans to establish an integrated transport agency and deliver the South West and North West rail links, and to improve honesty, integrity and accountability in Government, something sadly lacking over the past 16 years. The quality of life for all New South Wales residents will improve dramatically under a New South Wales Liberal and Nationals Government, with Infrastructure NSW guaranteeing a new focus and energy on delivering infrastructure in New South Wales.

The bill delivers on the Government's commitment in the 100 Day Action Plan to create Infrastructure NSW. The Government's 100 Day Action Plan starts the change the community has called for in New South Wales. I remind members opposite of what happened on 26 March. Infrastructure NSW will provide strategic policy direction and oversight for infrastructure planning and delivery. It will monitor the implementation of key projects and ensure the effective delivery of critical infrastructure. Infrastructure NSW will improve and streamline the identification, prioritisation and delivery of critical infrastructure across the State. It will ensure that under the Liberal and Nationals Government, New South Wales can secure the maximum economic and social return available from investments in major infrastructure.

The bill establishes Infrastructure NSW as a statutory corporation and New South Wales Government agency with dedicated responsibility for infrastructure provision; and an expert board to ensure that decisions about infrastructure projects are informed by expert professional analysis and advice. Under the bill, Infrastructure NSW will prepare long-term infrastructure plans and strategies, including a 20-year State infrastructure strategy, a five-year infrastructure plan, and sectoral State infrastructure strategy statements. The 20-year State infrastructure strategy will set out and detail recommended major infrastructure projects backed by sufficient evidence and analysis to gain broad community support and confidence. For too long, Labor has been about the next election. The New South Wales Liberal and Nationals Government is about the next generation. I think we heard in the inaugural speeches today the difference between politicians and statesmen. We are looking at the generations ahead and delivering what we promised. That has been lacking for 16 years.

The five-year infrastructure plan will be detailed, fully costed and transparent—five-year infrastructure plans with projects funded in the forward estimates. Sectoral State infrastructure strategy statements will be prepared by Infrastructure NSW as required, across key economic sectors. They will set out a clear analysis of long-term requirements for a sector, and a transparent road map for infrastructure needs. Infrastructure NSW will oversight the monitoring and delivery of major infrastructure projects and may step in to deliver key projects where a project authorisation order is issued. A major infrastructure project is an infrastructure project with a value of more than \$100 million or, if it is valued at less than that amount, it is a project nominated by the Premier as a special project requiring oversight and coordination.

Infrastructure NSW will reduce the time it takes to deliver vital major projects through better planning and coordination as well as reduce delays; ensure better value for money for communities and taxpayers by minimising cost overruns and delays; restore the reputation of New South Wales as a State where the right projects are undertaken in a timely and professional manner; make decisions in the public interest and on the advice of experts but not for political purposes; attract investments in New South Wales by providing greater certainty over project delivery; and be accountable for the State Infrastructure Strategy that is tabled in Parliament and subject to debate.

Earlier I mentioned Labor's infrastructure failures. New South Wales suffers from long-term failure in infrastructure delivery due to the poor performance of the former New South Wales Labor Government. That has led to a lack of integration, poor planning, inefficiency, and unnecessary cost and budget overruns. Projects were serially delayed or were announced and then not delivered at all. The result of those failures has been increased urban congestion, communities being serviced by poor or non-existent public transport, impediments to investment jobs and economic growth, a failure to renew ageing infrastructure, and greater stress being imposed on inadequate infrastructure.

The key problems with infrastructure planning and project delivery include an absence of detailed long-term plans and a lack of consensus about the long-term requirements; failure to provide a credible

implementation program and deliver projects on time and on budget; failure to integrate strategic infrastructure planning with land use and environmental planning and failure to coordinate the provision of infrastructure with urban development; and a slow and complex major project approval process, with perceptions of political interference and inadequate public consultation. The combination and interaction of these problems has led to the failure of the current system of infrastructure delivery. Without significant structural reform that is designed to solve those problems, the malaise that has affected New South Wales for 16 years will continue. It is time we examined Labor's failures over the past 16 years. During that time Labor promised and axed 12 rail lines. The North West Rail Link was first promised in 1998 to be fully delivered by 2010.

**Mr David Elliott:** It was first promised in 1985.

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD:** Although it was first promised in 1985, it was not delivered. It was delayed in 2005 and was promised to be completed by 2017, but it has not started. It was axed in February 2008 and then unsurprisingly last year it was revived by the Keneally Government. But construction was not going to start until 2017 and commuters would not be riding on it until 2024, which would have been a whole 26 years after it was first promised. What a joke.

**ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward):** Order! The member for Cabramatta will come to order.

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD:** The South West Rail Link was first promised by Labor in December 2004. The project was costed at \$688 million and was supposed to be completed by 2012. In March 2008 Labor re-announced the South West Rail Link at a cost of \$1.36 billion. In November 2008, the South West Rail Link was axed under Labor. A year later, in November 2009, Labor re-announced the project, but the completion date had blown out by four years to 2016. Three months after that, Labor revealed that the total cost had blown out to \$2.1 billion. Under Labor, the South West Rail Link was running four years late, had tripled in cost from \$619 million in December 2004 to \$2.1 billion in December 2010, and ultimately amounted to a total cost blowout of \$1.4 billion.

**Mr David Elliott:** Disgraceful. It was virtual infrastructure only.

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD:** Yes; and of course nothing was started. Only last year the Keneally Government axed the so-called Western Metro and handed back \$80 million in funding to the Federal Government. That created history in Australia by New South Wales being the first State Government to hand back funding. That happened after Infrastructure Australia panned the New South Wales Government for the poor quality of its submissions. The submissions lacked detail on benefits and costings after 16 years of Labor playing politics with desperately needed transport infrastructure. In 1998, as part of the Action for Public Transport 2010 Plan, Labor promised to build the Chatswood to Parramatta Rail Link by 2006. Instead, Labor managed to deliver only half a rail link—three years late, and at twice the original cost.

In 2006 then Premier Iemma promised to look into a fast rail link between western Sydney and the city, the Penrith Fast Rail project, but axed it the next year. Like most of Labor's pre-election promises, it was announced prior to the election and axed after the election. The North West Metro was promised in 2008, only to be axed forcing more pain on western Sydney commuters. It was cut short to accommodate the poorly planned Rozelle Metro—a project that cost \$500 million without a sod being turned. The Hurstville to Strathfield Rail Link was promised in 1998, and where is it? It was axed. The Bondi Beach Rail Link was promised in 1998, but it was axed. It seems that 1998 was a big year. The high-speed rail link to Newcastle and the Central Coast was promised in 1998—axed; the high-speed rail link from Sutherland to Wollongong was promised in 1998—axed; the CBD-New Harbour crossing rail link was promised in 2005—axed; the CBD to Rozelle Metro was promised in 2008—axed. The Rozelle Metro was \$500 million of wasted taxpayers' money.

I will not mention the \$1 million here and another \$100 million there because what is \$600 million among friends? In 1998 Labor promised to build seven transitways but managed to deliver only 2½ transitways. The ones that Labor failed to deliver include the Parramatta to Blacktown transitway, which was promised in 1998—axed; the Parramatta to Strathfield transitway, which was promised in 1998—axed; the Penrith to St Mary's transitway, which was promised in 1998—axed; the Blacktown to Wetherill Park transitway, which was promised in 1998—axed; and the Blacktown to Castle Hill transitway, which was promised in 1998, was only half delivered, but I do not know whether what was delivered was the left half, the right half, the first half or the back half.

In relation to traffic congestion, from 2007 to 2009 traffic on the M7 increased by 13 per cent, by 9 per cent on the M2, by 6 per cent on the M4, and by 4 per cent on the M5. In 2008 average travel times in the

morning peak on the M2 were just 21 kilometres an hour, 28 kilometres an hour on the M4 and Parramatta Road, and the M5 managed to crawl at the exorbitant rate of 34 kilometres an hour. Labor promised so much that it is easy to examine other examples of failure. The Burwood railway station was announced in 2001, but it took Labor nine years to deliver it. [*Time expired.*]

**Mr JAMIE PARKER** (Balmain) [12.57 p.m.]: It is great not to be talking about Federal issues. I am delighted to speak about issues that are of great importance to my local community, infrastructure particularly. When it comes to infrastructure, the Balmain electorate seems to have been the epicentre for so much of it—the vast majority of which was unwanted, disorganised, hopelessly implemented, and in fact a gratuitous waste of taxpayers' money. Many members know that the Rozelle Metro was proposed to extend to the suburb of Rozelle. I was delighted to be joined by the Premier, Barry O'Farrell, and by the current Minister for Transport, Gladys Berejiklian, on several occasions at several rallies and public meetings to discuss the Rozelle Metro.

**Mr David Elliott:** It was the smartest thing you have ever done, Jamie.

**Mr JAMIE PARKER:** And there is more to come. That project was not supported by planners, members of the community or the transport industry. The Rozelle Metro was proposed without first going to Cabinet. It was proposed for a whole range of reasons that was not about infrastructure but that had more to do with politics and making quick decisions rather than serving the needs of the local community. I was most delighted that members of our community did not say, "Let's build a billion-dollar Metro here in our local community." Instead, they said, "Let's look at what the issues are for the whole of Sydney." That is why I, as the Mayor of Leichhardt, and members of my local community said, "If the Government has \$5 billion to spend, build the North West Rail Link. If there is any money left over, build the South West Rail Link, and while you're at it, let's see a light rail in our local community."

It was a great example of a community not being selfish or inward looking but recognising that Sydney's transport issues were not just about one local area or one local electorate; it was about how Sydneysiders and the people of New South Wales live and work together prosperously. The Metro was not the only example of planning and infrastructure decisions for our local community. The infamous Iron Cove Bridge duplication was another, at a cost of close to \$170 million. It was designed to take traffic from the Drummoyne electorate of Mr Sidoti to the intersection between Darling Street and Victoria Road, Rozelle. The duplication bridge did nothing to assist transport and was opposed by the local Labor council on the Canada Bay side, Leichhardt council, local Labor branches, transport planners and other advocates.

Why did the Government propose it? It was a great opportunity to increase bus speeds. We favour increasing bus transit speeds, but I could do that easily. The biggest impact the Government had on increasing bus speeds was to remove four bus stops. It is easy to get a bus to move faster when it does not have to stop to pick up anyone. The \$170-odd million spent on that piece of infrastructure that impacted significantly on the local community was not a real result. Where could \$170 million have been better spent? It would have made a significant difference in a number of electorates. Sydney-wide transport is particularly important to Balmain as it is a gateway suburb to the central business district. People in my electorate suffer the impact of through traffic and the huge bus congestion in the central business district.

Bus movements are almost at peak capacity for the central business district. Balmain residents sit on buses travelling in long queues along Parramatta Road or over the Anzac Bridge. Why were buses invested in so heavily? They were cheap and did not require the significant strategic direction and investment this city needs to get people into heavy or light rail and off the cheap and easy bus network. Over the years Sydney has suffered significant transport problems. Marrickville, Leichhardt, City of Sydney and Ashfield councils lobbied hard for the extension of the light rail. We were particularly surprised when former Minister Campbell asked local councils—councils who are criticised for examining State or Federal issues—to pay for the feasibility study.

The Government wanted local councils to pay \$200,000 for the feasibility study in a \$54 billion budget. The decision to progress the light rail was introduced before the feasibility study was finished to try to help support electorates rather than transport policy. I am delighted that this new Government has taken up the light rail issue. My electorate and I are pleased with what Gladys Berejiklian as Minister for Transport has been doing about the transport issue. I wish her more power, particularly in developing and extending the light rail network. While we have concerns with the light rail network regarding ticketing integration—for example, concession cardholders do not get a concession for travelling on the light rail—we hope the Government will address the need for extending it.

It is important also to recognise that much work has been undertaken on transport integration. The Greens welcome this infrastructure bill, but it can be improved in order to improve accountability and openness, as well as better sustainability and equity outcomes. In the other place The Greens will discuss this matter in detail, but in the time remaining to me I shall outline some ideas we believe make sense that would augment and improve the Government's proposal for this infrastructure body. The Greens believe their commonsense and good amendments will make a significant difference and hope that the Government will consider them.

The bill creates Infrastructure NSW, which provides for a series of much-needed long-term plans: the 20-year State infrastructure strategy, the five-year infrastructure plan, the sectoral State infrastructure strategy statement and, of course, the project implementation plans. The Ron Christie report, which was initiated by the Fairfax company—I am sure members would have read it in detail—commented that the plan should be for 30 years for a number of reasons. It is not a critical issue and 20 years might seem like a long time in respect to transport issues, but taking into account the incredible amounts of money involved for the required strategic integration means that a long-term plan is needed. I will not dwell on that matter as 20 years probably is sufficient, but the Christie report highlights the need for long-term planning.

I ask the Government to take on board including ecologically sustainable development as part of this bill. The Greens will propose that the Infrastructure NSW Bill incorporate a definition of ecologically sustainable development with the same meaning as that in the Protection of the Environment Administration Act 1991. A definition of ecologically sustainable development should be in the infrastructure bill. We are talking about major infrastructure involving significant government spending. It would be worthwhile for this Government to demonstrate its commitment by looking at well-worn and well-established definitions in the Protection of the Environment Administration Act 1991 that recognise that ecologically sustainable development should be part of any infrastructure the Government proposes.

The Government should include ecologically sustainable development as an important section of the Infrastructure NSW Bill to ensure the protection of our environment and that ecologically sustainable development is advanced. In respect to the make-up of Infrastructure NSW the Government proposes five persons with skills and experience in infrastructure planning, funding and delivery. The Greens believe the opportunity exists to broaden the knowledge and engagement of that group of people to include a range of different organisations and people with different skills. The group should include three persons from the private sector with infrastructure planning and development experience, including a nominee from the Planning Institute of Australia.

Members will know the importance of that institute to planning from an academic and intellectual perspective as well as from a practical implementation perspective. A representative of the New South Wales environmental community would be a significant advantage to the board. The Greens propose a nominee from the Nature Conservation Council, which is the peak organisation of environment groups in New South Wales. Equity also needs to be taken into account in respect of infrastructure issues. A representative of the National Council of Social Service—NCOSS—or the New South Wales Council of Social Service that represents charities, non-government organisations and other organisations that work in the equity area would be a useful member.

This bill talks a lot about efficiency. Efficiency is great, but in rural and regional New South Wales efficiency may not be the measure to determine an infrastructure investment. It is more efficient to build, for example, rail and heavy links in Sydney than it is in rural, remote or regional New South Wales. Equity is an important issue that Infrastructure NSW should consider. That is why a National Council of Social Service representative is important and why the bill should include some equity clauses, to which I will refer momentarily. Finally, Unions NSW should be represented. The representatives of working people in New South Wales have a role.

**Mr David Elliott:** They got us into this trouble, James.

**Mr JAMIE PARKER:** They have a role to play. The Greens believe the group should include three people from the private sector: a nominee from the Planning Institute of Australia, a nominee from the Nature Conservation Council and one from Unions NSW.

**Mr David Elliott:** You were doing so well.

**Mr JAMIE PARKER:** The member for Baulkham Hills will not agree with everything I say.

**ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward):** Order! The member for Balmain will direct his remarks through the Chair. The member for Cabramatta will resume his seat.

**Mr JAMIE PARKER:** Those suggestions are reasonable. Members heard today about planning and how transport issues should be included. I am disappointed that no opportunity is provided for the new integrated planning authority. The Greens wholeheartedly support this authority. At least the Director General of Transport should be included in the group. Clause 11 of the bill, which outlines the functions of Infrastructure NSW, should have the word "equitable" inserted based on the issues I have raised. Clause 11 (1) (i) states:

- (i) to provide advice to the Premier on economic or regulatory impediments to the efficient delivery of specific infrastructure projects or infrastructure projects in specific sectors.

Equity should be included to address the impact of new infrastructure and to make sure that it is efficient and right and services the whole of New South Wales, not just those who live in the city. In the few minutes I have remaining I should like to raise a few points on an important issue. We know that there is an opportunity for public-private partnerships to be included in this bill. Obviously we have concerns about public-private partnerships, so we ask the Government to consider an amendment, a new clause 14 (2), as follows:

All partnerships, joint ventures or other associations entered into between Infrastructure NSW and any private entity are to be subject to annual audits by the NSW Auditor-General and such audits be tabled in Parliament within 14 sitting days of receipt of same by Government.

That arose as a result of the Victorian Government's experience with public-private partnerships. Members will remember that the Victorian Government undertook a significant review of public-private partnerships. One of its key recommendations was that the Auditor-General examine and report on their effectiveness and efficiency in an attempt to ensure accountability and openness. We also believe that community consultation should be undertaken as part of the preparation of the 20-year plan. The bill provides no opportunity for the proposed 20-year infrastructure strategy, the five-year infrastructure plan or the sectoral State infrastructure strategy statement to be subject to any form of community consultation.

Government members spoke earlier about accountability and transparency. We believe the Government should consider taking on board reporting options where these plans are adopted by issuing a regulation, and where there is a requirement to exhibit publicly the initial plan to seek submissions on that plan and to exhibit publicly the final adopted plan, including any amendments by the Premier. As I mentioned, we believe also that with each of these strategies and plans community consultation should be undertaken. Considering the shambolic mess in which infrastructure in this State has been for the past 16 years, and considering the massive underinvestment in transport and its impact on our local economy, community and environment, we support the Government implementing these types of plans.

My proposed amendments relate to incorporating in the bill a definition of ecologically sustainable development, establishing the make-up of the board and the members on that board and, most importantly, publicly exhibiting three long-term infrastructure plans—amendments which would be open to public engagement and discussion. Once those infrastructure plans have been publicly exhibited members of the community will be able to make a contribution. From my experience—and I believe many other members would agree—it is good practice for a government to exhibit documents publicly, to seek an input from communities and to respond to that input. I encourage the Government to include those amendments to ensure that everyone in this State is able to contribute to an important piece of legislation.

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

*[Acting-Speaker (Mr Gareth Ward) left the chair at 1.12 p.m. The House resumed at 2.15 p.m.]*

#### **DISTINGUISHED VISITORS**

**The SPEAKER:** I acknowledge the presence of 15 Chinese Government department officials, guests of the New South Wales Parliament. I acknowledge Councillor Geoff Kettle, Mayor of Goulburn Mulwaree Council, and Councillor Neil Penning, guests of the member for Goulburn.

#### **REPRESENTATION OF MINISTER ABSENT DURING QUESTIONS**

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** I inform the House that the Deputy Premier, Minister for Trade and Investment, and Minister for Regional Infrastructure and Services will answer questions today in the absence of the Minister for Education.

**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE****Notices of Motions****Government Business Notices of Motions (for Bills) given.****QUESTION TIME**

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*[Question time commenced at 2.19 p.m.]*

**INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS LEGISLATION**

**Mr JOHN ROBERTSON:** My question is directed to the Premier. Will the Premier listen to the more than 15,000 people who signed the people's petition I tabled yesterday and stop the progress of his industrial relations bill through the Parliament to allow this House to debate their concerns?

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** The legislation is currently being debated in another place and, of course, I anticipate that in the next sitting week, the week after next, the matter will also be debated in this Chamber. As I said yesterday, I anticipate that on the next sitting Wednesday debate will ensue on the petition presented on behalf of 15,000 people because of an initiative that we put in place—one that those opposite did not do.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members will listen to the answer in silence.

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** I again make the point that the wages policy we are pursuing guarantees fair pay for the State's public servants.

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

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** It guarantees to taxpayers that productivity savings to which we are committed will in fact be delivered.

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

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** It guarantees that the Parliament—

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

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** —will safeguard accountability because it can veto any proposal. This is the same wages policy that Labor pursued over the past four years.

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

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** The conditions, entitlements and award provisions are those that were set by the Labor Party in office over the past four years.

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

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** But there is a difference. In exchange for productivity savings, public sector wages can increase over 2.5 per cent.

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

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** The same provision that existed under Labor's wages policy will now continue under our wages policy.

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

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** The difference is this: This Government will expect that productivity savings agreed to by unions and Government together will be delivered. We will not stick taxpayers with a \$900 million bill for wages paid in excess of 2.5 per cent—

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

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** —on the promise of productivity savings and then turn a blind eye when those productivity savings are not delivered. We think that agreements ought to be respected, including by the Labor Party and by—

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

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** The failure of those opposite to hold their union colleagues to account on those agreements cost taxpayers \$900 million over four years.

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

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** If we continued Labor's lax policy of promises made but not kept, it would cost the State's budget an additional \$1.96 billion. That is paid for from taxpayers' money or from revenue derived from services that workers deliver. We are committed to continuing Labor's wages policy. We are committed to giving public sector workers their wage increases. We are committed to ensuring that if they can offer productivity savings to departments, they can get more. We are committed to being responsible for the taxpayers of this State, and we are committed to parliamentary process. Parliamentary process will ensure that a wages policy that is unfair or unconscionable will be able to be disallowed by the upper House, where the Government does not hold a majority.

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

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** This week parliamentary process will deal with the legislation that is being debated in the other place. Parliamentary process will ensure that the legislation is brought back to the Legislative Assembly the week after next. Parliamentary process, which has been amended by us, enables anyone who has a petition with 10,000 signatures to have their concerns presented and debated in this Chamber.

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

#### LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

**Mr GARETH WARD:** My question is directed to the Premier. What action has the Leader of the Opposition taken to help fix New South Wales and make our State number one again?

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** There is a short answer to this question—absolutely nothing. Never let it be said that I will take a short answer when there are a few minutes to go.

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

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** The Leader of the Opposition is the bloke who was going to be the most energetic Opposition leader the State has ever seen. He was also going to be the most constructive Opposition leader that the State has ever seen. They are not my words but the words spoken on the day on which he was anointed by the unions as Leader of the Opposition. I say "anointed" because Labor members were not allowed to have a leadership contest.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Cessnock will come to order. I call the member for Wollongong to order.

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** Others wanted to stand and were not allowed. But the truth remains that the little energy that we have seen from the Leader of the Opposition has been turned towards destructive campaigns to try to stop this Government from cleaning up the mess that Labor created over the past 16 years.

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

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** Let me examine the record of the Leader of the Opposition. Does he support the Government's attempts to fix the ferry system?



**Government members:** No.

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** Does he support the Government's attempts to establish Infrastructure NSW?

**Government members:** No.

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** Will he support the provision of infrastructure that New South Wales needs?

**Government members:** No.

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** Does he support our moves to protect clubs from compulsory pre-commitment, which would cost jobs and would cost clubs hundreds of millions of dollars?

**Government members:** No.

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** What about a carbon tax? Has he supported our demands that the Federal Government scrap the carbon tax, which will cost jobs and add to costs borne by families across New South Wales?

**Government members:** No.

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** Did he support our legislation on occupational health and safety to make workplaces safer and to bring in an additional \$144 million to this State? No.

**Mr Michael Daley:** Point of order—

**Government members:** No.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Government members will come to order. What is the member's point of order?

**Mr Michael Daley:** As unusual and as telling as that question is, it does not allow the person who is answering the question—as loaded as it was—to overcome Standing Order 73. This is not a substantive motion. The Premier is not allowed to just embark upon an attack against any other member of this House.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I have listened to the point of order in relation to Standing Order 73. The Premier is answering the question factually.

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** The Premier has won his bet with the Treasurer. The Treasurer said that the member for Maroubra would not take a point of order because of his leadership aspirations. I am happy to continue outlining the factual, non-constructive efforts of the Leader of the Opposition. To have the Occupational Health and Safety Amendment Bill 2011 passed by the upper House, the Government has had to rely on the common sense of the crossbenches because Labor tried to sabotage the bill, just as Labor is trying to sabotage our efforts to clean up the Solar Bonus Scheme. The Solar Bonus Scheme is a mess that the Leader of the Opposition, when he was a Minister, said would cost taxpayers \$355 million. But the former Government's own report, the Duffy-Parry report, states that it will cost \$1.96 billion.

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

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** Having created the mess, will the Leader of the Opposition help to clean it up?

**Government members:** No.

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** Once again, we will have to rely on the crossbenches of the upper House to determine whether we will be able to make the necessary reforms to fix the Solar Bonus Scheme or protect taxpayers from higher power bills. Of course, the Leader of the Opposition is now screaming blue murder, not because we are introducing a new wages policy but because we are simply enforcing a wages policy that Labor had in place for four years.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call the member for Kogarah to order for the second time. I call the member for Wollongong to order for the second time.

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** We will enforce the policy. Taxpayers will foot the bill for \$1.96 billion.

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

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** Does the Opposition leader support the Government's bill to bring the State's finance under control so that we can provide the services that Labor failed to provide over the past 16 years? Of course not. I cannot think of anything the Leader of the Opposition has supported. Has he supported the North West Rail Link, our moves to fix hospitals, the scrapping of the corrupt part 3A? The list goes on and on. Unfortunately, the media and the public still regard the Leader of the Opposition and the Labor Party as irrelevant. The media and the public do not really care what the Leader of the Opposition says or does so he is never held to account. But we will continue to highlight the fact that already he is emerging as the most destructive Opposition leader in the State's history. He has learned none of the lessons from the election. He does not want to fix the problems that his Government left the State. He is not prepared to fix services and infrastructure, but we are.

### TEACHERS SALARIES

**Ms LINDA BURNEY:** My question without notice is directed to the Premier. Why should teachers have to suffer a \$15,000 pay cut to allow the Premier to build the 52 schools he said that his industrial relations legislation will fund?

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** What an absolute lie. There is nothing in Labor's wages policy that we are applying that cuts the wages of any public sector worker. As I explained a moment ago, the wages policy we are pursuing is the wages policy of the—

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

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** The first issue is that there are no wage cuts going on.

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

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** The second issue is, as I said earlier, all we are seeking to do is ensure that for any wage increases paid over and above the 2.5 per cent set by Labor's wages policy in exchange for promised productivity savings, we deliver those productivity savings. As I said a moment ago, if a union on behalf of any sector of the public service enters into an agreement to say that its workers are going to get more than 2.5 per cent because of these productivity savings, the Government has an obligation to ensure that those savings are delivered. Otherwise, what will happen is what has happened over the past four years.

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

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** Taxpayers get stuck with almost a billion dollars worth of additional cost.

**Mr John Robertson:** It's gotten bigger?

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** It is \$900 million. Whichever way one looks at it, \$900 million could have gone to schools. Whose electorate wants a school?

**Government members:** Mine.

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** Whose electorate needs more police, more teachers and more nurses?

**Government members:** Mine.

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** Whose electorate needs more roads or more train services?

**Government members:** Mine.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members on both sides of the House will come to order.

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** For the past three weeks I have heard the Minister for Transport and the Treasurer ask similar questions in this House. Each time, they received the same response. Only those opposite do not want to improve policing, teaching, health and other services in their electorates. Why would that be a surprise, given what they did over the previous 16 years?

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

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** Since 1997 public sector wages in this State have increased by 21.1 per cent. According to Treasury figures, that is almost double the amount by which private sector wages have increased—almost 50 per cent higher than Victorian public sector wage increases and almost one-third more than Queensland public sector wage increases. We want to pay, we will pay and we are committed to paying public servants a fair wage. We will ensure that we deliver the best possible services to the people of this State. All of us in the public sector, in business or within our families have to live within our means. We are cleaning up the mess left to us by those opposite. We are giving a guarantee of public servants getting fair wage increases, a guarantee to taxpayers that we can pay those increases, and a guarantee to this place that there is a safeguard—a valve that can be pressed—if the policy is unfair or unconscionable.

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

### JOBS GROWTH

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** My question is directed to the Deputy Premier. What is the Government doing to drive jobs growth in New South Wales?

**Mr ANDREW STONER:** I thank the member for Monaro for a very good question and congratulate him on an excellent inaugural speech earlier today—

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

**Mr ANDREW STONER:** —and an outstanding election victory in the Monaro electorate. Of course, he is well qualified to sit in this place as a successful businessman who operates a business right on the border with the Australia Capital Territory, battling all the red tape and taxation that lot opposite put in place during their 16 years in office. Had the New South Wales economy grown at the same modest rate as the Victorian economy over the past 16 years, our State's economy would be \$22.1 billion larger and over just the past seven years this State would have had an additional \$6 billion in revenue. That equates to a lot of police, a lot of hospitals, and a lot of services and infrastructure that are all gone because of their mismanagement.

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

**Mr ANDREW STONER:** New South Wales also would have had 273,000 additional jobs—an opportunity lost through Labor's incompetence. Of course, the backbone of our State's economy is the 650,000 small businesses in this State that employ 1.8 million employees, or more than 40 per cent of our State's workforce. As I mentioned earlier, the New South Wales small business sector has been hampered by red tape and neglected over the 16 long years of Labor. The good news is that already the Liberal-Nationals Government has started to turn things around for small business in this State. Fulfilling another election commitment, we are taking action to recruit a small business commissioner.

**Mr Nathan Rees:** You are kidding.

**Mr ANDREW STONER:** What did you do for 16 years?

**Mr Nathan Rees:** Two months in and you're coming out with that.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call the member for Toongabbie to order for the third time.

**Mr ANDREW STONER:** What did you do? As a small businessman you made a good garbo.

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

**Mr ANDREW STONER:** A small business commissioner will be a vital contact point for issues facing the small businesses of this State. The commissioner will resolve disputes between small businesses and government agencies. We have heard of small businesses not being paid for services, goods and equipment for up to 90 days and beyond by government agencies under that lot. We will put an end to that. The small business commissioner will ensure also that legislation takes into account the needs of small business in this State. My colleague the Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Small Business, the Hon. Katrina Hodgkinson—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call the member for Cessnock to order for the second time.

**Mr ANDREW STONER:** —has already started the process to get our small business commissioner on deck. She has arranged for advertisements for this key position in tomorrow's *Australian Financial Review*, Saturday's *Sydney Morning Herald* and other Australian newspapers. This action follows legislation already passed to bring consistency and fairness through occupational health and safety laws in this State—another big bugbear for small business. Of course, Labor never cared about small business, with its revolving door of nine small business Ministers—none of whom did anything for small business because most of them were from either a union or political background and never understood what it was like to spend more than 20 hours a week just on red tape and paperwork associated with their regime.

As the member for Monaro said this morning, Labor never understood what it was like to put your finances and your house on the line just to ensure that your small business survived. The Leader of the Opposition is from a union background and has not raised a peep about jobs or small businesses in this State. He has been rattling the sabre with an irresponsible scare campaign about public sector wages. He has not lifted a finger about the real job killers: the carbon tax and the mandatory pre-commitment technology for poker machines. Hypocrisy thy name is Robertson. The only job he ever cared about was his own.

#### NURSES SALARIES AND CONDITIONS

**Dr ANDREW McDONALD:** My question is directed to the Minister for Health. In light of the findings of a study by the University of Sydney's Workplace Research Centre published in today's *Sydney Morning Herald* that the Government's industrial relations legislation would reduce nurses' pay by at least \$12,000 per year, how can the Minister possibly expect to follow through on the election commitment to employ 2,475 extra nurses in New South Wales?

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

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER:** This question comes from a member of the former Labor Government who stood silently by while it cut nurse jobs by 340 alone in the western Sydney area. How do I know that? Because the nurses union demonstrated outside the hospitals for weeks on end complaining about—

[Interruption]

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

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER:** The House should know that I have spoken to many of my nurse union contacts today and they are appalled at the total disinformation campaign being run by Opposition members. They are encouraging this beat up.

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

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER:** They have ignored the fact that on 22 February nurses entered into a multiyear agreement.

**Mr John Robertson:** We know that. Tell us what you're going to do.

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

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER:** They have a memorandum of understanding that covers them for years ahead.

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

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER:** This Government is implementing the Labor policy of years past.

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

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER:** Our policy is clear: We will allow a 2.5 per cent wage increase across the public service, and rises above that level will need to be offset by productivity gains.

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

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER:** The former Government said that but never delivered it.

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

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER:** We are actually going to do what we say we are going to do, unlike you. You just plain lied to people. You lied about not cutting nurses jobs.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members will come to order.

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER:** You lied about upgrading hospitals in country New South Wales.

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

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER:** I am afraid you are lying to those very hardworking members of the health workforce who are keeping our system together.

**Mr Michael Daley:** Point of order: Standing orders provide that the Minister must direct her comments through the Chair, not directly across the Chamber.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Minister will direct her comments through the Chair. I uphold the point of order.

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER:** I am delighted to address the first female Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, an exceptionally good member who has always stood up for nurses and others working in the hospitals in her electorate.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Bankstown will come to order. I call the member for Canterbury to order for the second time.

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER:** The ludicrous thing about the beat-up being encouraged by the Labor Opposition in this State is the fact that this Government's policy means we have no intention of reducing entitlements and conditions. We are not in the business of taking conditions away from public servants. We need to keep these issues of conditions on the table in case any union wants to negotiate them as part of their productivity improvements, as they have done when Labor was in government. Do members want me to read out a list of conditions that the health unions negotiated away as part of the awards? Let me just read a couple that are specific to the Health Services Union. As part of the 2008 award it agreed to reduce the minimum overtime payment from four hours to one hour where a technology support resolution, or clinical appraisal, can be undertaken remotely without on-site presence. Why did it negotiate away that condition? It is because it wanted a pay increase of more than 2.5 per cent. So this has been done in the past under the former Government. What else did it do?

*[Interruption]*

Do members want me to tell them what the nurses union negotiated away? It altered the approach taken to enrolled nurse training—Madam Speaker raised that matter with me on a number of occasions, as have many other members of the Government. It introduced a pre-service training model that means that those enrolled nurses have to pay up to \$12,000 up-front for a vocational education component, unlike the previous arrangement where they were effectively trained on the job while they were earning a wage. That was a condition negotiated away by the NSW Nurses Association. Why did it do that? It is because it wanted to have pay increases above the award. That is exactly the sort of thing that the union will be able to do under the Coalition policy, which is exactly the same as that of the former Government. Don't be so mischievous.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I remind members that interjections are disorderly at all times. All members who have been called to order are now deemed to be on three calls to order. If they continue to interject they may be removed from the Chamber.

### DISABILITY FUNDING

**Mr ROB STOKES:** My question is addressed to the Minister for Ageing, and Minister for Disability Services. Will the Minister explain how the Government is working to establish client-centred supports and individual funding arrangements for people with a disability?

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** I recognise the interest of the member for Pittwater in this area given the number of concerns that have been raised about this issue by his constituents over many years. I want to talk about individualised funding and support. In doing so, I want to forget that it has to do with funding or funding models and recognise that a basic human right for people with disabilities, their carers and their families is to be able to make decisions about their everyday life. For too long in this State people with disabilities, their carers and their families have been dictated to by government and bureaucracy as to what services they can have, when they can have them and who will provide them.

Under an O'Farrell Government New South Wales will be the number one State in relation to the provision of self-directed supports by June 2014. Today I announce a 12-month extensive consultation process involving the sector, people with disabilities, carers, families, advocates and peak bodies to roll out a new model. We will have consultation to make sure that the model is right because it is not easy and many questions need to be asked through this process. The Government believes that by using the consultation findings and by holding a two-day summit next month and then rolling out 100 workshops around the State during the next six months it can get this system right.

During the next five years the O'Farrell Government will increase growth funding in disabilities by \$2 billion. It is planning to provide an additional 47,000 places. At the heart of that is the rollout of individualised funding, which will make sure that the State system is ready for the implementation of a national disability insurance scheme. That is critical, particularly for those services that recognise the need for a national disability insurance scheme. Last night, together with the Minister for Citizenship and Communities, Victor Dominello, I met representatives of the Ryde Area Supported Accommodation for Intellectually Disabled—it is a well-known group, for the benefit of some Opposition members—and announced an allocation of \$3 million to assist those families with a trial in relation to individualised funding that will enable them to pull those resources together. We were taken aback by the emotion and the jubilation that finally something was going to be done.

We have done more in 10 weeks for Ryde Area Supported Accommodation for Intellectually Disabled families than has been done for a very long time. Those families want the security that comes from knowing that their loved ones in the years ahead, beyond when they can care for them, will be looked after in the best environment possible. The rollout of individualised funding will start to take place. This Government is very keen to make sure that it is done in a way that ensures people with disabilities, their carers and their families are at the heart of the decision-making.

It is a basic human right and it is something that the Government is very keen to see rolled out. The Government intends to look very carefully at key learnings from other jurisdictions. We know that mistakes have been made in other jurisdictions and we believe we can learn from them. I think all members, regardless of their political persuasion, know only too well that this is something that families around the State desire. It is for that reason that the O'Farrell Government will be committed to ensuring that New South Wales is the number one jurisdiction by June 2014 in the provision of self-directed care for people with disabilities.

### PUBLIC SECTOR WAGES AND CONDITIONS

**Ms CARMEL TEBBUTT:** My question is addressed to the Attorney General. Why is the Government changing the role of the Industrial Relations Commission to leave New South Wales public sector employees with weaker workplace rights than any other employee in the country?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I remind members that many of them are on three calls to order.

**Mr GREG SMITH:** We are talking about the model legislation that has been passed through the Council of Australian Governments process.

**Mr Michael Daley:** No, we are not. We are talking about the industrial relations bill.

**Mr GREG SMITH:** The wages policy? We are enforcing the wages policy so that the State does not go bankrupt. Members opposite have helped to run down the money in this State, and the Industrial Relations Commission did what it was told to do. Our policy is clear.

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

**Mr GREG SMITH:** Our policy is the same as Labor's policy, but members opposite did not deliver on it. We will provide 2.5 per cent wage rises across the public service, and rises above that level will have to be offset by productivity gains—something that Labor members were unable to achieve and did not try to achieve because they wanted their mates, who they thought would vote for them, to reap the benefits of their largesse. New South Wales taxpayers had to keep forking out and missing out on proper train services, proper roads, good schools—matters of that sort. This is the same policy the former Labor Government had in place for the past four years. The only difference between our policy and Labor's policy is that we intend to deliver. If we do not enforce the policy the impact on the budget will be about \$1.9 million over the next four years. That is why the policy is so important. It delivers fair wage increases while bringing the budget under control so that we can start delivering the infrastructure and services this State desperately needs. We saw how the previous Labor Government spent the money of this State on the inner-city metro and matters of that sort.

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

**Mr GREG SMITH:** We saw the waste that took place, which is why the voters of this State rejected Labor so wholeheartedly in March. We have no intention of reducing entitlements and conditions. We are not in the business of taking conditions away from public servants. We need to keep conditions on the table in case unions want to negotiate them as part of their productivity improvements.

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

**Mr GREG SMITH:** We will do things that the former Labor Government simply did not do. Labor just gave the money away. The former Labor Government forced departments to cut their expenditure on services to the community simply to meet pay rises. Parliament will always have the right to disallow our wages decisions if they are regarded as being too harsh. Labor's scare campaign shows that members opposite have learnt nothing, and grinning like cheshire cats, Timbo the clown or a mutant ninja turtle, down there in the deep, will not get away from that. This is exactly what we are doing with our policy. Acting like the court jester put Labor members below 20 per cent; next time they will go into oblivion, into minus figures.

## MENTAL HEALTH

**Mr ANDREW GEE:** My question is addressed to the Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Healthy Lifestyles, and Minister for Western New South Wales. What action is the Government taking to restore the confidence of our community and mental health clinicians in the State's mental health system?

**Mr KEVIN HUMPHRIES:** I congratulate the member for Orange on working hard with his community, the health Minister and the Deputy Premier to restore quality health services to the people of Gulgong. Good luck to him. I am proud to stand here as the first ever Minister for Mental Health in New South Wales.

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

**Mr KEVIN HUMPHRIES:** The fact that this Government has put improving mental healthcare front and centre demonstrates our commitment to serious and meaningful reform to improve the lives of those who are affected by mental health problems. I am determined to provide the leadership that is needed to deliver on our promises to the people of New South Wales—leadership that was conspicuous by its absence during the previous tenure of members opposite. With one notable exception, the Australian Labor Party has shown no leadership in mental health, and left mental health in New South Wales to flounder for years—a message I have heard time and time again. It seems that when a Labor member tried to do something, it cost him his job. Of course, I am referring to former Premier Morris Iemma, No. 41.

When it comes to mental health, the difference between the Liberal-Nationals Government and the Australian Labor Party is that we will listen to the voices of consumers, carers, clinicians and families. As the

Premier has made perfectly clear, we will deliver on every single one of our election commitments. Our commitments in mental health and across the board are sensible, workable and deliverable. Today we are delivering on another promise to the people of New South Wales. Another part of the O'Farrell-Stoner Government's 100 Day Action Plan is being delivered. I am pleased to announce the establishment of a mental health task force that will deliver a world-class mental health commission for New South Wales to commence in 2012. I am proud to present to the House the names of the task force members who, because of their belief in the need for mental health reform, are giving their time and expertise to deliver a better mental health system for the people of New South Wales.

As the Minister for Mental Health I will be chairing the task force, which will comprise Ms Jenna Bateman, the Chief Executive Officer of the Mental Health Coordinating Council; Dr David Chaplow, the Director of Mental Health and the Chief Advisor on Mental Health from the New Zealand Government; Professor Alan Fels, AO, Dean of the Australia and New Zealand School of Government, and patron of the Mental Health Council of Australia; Dr Mary Foley, the Director General of NSW Health; Associate Professor Dan Howard from the School of Psychiatry at the University of New South Wales; Professor Karin Lines, the Executive Director of Forensic Mental Health and Adolescent Services, Justice Health; Mr David McGrath, the director of mental health and drug and alcohol programs in NSW Health; Mr Colman O'Driscoll, the Chief of Staff to the mental health Minister; Dr Brian Pezzutti, a former member of the Legislative Council; Professor Alan Rosen, the Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Wollongong; Mr Sebastian Rosenberg, expert facilitator and specialist advisor and director of ConNetica Consulting; and Ms Julie Hourigan Ruse, the Chief Executive Officer of the New South Wales Consumer Advisory Group—Mental Health.

As members can see, we are drawing on State, national and international expertise to ensure that we develop the right commission for New South Wales, and I am pleased to have some of those members in the gallery today. Having come this morning from the inaugural Child and Adolescent Mental Health conference, I am pleased to introduce Dr Sandra Heriot, who is in the gallery today. Members can be assured that the Government is committed to improving child and adolescent mental health services, an area of great importance and one that has a great champion in the New South Wales Governor, somebody whose wise counsel I will continue to value as we progress our mental health reform agenda.

The O'Farrell-Stoner Government was elected with a clear mandate for change and reform. For mental health, that change means improving services for those who are experiencing mental health problems. The commission will be established based on best practice models from around the world, including the Western Australian and New Zealand mental health commissions. The commission will ensure the best quality mental healthcare, ensure that we divert mentally ill people away from the criminal justice system and ensure that the Mental Health Review Tribunal runs effectively and efficiently. The Government will provide quarantined and accountable funding for mental health expenditure. As the task force completes its work over the coming months it will be consulting widely across the community, and I ask all members of Parliament to engage in that process. As the Minister for Mental Health I will be working hard to continue to drive improvements in this important area, which was long neglected by members opposite.

### **COST SHIFTING TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

**Mr RICHARD TORBAY:** My question is to the Minister for Local Government. Can the Minister outline any steps the Government intends to take to reduce the burden of cost shifting from State to local government?

**Mr DONALD PAGE:** I thank the member for Northern Tablelands for his question and note his longstanding interest in local government matters. Councils across the State are under a lot of pressure at the moment and our new Government is determined not to add to their burden through the practice of cost shifting. Cost shifting to local government was ignored by the previous Labor Government, which only signed its intergovernmental agreement with the local government sector in the dying days of the last Government. However, it is interesting to note that the same Labor Government was a signatory to the national agreement on these matters way back in 2006. So it took the former State Labor Government more than four years—until October 2010—to enter into a similar arrangement with local government in New South Wales. In the meantime, of course, cost shifting continued to occur under that Government.

The intergovernmental agreement with local government signed in October 2010 establishes principles for funding and delivery of services between local government and other spheres of government. Among other things, the intergovernmental agreement acts as a brake on any real or perceived cost shifting by ensuring that



any movement of services or functions to local government has associated funding. The intergovernmental agreement provides that where local government is asked or required by the State or Commonwealth governments to provide a service or a function, any consequential financial impact on local government is a key consideration. However, if a council decides to take on an additional service in response to community requests, that is not cost shifting.

Some councils argue that cost shifting includes such things as the provision of educational or medical services. These are services provided by councils at their own discretion in response to community requests. This is not a function required by another tier of government, so it is not cost shifting. Further, some councils claim cost shifting on things such as contribution to fire services, public libraries, administration of companion animals and control of weeds, but these things are mandated by legislation and are essential functions of local government. Indeed, communities expect their councils to provide these services; that is why they pay rates.

Our Government is of the view that the role and function of local government needs to be better understood to identify and define the core functions of councils, what matters are rightly the joint responsibility of State and local government, and indeed what matters are exclusively the responsibility of State Government. When this is better understood, agreement can be reached on the need for any financial contribution by the State Government or, alternatively, the provision of revenue-raising mechanisms for councils. If new services are introduced by a council at its own discretion, the council should consider either reducing other services or seeking a special rate variation to meet additional costs. These decisions should be made in consultation with the community.

We support the objectives and principles of the intergovernmental agreement. Yesterday I announced at the local government and shires associations conference that in the coming year our new Government will review this agreement in partnership with the local government and shires associations. It is important that we review such a significant agreement in consultation with the local government and shires associations to clarify precisely where responsibilities fall. The intergovernmental agreement, as written, is full of good intentions. However, our Government will consult with the local government sector to make it clearer as to exactly who is responsible for what, and where our new Government is responsible it will take that responsibility.

I am also keen to explore how the intergovernmental agreement can be strengthened and better focused on the issues important to the sector and to the New South Wales Government so that we can avoid the sort of cost shifting we have seen under the previous Labor Government. It is a question that is important to local government and it is a question that has been around for quite a while. At long last, the previous Government did put in place an intergovernmental agreement between itself and the local government. This was some four years after it signed a national agreement to do so.

Is it any wonder that, after four years of delay, we saw a continuation of the trend by the previous Government to transfer the cost of State Government policy to local government? That is what the local government sector is very concerned about. I have given an indication and assurance to the local government and shires associations that we will go back to the intergovernmental agreement to make sure that we have a clear definition of who is responsible for what, and if there are things that we are responsible for we will be responsible for those things. That will change the whole situation of cost shifting in this State.

#### **GILLIAN SNEDDON SUPREME COURT DECISION**

**Mr GARRY EDWARDS:** My question is directed to the Premier. What is the Government's response to today's Supreme Court decision in the Gillian Sneddon case?

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** I thank the member for Swansea for his question. I am aware that the Supreme Court today dismissed Gillian Sneddon's action against the State, but it has awarded damages of more than \$400,000 in her favour against the former Speaker of the Parliament and former Labor Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Milton Orkopoulos. Members will recall that Ms Sneddon claimed to have suffered victimisation, bullying and harassment at the hands of Mr Orkopoulos and other members of his staff. It is, of course, one of the sorriest episodes involving any member of this Parliament and it is something the Labor Party should always be ashamed of.

Ms Sneddon became aware of the behaviour of Mr Orkopoulos and did the right thing: she alerted police. She cooperated with them in gathering evidence against the former Labor member. She also alerted other members of the Labor Party and we know they did nothing—and they stand condemned for that lack of action.

I notice the ashen face of No. 41, Milton Orkopoulos's former chief of staff, who was so concerned about the matter and the activities. What did he describe it as? Kiddy fiddling. What happened when Mr Orkopoulos found out Ms Sneddon was cooperating with the police? Was she commended? Was she supported? No, the locks were changed. She was locked out, cast aside, and she became a persona non grata within the Labor Party. As she said this morning when she left court, "The whole staff treated me as if I was a traitor. Immediately I was given the freeze treatment." Ms Sneddon had been cooperating with the police to help convict a paedophile, who was then a Minister in a Labor Government. She was locked out of the office and forced on to stress leave after Mr Orkopoulos became aware that she was assisting police.

It was a courageous move by Ms Sneddon to gather evidence on her boss for police, particularly when her boss was a Minister in a Labor Government. Ms Sneddon did the right thing; she committed no crime. This brave woman was integral in locking up a child sex offender. She was a whistleblower, and all the Labor Party did was to try to destroy her. She was sacked from her job and she was bullied. Ms Sneddon quite rightly sued and today she was awarded \$438,000 by the Supreme Court of New South Wales. Her case is symptomatic of Labor's treatment of whistleblowers, whether it be the nurses who exposed problems at Camden and Campbelltown hospitals or the brave Bimla Chand who exposed systematic bullying. Labor's treatment of people who stood up for the public good, who stood up for their beliefs, was nothing short of shameful and every single member of the Labor Party in this place ought to hang their heads in shame.

It is the same shameful intimidation that occurred more recently in relation to the eight power directors who resigned in protest at the dud deal of the century—the power sale undertaken by those opposite. The hypocrisy of those opposite is breathtaking because today, in another place, they have been talking about workers' rights. They did not care much for the rights of Ms Sneddon. Her rights were cast aside in the interests of the Labor Party. This is one of the lowest chapters in the history of a party amongst other low chapters that could fill volumes of books of low acts over the past 16 years. But today a whistleblower has been vindicated and the State will ensure that the debt that is owed to her is paid.

*[Personal explanation]*

**Mr NATHAN REES**, by leave: Wilfully or otherwise, the Premier has ignored the chronology of events relating to that matter. I will give him the benefit of the doubt on this. I have made public comment; I have made comment in this House on the chronology of those events.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I remind the member that a personal explanation should be brief and should describe how he has been offended during debate.

**Mr NATHAN REES:** It is a matter of fact that I was not employed in the former Minister's office for three months before his arrest and at no time did Ms Sneddon, as asserted, ever have a discussion with me about any police examination of any matter.

**Question time concluded at 3.08 p.m.**

#### **DISTINGUISHED VISITORS**

**The SPEAKER:** I welcome to the public gallery the former member for Miranda.

#### **PETITIONS**

**The Speaker announced that the following petition signed by more than 10,000 persons was lodged for presentation:**

##### **Wagga Wagga Base Hospital**

Petition requesting funding for and the commencement of construction of a new Wagga Wagga Base Hospital within four years, received from **Mr Daryl Maguire**.

**Discussion on petition set down as an order of the day for a future day.**

## 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**.

## PRINTING OF PAPERS

### **Motion, by leave, by Mr Brad Hazzard agreed to:**

That the following papers be printed:

Report of the Dental Board of New South Wales for the nine-month period ended 30 June 2010  
Report of the New South Wales State Emergency Management Committee for the year ended 30 June 2010  
Report of the State Rescue Board of New South Wales for the year ended 30 June 2010  
Report of Charles Sturt University for 2010  
Report of Macquarie University for 2010  
Report of Southern Cross University for 2010  
Report of the University of Newcastle (Volumes One and Two) for 2010  
Report of the University of New England for 2010  
Report of the University of New South Wales (Volumes One and Two) for 2010  
Report of the University of Sydney for 2010  
Report of the University of Technology, Sydney (Volumes One and Two) for 2010  
Report of the University of Western Sydney (Volumes One and Two) for 2010  
Report of the University of Wollongong for 2010  
Report of the Department of Education and Training for 2010  
Report of the Community Relations Commission entitled "Community Relations Report 2010".  
Half yearly report of Country Energy for the period ended 31 December 2010  
Half yearly report of Eraring Energy for the period ended 31 December 2010  
Half yearly report of Integral Energy for the period ended 31 December 2010  
Half yearly report of EnergyAustralia for the period ended 31 December 2010  
Half yearly report of Delta Electricity for the period ended 31 December 2010  
Half yearly report of Macquarie Generation for the period ended 31 December 2010  
Half yearly report of TransGrid for the period ended 31 December 2010

## BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

### **Notices of Motions**

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

## PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENTS

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### **ELECTION RESULT**

**Mr MIKE BAIRD** (Manly—Treasurer) [3.15 p.m.]: I proudly stand here today to deliver my first private member's statement in the new Parliament. I was incredibly humbled by the result not only across the State, but particularly in Manly. On election night it is a very rare moment to realise that you have been given the trust of your community. It is a moment when one feels the incredible responsibility and privilege it is to be endorsed by your community, to go into battle for your community. I acknowledge that I am incredibly proud to

serve my second term as the member for Manly. It is something I do not take for granted and I can give an assurance to my community that I will fight every step of the way and every day for that community; a community of which I could not be more proud.

I will highlight what we want to do in Manly and across the northern beaches during this term of Government; we want to get some things underway. Many in the community have said that they feel it does not matter whether it is a Labor Government or a Liberal Government: they have been ignored for too long. They rightly remained sceptical because their experience has been one of being forgotten on Macquarie Street for too long. The good news is that Macquarie Street, with a new Government in place, is listening and will act. The first commitment relates to the northern beaches hospital. It is something that our community—our nurses, our doctors, our mums and dads, grandmothers and grandfathers—has been crying out for for so long.

Both Manly Hospital and Mona Vale Hospital are run-down to a point that we desperately require a hospital that fits this century. We have the services; we have the staff. But we do not have the facilities. The northern beaches hospital was first announced in 1999. The Frenches Forest site was identified in 2006 and Labor promised to build the hospital, but that has not happened. We are going to get on with the job. I note that a range of groups is fighting for the building of the hospital. The Minister for Health and I look forward to receiving a group named Peninsula United to Secure Hospital on 17 June. They want a new hospital and the good news is that we will be able to tell them that the Government remains committed to building one.

The Government has allocated \$125 million to start the construction of the new hospital in its first term. It will be equal to the largest health funding commitment across the State and it will finally deliver for the people of the northern beaches a facility that will support the nurses and doctors who day in and day out are asking for the facilities to support them. We will retain the Manly Hospital site for community use and Mona Vale Hospital will serve in a complementary role. We will consult and look for opportunities. The emergency services department of Mona Vale Hospital will play a key role in health delivery to the northern beaches. Neither Manly nor Mona Vale hospital will be further downgraded while we wait for this new hospital to be built.

We must attack the Spit Corridor. Anyone that has driven up and down it that knows that it is now the slowest corridor at peak hour across this city, and obviously this State. As part of the solution we are looking into the feasibility of a northern beaches bus rapid transit system; something I have called for long and loud over the past few years in this place. I have asked the Government to put the whole of its attention and resources into investigating the feasibility of such a project, such as the route and the infrastructure required. That is what we are going to do. The pre-feasibility work is already underway. Indeed, next week the Minister for Transport and I will attend a bus rapid transit forum with key industry experts so that we can understand in detail some of the opportunities of bus rapid transit not just for the northern beaches but also for other areas of this city. We will deliver a 20-year vision for that corridor. We are determined to improve the congestion and to improve bus transport, and to make it the option of choice on that corridor.

With regard to Seaforth TAFE, we have announced our commitment to ensure that the site is opened as a community facility and managed by Manly Council. It was shut in 1999, but the good news is the Department of Education and Training and the council are finalising a contract to deliver that site for community use. We will negotiate with the Department of Education and Training and TAFE to see whether the community space can be used for public education. The good news for the community is that it will be developed in a way that is in line with the local area plan. It is a community building and finally something will be done with that site that will support education, if that is possible, through TAFE and the Department of Education and Training. I thank the community for supporting me. In my role as Treasurer there will be some tough things to do but I assure my community I will be with them 100 per cent of the way.

### **BALMAIN ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Mr JAMIE PARKER** (Balmain) [3.20 p.m.]: I thank the member for Wallsend for allowing me to speak before her to facilitate a meeting I am having later today with the Minister for Planning. I speak today on the matter of infrastructure in my electorate and the importance of recognising the people who work so hard to deliver services in our local community. There has been a great deal of discussion on the matter of infrastructure in the House and today I recognise the role of local government in delivering infrastructure and services to the people of the electorate of Balmain. I acknowledge the role of the City of Sydney and Ashfield councils in delivering services in the suburbs of Glebe, parts of Forest Lodge and Haberfield, but I want to concentrate on the efforts of Leichhardt council, which services the majority of my electorate.

The problems of infrastructure were not just confined to the 16 years of Labor at the State level. In Leichhardt we had the unusual situation of the Labor and Liberal parties voting together from 2004 to 2008 in order to share the position of mayor and control of the council. This led to a period of instability, marked by an inability to deliver on key infrastructure projects. The problem was not funding, as there had been a significant rates increase in 2006; it was a lack of will and direction on the part of the council. One year with a Labor mayor followed by a year with a Liberal mayor is not a recipe for a focused organisation. This was borne out in the 2007-08 financial results where a startling \$24.4 million of spending was carried over, mainly from projects that had been planned and budgeted for in that year but not commenced. That represents almost 75 per cent of rates revenue. It was no wonder that not one Australian Labor Party councillor from that term was re-elected in the 2008 elections.

With the hard work and dedication of all the councillors and staff, the election of the new Greens-led council marked a period of intense activity. Basic infrastructure was delivered by prioritising spending, making savings and investing intelligently. A range of projects were commenced and completed, including the \$7 million redevelopment of the Leichhardt aquatic centre, \$4 million on a new wing and local history archive centre at the Balmain Library, over \$1 million on upgrading the Hannaford Seniors and Community Centre, and a \$3 million upgrade to the wonderful Leichhardt Oval. I acknowledge there was some Federal Government funding for a few of these projects but it was Leichhardt council, its staff and management that got on with the job of delivering the infrastructure.

The council has focused on providing sporting and recreation facilities with the construction of the first new sporting field in the area for over 20 years at the Sydney Secondary College Leichhardt Campus and the redevelopment of nine—yes nine—new community playgrounds to accommodate the growing number of children in the area. Our public toilets have been upgraded and the council doubled investment in footpaths in the first year and increased road re-sheeting expenditure by close to 50 per cent. The council has also refurbished and opened a new occasional childcare centre to increase places and provide quality of service as well as increasing the opening hours of other facilities like the Balmain Library, which, I am proud to say, is now open on Sundays.

But infrastructure needs to be delivered with community support. That is why the council created the budget and parking task force to welcome residents and businesses to talk long-term about financial issues, and abolished fees for freedom of information requests in order to increase transparency. Supporting involvement also means resourcing citizens, so the innovative precinct committee system had its funding almost doubled to support and nourish citizen engagement with council. The provision of affordable and social housing is a major issue in a changing electorate like Balmain. Previously Leichhardt council had no policy on affordable housing. The current council now has a clear policy and has created an affordable and supported housing fund with seed funding of \$850,000. Developing this kind of affordable and supported infrastructure is critical to the future of a diverse community.

I take this opportunity to thank those people in my local area who have contributed to delivering this infrastructure to the community, starting with the current councillors on Leichhardt council. I thank the senior management team and the infrastructure and service delivery managers and staff at the council: Peter Gainsford, Vince Cusumano, Jacob Bennett, Heidi Webb, Tom Haramis, and John Stephens. The key staff members who implement much of the projects, particularly the groundwork, are: Aaron Callaghan, Mandy Smith, George Georgakis from the administration perspective, and Ron Kennedy. I thank Balmain Rozelle and Leichhardt chambers of commerce, and the great people from our local businesses, including Jodie Stewart, Grant Cromer, Simon Dyer, Sonia Komaravalli, Anitra Morgana, and our precinct members. These innovative community and citizen-based committees are run by residents for residents, and supported by the council. They letterbox community members each month letting them know about their meetings and they engage with us.

I thank Christina Ritchie from Balmain; Felicia Findlayson, Rozelle-Iron Cove; David Anderson, Tom Donovan, Kath Hacking, John Braithwaite-Young, Birchgrove; Monica Pellizzari, Leichhardt; Ian Cranwell, Annandale; David Springett, Annandale; David Lawrence, Annandale; Geoffrey Guy, Rozelle-Lilyfield; Glenda Sanders, Rozelle-Lilyfield; and Lindsay Anderson, Tracey Brooks, Sandra Jones, and Pauline Valentine. These people are at the heart of our community. They make a wonderful contribution to our daily lives. It is important that we not only build on the physical infrastructure, which I have mentioned, but also support, acknowledge and reward those people who make such a sterling contribution to our local area.

#### **TRIBUTE TO PAMELA RITA SUNDERLAND**

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD** (Myall Lakes) [3.25 p.m.]: The subject I was going to speak about today has been overtaken by other circumstances. It is with sadness that I refer to the passing of Myall Lakes

oncology warrior Pam Sunderland from Taree, who died on Saturday after a brave battle with cancer. Pamela Rita Sunderland, 73, was a popular and inspirational member of the community and will be sadly missed by all who had the privilege of knowing her. Pam was a special person with extraordinary strength and spirit. I have known Pam and her family for many years. I had the pleasure of being with her on several occasions during the recent election to discuss oncology services for Manning Rural Referral Hospital. I say Pam was extraordinary because she not only had the fight of her life as she battled with cancer but she also chose to speak out and fight for improved oncology services for other cancer sufferers. When first diagnosed with cancer Pam stated in a letter:

Since I was first diagnosed I have been forced to travel to Newcastle many times for follow up treatment and to access oncology specialists.

It must have been such a lonely experience leaving home and leaving behind all support networks to travel distances of up to 160 kilometres to attend appointments, as well as to receive cancer treatment. Pam, like so many other cancer sufferers from the Myall Lakes electorate, spent many hours travelling the busy highway to attend appointments in Newcastle or Port Macquarie. The lack of adequate oncology services at Manning Rural Referral Hospital led to an ongoing battle with the State Labor Government and I know that the former member for Myall Lakes, John Turner, lobbied extensively for improved services for cancer sufferers in the Manning and Great Lakes areas. I am hoping that my future discussions with the Minister for Health on behalf of the medical staff council of Manning Rural Referral Hospital will be positive, and that Pam's fight for better services will be realised.

During her several years of on-and-off treatment for ovarian cancer, Pam had to travel to John Hunter Hospital in Newcastle for chemotherapy, but her most recent treatment was at Manning Base Hospital where there were six beds. She said, "You just can't compare the oncology units at the two hospitals", referring to the atmosphere and amenability, not the level of service or care. "Ours in Taree is a wonderful facility, light and bright, airy and open. It is beautifully located and has wonderful staff. In Newcastle, the 25 to 30 chemotherapy chairs are in the viewless, windowless facility that is dull and dreary and not at all conducive to a positive attitude towards getting better."

Pam was an active campaigner for an improved service in Taree and for some time lobbied politicians, including John Turner the former member for Myall Lakes, the Leader of The Nationals and member for Oxley, Andrew Stoner, and me. She said in her letter, "Having to travel for two hours to and from larger oncology units has always been a trouble for Manning and Great Lakes residents, hard on patients, their drivers, carers and families." She also tells the tragic tale in that letter of a Taree woman who has to catch a bus to and from Newcastle as well as a taxi to take her on a return trip from the bus station to the hospital because she did not have anyone to drive her. Pam thought that was extremely sad.

Considering that the Manning and Great Lakes regions have one of the highest proportions of elderly residents in the State, and given the increasing incidence of cancer, Mrs Sunderland fought to improve the network of care for local people. She will be sadly missed. I extend my condolences to Pam's husband, Colin, to her daughters, Leenne Mullen and Jenine Callaghan, to her son, Darren, to her grandchildren and to all members of Pam's extended family.

### **WIN JUBILEE OVAL KOGARAH REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT**

**Ms CHERIE BURTON** (Kogarah) [3.30 p.m.]: In October 2010 former New South Wales Premier Kristina Keneally announced that \$13 million in additional funding from the New South Wales Government would be granted to complete stage three of the ongoing WIN Jubilee Oval Kogarah Redevelopment Project. The southern and northern wings to the existing western grandstand are now complete as part of the current stage of the project's master plan. This scope of works ensured that WIN Jubilee Oval remained a high-profile iconic sporting event venue in the south of Sydney—a community asset, not only for Dragons players and fans but also for sporting community and school groups.

History will record that the inaugural idea of redeveloping this iconic sporting, events and community venue was realised when a partnership between St George Leagues Club, St George District Rugby League Club and Kogarah council was formed. The Kogarah Jubilee Oval Redevelopment Steering Committee was established in 2002 to oversee future capital improvements. Upon my election in 1999, the St George Dragons did not play at Kogarah. They were playing at the Sydney Football Stadium [SFS], and probably had plans to go to the ANZ Stadium.

It was the partnership between the leagues club, the council and the State Government that attracted the funding that made it possible for the St George-Illawarra Dragons to play at Kogarah. Now we have local matches. It is great for local people to go to the oval and cheer on the Dragons. Redevelopment of Jubilee Oval commenced with stage one in October 2002. Funding came from grants from the State Government, the Kogarah, Hurstville and Rockdale councils, the St George Leagues Club and donations from local businesses and the community. That enabled initial capital improvements to be completed in May 2003 for the return of the St George-Illawarra Dragons to the ground on the day after works were completed.

I commend the fans, the Dragon Army and the Return to Kogarah Group for their great advocacy in ensuring that the Dragons came back to our local oval—to their home at Jubilee. In 2005 the Federal Government provided a grant for stage two of the master plan. Work commenced in June 2005 with the installation of high-definition television lighting, construction of the Kogarah Park training and schools sports field, a community playground, construction of a gymnasium, perimeter concourse and tiered seating including designated areas for wheelchairs, new able-bodied persons and disabled persons toilets, improved access and egress, a community education centre, new perimeter security fencing, and gates. These works were completed in August 2006.

In 2006 and 2009 the State Government provided grants for stage three scope of works to continue the redevelopment of the WIN Jubilee Oval Kogarah. In February 2008 work commenced on the southern wing, and the western grandstand was completed in March 2009. Currently the works are nearing completion of stage three. With grants from Federal, State and local governments, St George Leagues Club, businesses, community groups and supporters, the accumulated funds total \$35 million, of which \$26 million came from the former New South Wales State Government. The funds have been well invested into the redevelopment of the WIN Jubilee Oval Kogarah, which is now one of Sydney's leading sports venues.

I take this opportunity to say that this is an important sporting and community facility. It provides facilities that enable the Dragons to play locally and enables local people to see a local derby, which I firmly support. Two weeks ago I took my children there and we had a great day. There were lots of enjoyable activities for children. Tonight I am going there to address a community drug action team's forum that will be meeting in the community education centre. The builders, SX Projects, ensured that stages two and three of the project were completed on time and within budget. Their effort to complete the northern wing works could be described as an incredible feat.

Construction commenced in November 2010 and was completed, ready for occupancy, by April 2011. I hope the newly elected Government will strongly consider continuing financial support to see through the master plan's completion to stage five. As I stated, the reason I am such a strong supporter of the project is that the complex is a venue for school carnivals, youth sporting groups, cricket events, community events, and meetings of Meals on Wheels participants. It is also a centre for many community services. As I stated earlier, tonight I will be addressing a community drug action team. I commend the Dragons for an outstanding contribution to our local community.

## **MACARTHUR BUSINESS ENTERPRISE CENTRE**

### **YOUTH SOLUTIONS**

**Mr BRYAN DOYLE** (Campbelltown) [3.35 p.m.]: I inform the House of the Macarthur Business Enterprise Centre and Youth Solutions, which are two fine organisations that serve the Campbelltown area. On Wednesday 25 May this year I was fortunate to attend the Macarthur Business Enterprise Centre and Youth Solutions business breakfast that was held at the world-renowned Campbelltown Catholic Club. The meeting was addressed by Darren "The Gun" Flanagan, who is a low-impact explosives expert and who was the architect of the rescue of miners from the Beaconsfield mine disaster. More than 80 members were in attendance at the business breakfast to listen to the inspiring story presented by Darren Flanagan. It was an amazing story of Australian mateship. Like many other industry groups, miners form a strong bond. They exemplify the teamwork that is a prerequisite for success, the skill that is inherent in the Australian workforce, and the courage to overcome adversity. It was a lesson for all people—youth and business people alike.

The business breakfast was conjointly organised by the Macarthur Business Enterprise Centre and Youth Solutions. Macarthur Business Enterprise Centre provides outstanding support to small businesses in the Campbelltown, Camden and Wollondilly areas that form the opal of the south-west of Sydney. The Macarthur Business Enterprise Centre provides small businesses—the key to driving the economy—with access to

guidance, information, networking and events to assist them with achieving success. In addition the Macarthur Business Enterprise Centre provides a business incubator that assists small businesses to establish, or relocate from a home office, or simply to grow and mature. It provides a safe environment in which small businesses can succeed. It should be noted also that as a result of funding from Commonwealth and State governments, the services provided by the Macarthur Business Enterprise Centre are free. The Macarthur Business Enterprise Centre plays a very important role in the development of business growth in the south-west of Sydney. Its work is highly commended. I hope to be able to support the business centre as much as I can.

The co-sponsor for the business breakfast was Youth Solutions, which is a non-government community based, youth drug prevention charity. Youth Solutions was established to provide the Macarthur and Wingecarribee regions of New South Wales with a specialist resource in relation to youth drug and alcohol prevention. Specifically the group develops and maintains drug and alcohol programs in an effort to reduce or prevent drug-related harm among young people. Youth Solutions is a unique service that aims to prevent drug-related tragedies. Its chief executive officer, Debbie Roberts, is a very committed local Campbelltown person. I know that Youth Solutions believes that every young person deserves an opportunity to reach his or her potential and that drug use takes away that potential. Currently unacceptably high rates of youth suicide, drug abuse, homelessness and poverty are taking away the potential of too many young people. Youth Solutions works hard to try to stop this pattern.

Although youth is its primary focus, Youth Solutions aims to educate, inform and support others who play an important role in the lives of our youth. One excellent partnership was with the Campbelltown Catholic Club, which is highly recognised as one of the leading clubs in New South Wales. Only last Tuesday this club stepped in after a major storm and provided alternative accommodation for residents with disabilities after their Warby Street premises were flooded. This enabled them to continue their programs while their building was being repaired. The Campbelltown Catholic Club-Youth Solutions partnership campaign "Don't Be a Random—Plan Safe, Drink Safe, Stay Safe" addressed the problem of youth attitude to alcohol. The club used the results of the campaign survey to improve its service and to help keep young people out of trouble. Youth Solutions, the Macarthur Business Enterprise Centre and the Campbelltown Catholic Club are fine organisations that provide wonderful services to the people of Campbelltown. I commend them to the House.

### STANFORD MERTHYR

**Mr CLAYTON BARR** (Cessnock) [3.40 p.m.]: The small village of Stanford Merthyr in my electorate has a long history. This village would have barely 1,000 residents and probably fewer than 300 houses. However, something important is happening to this village: it is called the Hunter expressway, a project that will have a seriously significant impact on Stanford Merthyr. The village has one road in from the north and another from the south. Unfortunately, the construction of the Hunter expressway will result in the northern road to Stanford Merthyr being cut. The village will be left with one entry and exit via the south road. Presently many people use both roads to connect to surrounding villages, towns and cities such as Kurri Kurri and Maitland. Stanford Merthyr school students travel along both roads to attend this wonderful education facility, but cutting the northern road will prevent some students from being able to do so.

Without laying blame, the background and outline for the expressway project contains many layers going back to 2007. I acknowledge that, of course, the Labor Government was in office at that time. A letterbox drop or mail-out in a neighbouring suburb advised residents that this particular road was part of a complex development. Residents may have difficulty understanding the full nature of the impact of the expressway construction, given that the local council as owners of the road may not have contributed any input to the project or consulted with the Roads and Traffic Authority on whether the road closure was in the original plan. That background does not lay blame on any particular entity: the project is complex. For the local residents to work through all that and learn that the road was to be closed could have been disheartening.

However, let us look forward and consider a solution. During the election campaign the Leader of The Nationals, Andrew Stoner, with his party's candidate for Cessnock, Alison Davy, committed to the residents of Stanford Merthyr that should the Coalition win, a review of the proposed road closure would occur. Time is of the essence. The road is set to be closed in August, only a few short months away, yet no solution has been forthcoming. The trouble is that a single road entry/exit has inherent dangers for such a small community. I am sure I do not need to spell out those dangers to members. A fire emergency would be a high priority as the area is surrounded by bushland. If this small village has only one exit/entry road there is only one option. I am sure residents live in the hope that a fire will not come from that same direction.



In previous years accidents on the front road, which is a main State road, led on many occasions to that road being gridlocked, making entry to and exit from Stanford Merthyr impossible. The current proposal is to construct a roundabout on the single entry/exit main south road. It does not fix the problem. A roundabout is a solution to help people get in and out when a road is congested, but only if that road is open. I bring this matter to the attention of this House to highlight the urgency of this situation. This road is to be closed in August. I call on the Leader of The Nationals to fulfil the commitment he made to the people of Stanford Merthyr. The solution is not simple and will require the cooperation of this Government, local government, the Roads and Traffic Authority, and the local community. I urge the House to find a solution. We need to do all that we can for the good people of Stanford Merthyr.

### **COFFS HARBOUR SHOW**

**Mr ANDREW FRASER** (Coffs Harbour—The Assistant Speaker) [3.45 p.m.]: On 14 May I had the honour of opening the ninety-seventh Coffs Harbour Show at the Coffs Harbour Showground and Recreation Reserve. I congratulate the show organisers, who did a phenomenal job. President Chris Pearson, who is indulging in one of his hobbies, that is, visiting the Isle of Wight in the United Kingdom to watch motorbike racing and to participate in a vintage event, had the support of an excellent show committee. I commend Karen Luke and Margo Caba who doorknocked the entire Coffs Harbour business sector seeking support for the show and to ensure it was a record event.

I commend also two old show committee stalwarts, Francis Black and Brian Navin. Brian is in his nineties and Francis is in her eighties but she looks a lot younger than that. For the three show days Francis worked at the ladies auxiliary stand preparing food and serving the public. Those committee members take on these tasks to give a face to agriculture in the Coffs Harbour area—a face that is disappearing on the North Coast as a result of urbanisation. The region has a strong agriculture sector although these days it is associated more with blueberries and not as many bananas, and cattle breeding is no longer as strong as it was. In reality it is a country show in a fast-changing country town.

The Coffs Harbour Show had its biggest turnout of showgirls. I commend all committee members for organising the show. The ring looked fantastic and the crowd was tremendous. After officially opening the show I conducted a straw poll of attendees. The former Labor Government, without consulting the community, sacked the showground trust and appointed an administrator. It was difficult to determine the administration costs as they had climbed steadily and responsibility for providing a complete show ring fence was returned to the show society rather than to the trust. The administrator removed part of the showground fence, which is appalling. The fence, which in 2010 cost in excess of \$3,000, was erected to seal the arena to stage equine events and the ring parade.

Why was that done? The proposed showground plan of management released last year revealed that the Government wanted to commercialise the showground by taking away a 50-acre asset which since 1914 has been utilised to hold the Coffs Harbour Showground. The only occasions on which the show was not held on that ground were three years during the Second World War. The former Labor Government sought to sell 50 acres in the centre of Coffs Harbour which would have resulted in a phenomenal commercial return on the open market. When asked what should be done people clearly indicated by applause that they wanted the administration of the showground to be returned to the trust. The local people who apply to become part of that trust are appointed by the Minister on behalf of the Government.

The Coffs Harbour Showground and Recreation Reserve is a valuable public asset. Under administration, the Coffs Harbour Soccer Club, for example, improved the ground for its use. Yet it has now been priced out of further use of that ground. I served on that trust for a number of years prior to entering politics and the area was used a phenomenal amount. Unfortunately, it has now dwindled. The public utilise the buildings but it could be used more if a public trust set the prices at a rate that people can afford. I ask the Minister to return it into public hands. I commend the show society on a great job on 14 May. Well done.

### **BOOLAROO PASMINCO SMELTER**

**Mr GREG PIPER** (Lake Macquarie) [3.50 p.m.]: I refer to a number of outstanding matters in relation to the former Pasminco lead and zinc smelter at Boolaroo. The three matters to which I refer emanate from the redevelopment of that site. In 2003, following more than 100 years of lead and zinc smelting, the Pasminco Cockle Creek smelter closed. The smelter had been at the heart of the local community for much of that time.

But, ironically, while it had been the lifeblood of the community for most of its existence, it was lead in blood that sealed its fate. The smelter was an industrial dinosaur that could not be brought up to any standard that would remove the risk to the health of local residents, particularly children, and to the local environment.

It is hard now to see any clear indication of the old operation, other than the large area of cleared and disturbed land that is subject to remediation and being prepared for future uses, including residential, commercial and light industrial. The closure of the smelter was a good thing. However, its legacy continues to impact on the local community through concerns about remediation and the impacts on local business and residential communities of a proposal that would see the existing efficient road access to Boolaroo change dramatically. There is no doubt that site issues are complex, making work difficult for the deed administrator, Ferrier Hodgson, Lake Macquarie City Council and the government agencies that work through these matters to produce the best outcomes for existing and new residents. I thought, however, that we were making progress.

On 13 April at Club Macquarie, Argenton, hundreds of residents left me in no doubt about their views on the development proposals by Ferrier Hodgson that would have seen the loss of a direct and convenient access to Boolaroo. The meeting called on me to raise the issue with the Government. I wrote to the Minister for Roads and Ports and the Minister for the Hunter. In early May I met with Ferrier Hodgson, which agreed that it would not proceed with the contentious proposal but indicated that it needed a timely solution. Since then, Ferrier Hodgson has met with Lake Macquarie City Council officers, and a number of alternatives have been examined. At this point in time there is no resolution to this issue, even though there has been some minor reduction in the impact of the Ferrier Hodgson preferred proposal.

The matter has not advanced as much as the local community had hoped. I understand that Ferrier Hodgson and its agents are still seeking to have a road network constructed that will be detrimental to the local community and will deny residents the historic and logical direct and convenient access to their residential area and, importantly for them, to the commercial sector. They believe this will impact on the viability of that commercial centre, and I agree with them. The issue has been impacted on by what I consider to be a lack of genuine assistance from the Roads and Traffic Authority. We are dealing with a road network that has to interface with the main road network so the Roads and Traffic Authority should take a broader view than just examining the impact on the main road.

It should consider also the impact on the broader community. I call on the Minister once again to assist in this matter. Another issue of great concern in the local area is the implementation of the Lead Abatement Strategy, a very controversial proposal that would see residential properties have their soil tested and, depending on thresholds of contamination in the soil, either removed and replaced or capped. The community is concerned because some people believe residents should not participate in the strategy. The strategy has been locked in by the NSW Department of Environment and Climate Change and I believe there is no alternative other than to participate. The strategy is available until the end of July.

I urge people to take up this option. I note the member for Wallsend who is in the Chamber has constituents who are similarly affected. The area is a fantastic location. The contamination will only reduce now that the source of pollution has gone but the Lead Abatement Strategy option is only available until the end of July. Another outstanding issue relates to section 149 certificates and what the council places on those certificates. That is a debate for the future—and I believe it will be had because people are passionate about this issue. The protection of our children is very important, and I urge those in the community who are affected to participate in the Lead Abatement Strategy as it is their only chance.

#### **FRENCHS FOREST LIONS FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY**

**Mr JONATHAN O'DEA** (Davidson) [3.55 p.m.]: Volunteers and volunteer organisations are the backbone of our society. They do so much good to establish and maintain our social infrastructure. They must be nurtured and valued. I want to highlight one such organisation in my electorate of Davidson. The Lions Club of Frenchs Forest is celebrating years of service to its community and enjoying good fellowship along the way. I note that Warringah Council and the *Manly Daily* have already honoured this admirable milestone in different ways. The club had its inaugural meeting in June 1961, in the days of the infamous blinking light at the intersection of Warringah Road and Wakehurst Parkway. The blinking light has long gone but the Frenchs Forest Lions are still lighting the way as much as ever. One of the Charter Lions from 50 years ago, John Diamond, is still with the club today.

The Frenchs Forest Lions Club is believed to be the first service club in the area in the days when the area was changing from an allotment area with small farms on a high sandstone plateau to a suburban part of

Sydney. Early meetings were held in the Windmill Restaurant, Belrose, and after a number of moves they are now held in the Belrose Bowling Club. Service to the community is at the core of the club's activities. Charity fundraising activities over the years have included chicken raffles, art exhibitions, golf carnivals, trots nights, coin collections, and the longstanding Lions activities of chocolate wheels, and Lion's mints and Christmas cakes. Annual charity golf carnivals, in conjunction with the Wakehurst Golf Club, have been a major project for the club during the past decade, resulting in donations of more than \$200,000 to various children's health programs.

Charities and organisations supported by the club include local schools, youth groups, facilities for the disabled, the Salvation Army, the Red Cross and its mobile blood bank, cancer research, Save Our Sight programs and medical research. The club also assisted in funding the Paul Jackman Memorial Power Surf Boat, one of the first on the northern beaches. As can be seen from those activities, the primary mission of the club is highlighting a number of important organisations and functions in our society and then raising much-needed funds for facilities and equipment. It is a bit like the Australian Overseas Assistance Program, through which people in need of food are not given fish but provided with fishing rods and taught how to use them.

Similarly, the club does not drive for Meals on Wheels but provides buses for others to drive. Lions bring to clubs their experience and knowhow from a wide variety of occupations. That is the case with Frenchs Forest Lions Club. I wish to pay tribute to its President, Tony Philips, and all members of its board—both past and present—as well as the current active membership of more than 30 Lions. One of the challenges facing service clubs these days is how to attract new members. The need for service clubs is as strong as ever, but the Frenchs Forest Lions are conscious that they need to change how they present themselves to the community and recruit new members.

I look forward to the club celebrating 50 years of service at a special dinner later this month. I am sure the Lions members' company will be enjoyable and welcoming, as it always is. It certainly was at the recent annual volunteer awards dinner with Ku-ring-gai Lions and at the special Lions fundraiser held in New South Wales Parliament House last week in support of Barry Palmer's campaign to become the second Vice-President of Lions International, a pathway to being the first Australian President of Lions International. I wish the Lions movement well, and may the Frenchs Forest Lions Club continue to serve its community for another half century, and beyond.

#### **WALLSEND DISTRICT CRICKET CLUB**

**Ms SONIA HORNERY** (Wallsend) [4.00 p.m.]: Dare to be great. This is a mantra we all could use. It takes courage and then resilience to attain greatness. This is the motto—may I say article of faith—of the Wallsend District Cricket Club, the Tigers. Recently I was privileged to attend the presentation night of this worthy local sporting outfit, and it was a fabulous night. Indeed, the invitation asked attendees to bring a wheelbarrow to take home their trophies. Players, officials, families, supporters, dedicated volunteers and other guests enjoyed a night of camaraderie as they acknowledged the season's achievements and looked to the challenges of the future. The second and fourth graders were proud semi-finalists, and all involved had triumphed by participating and daring to be great.

The Tigers are affiliated with Country Cricket NSW and the Newcastle District Cricket Association. To say they have a proud history is putting it mildly. One has only to look at their website to see that they are a highly credentialed and long-existing club, which was established in 1925. The club has four senior grade teams and 15 junior teams, along with a junior cricket academy to develop young players. The club's membership, including players and non-players, totals more than 500. All members have strong local ties, some with business ties in the wider Newcastle and lower Hunter areas.

Anyone driving into Newcastle off the F3 link into Thomas Street drives past Wallsend No. 1 oval, the Tigers' home ground. This ground was formerly owned by the Wallsend Coal Company and was eventually handed to Newcastle City Council. In 1925 the Wallsend District Cricket Club became affiliated with the Newcastle District Cricket Association, but it did not begin to hit its straps until the 1930s, when it won a raft of titles. Again, the club went through a few lean years until the early to mid 1960s when it again reached prominence. In the 1969-70 season the first grade tied with Merewether in the final, with 164 runs each. The 1970s were a triumph for the club, with numerous titles, but many members remember the 1990s as perhaps the club's best era ever. In that decade it won 18 finals and 10 minor titles.

During their incredible 79 seasons, the Tigers have had the usual rollercoaster ride experienced by sporting teams, with which they are all familiar, but they have always come up trumps with hard-fought competition, mateship and sportsmanship. An enduring and faithful support base has helped. Tigers players have gone on to represent New South Wales, and there have been former test players. But the two moments that will

be frozen in the collective memories of all 500 members must surely be in the 2005-06 season when the Tigers played at the Sydney Cricket Ground and won the Country Cup final and in 2006-07 when the first grade won its eighth grand final, including the spectacular tied game with Merewether I referred to earlier. Once again, they had dared to be great.

When I did some research for this speech I discovered that the Tigers have several other favourite phrases—a couple of which are unrepeatable but funny nevertheless—and one that encapsulates their philosophy: "Success isn't something that just happens—success is learned, success is practised and then it is shared". The final stanza in the club song includes the words "So if you wanna play good cricket and you wanna be told, play for Wallsend in the black and gold". I will leave the last words to Peter Hanna, the Chairman of the Wallsend District Cricket Club, who said:

Wallsend District Cricket Club has a proud 75-year history of providing sporting opportunities for, and putting back into, our local Wallsend community. Our continued primary focus is to provide opportunities for our local youth to develop and grow within the Club's culture of healthy competition, mateship and sense of community.

Bravo, Peter and the Wallsend Tigers.

### **THE SCOTS COLLEGE SIXTIETH ANNUAL PARADE OF REMEMBRANCE**

**Ms GABRIELLE UPTON** (Vaucluse—Parliamentary Secretary) [4.05 p.m.]: Last Sunday evening I attended the Scots College Sixtieth Annual Parade of Remembrance in Bellevue Hill, which is in the electorate of Vaucluse. The Scots College is a large private boys school with a strong Scottish Presbyterian tradition of academics, sport, pipes and drums, cadets and community service. This parade is significant as it commemorates the profound service and sacrifice of the Scots College old boys and staff in times of conflict. It reflects on the nation-building role played by these ex-servicemen, and it pays great tribute to their honour, strength and tenacity, born of camaraderie and team spirit. The first parade was held in 1932. At that time it was more about farewelling cadets who were leaving the school.

But from about 1952 a tradition began, where the parade began to remember the sacrifices made by students and staff in the many global conflicts in which Australian servicemen have served since the Boer War. Let me paint a picture about what happened on Sunday night. It was truly a spectacle to remember. It was a very cold evening. The rain was tempting—it was coming and going. The 1,000-strong crowd at the event sat on the bleachers in the school oval. The old boys pipes and drums and the school orchestra regaled us with music that set the mood for reflection on the important remembrance of those who gave their lives in service to our country. As the dark settled the oval was flooded in blue and yellow lighting, and it silhouetted the large number of cadets in army fatigues and band members in their Black Watch tartan parading on the field.

History and Scottish tradition loom large at the Scots College. The college boasts the largest school boy cadet unit and pipes and drums unit in Australia. The cadet unit was formed in 1899 under the patronage of the New South Wales Scottish Rifles. The band has attended 10 tattoos and won many State and national pipe band championships. Indeed, it is currently preparing to return to the 2012 Edinburgh Military Tattoo. The Governor of New South Wales, Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir, attended the event as a special guest, and she was the parade reviewing officer. She was accompanied into the oval by New South Wales mounted police and heralded by the Scots College pipes and drums, the old boys pipes and drums, defence veterans and current serving Defence Force personnel who had a connection to the college.

Such was the spectacle I have described that local residents lined the surrounding streets to catch a glimpse of the ceremony unfolding before their eyes. As the local member I extend my congratulations to the leadership of the Scots College on its remembrance day parade. It was truly worthy of the old boys and staff who sacrificed their lives to keep our country free. The parade also celebrated the particular traditions of the Scots College in that regard. I also extend my best wishes to our local Returned and Services League sub-branches, including Rose Bay, North Bondi and the Waverley-Bondi Junction RSL, as well as our local War Widows Guild, which also keeps alive our remembrance of those who bravely sacrificed themselves for all of us. Their regular commemorations, and in particular their commemorations on Anzac Day, are a highlight of our calendar in the eastern suburbs and the seat of Vaucluse for the honour and respect they give to those who lost their lives for the freedom and opportunity we enjoy and value.

### **ITALIAN NATIONAL DAY**

**Mr JOHN SIDOTI** (Drummoyne) [4.10 p.m.]: It is with great pleasure that I report to the House on a wonderful event, which many members of my community attended. It was my great honour to stand alongside

the Italian-Australian community of New South Wales in celebrating the Italian National Day, better known as Festa della Repubblica. I was also delighted to convey Premier Barry O'Farrell's warm greetings to the organisers of this unique event, held at Club Marconi, and to the vast number of community members who proudly bear their Italian heritage. The celebration commemorates 2 June 1946, the day on which dictatorial rule fell and democracy was established in Italy. It is therefore a highly significant occasion for all Italians across New South Wales and indeed Australia, embedding the expression of Italian history, heritage, folklore and arts.

The historical establishment of democracy in Italy was followed by social developments that were previously unthinkable, including large-scale Italian immigration and the opening of Australian doors to the Italian workforce in need of employment and settlement. Italian contribution to Australia through post-World War II mass immigration became an event of historical proportions for Australia. Many Italians came to work on the Warragamba Dam from 1948 and on the Snowy Mountains scheme the following year—and they stayed and formed large families, and became an important part of the great life we have in this country. It is worth noting that the 2006 census recorded some 852,000 claims to Italian ancestry in Australia, of which 27 per cent, or 231,000, were claims by people who lived in New South Wales or had one parent or both of Italian ancestry.

Overall, the event was highly successful. The many significant achievements by the Italian community in Australia and New South Wales are worth celebrating alongside the establishment of a democratic republic in Italy in 1946. For many decades, Italy and Australia have strongly developed their bilateral relations, agreements and trade, and today Italy is our fifth-largest export market in the European Union. The New South Wales Government is very proud of the valuable contribution made by the Italian-Australian community in many ways to the life and development of our State, and looks forward to developing further this productive and harmonious relationship. I take this opportunity to congratulate and thank many of the distinguished guests in attendance at this very productive function, one of whom was the Italian Consul General, Dr Benedetto Latteri. This was possibly his last public function in New South Wales, as I believe he will now take up another post in China. I congratulate Dr Latteri and wish him all the best in his future endeavour.

I also note distinguished guests the Hon. Chris Bowen, Minister for Immigration, and the chairman of Club Marconi, Mr Vince Foti, and his wife, Liz. Their hospitality was fantastic and I commend them on the great work they are doing for a wonderful club. Also present were the member for Fairfield, Mr Gaetano Zangari, who gave a very colourful speech on which I congratulate him; John Caputo, who is the chairman of the Italian National Day celebrations; Councillor Frank Oliveri from Fairfield council and Councillor Albert Mooshi; and the member for Smithfield, Mr Andy Rohan. Overall, it was a fantastic event. It is amazing how an event so far from my electorate drew so many people from my electorate. I highly recommend the celebration and hope that other local council areas and electorates—particularly those with a significant Italian population—will capitalise and promote this wonderful event.

### **PHILIPPINES NATIONAL DAY**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE** (Bathurst—Parliamentary Secretary) [4.15 p.m.]: It is very pleasing that I am able to stand here today and talk about a very significant event in which I will be involved. Philippines National Day will be celebrated in the Bathurst electorate on Saturday. It will be the 113th Philippines National Day and the third that I will be attending. Each year it is held at the entrance to the city of Bathurst and it is a wonderful event to be involved in. Usually at this time of year it is fairly cold in the morning, so it is great to see a large crowd of people turn up. There are various organisers, including Bathurst Regional Council and the Filipiniana Friends Group of Bathurst and the Central West, which has made a lot of connections with the Filipino community living in Bathurst, Lithgow, Oberon and the Blue Mountains, and many of them make the trip for the annual event.

It is also very important because it is an event that celebrates what happened 113 years ago, when the Filipino community struggled for freedom from their Spanish colonial masters. These people are proud of their heritage and proud to be Australian citizens—and they are some of the finest people I have ever met. They have a strong work ethic, respect for education and high Christian values. They are very much involved in Australian life. In my community, many are business owners and family people involved in employment—whether in health or the environment areas—and they are very active in the community.

The ceremony is a flag-raising ceremony. By the Macquarie River there are six flagpoles that the Lions Club has set up and one flies a Philippines flag measuring six metres by three metres. It is the largest Philippines flag in the Southern Hemisphere and we are very proud to be able to fly it in Bathurst. We also raise the Australian flag at the flag-raising ceremony to show that the Australian and Filipino communities can stand side

by side and work strongly together. The Lions Club, which provides the flags, does tremendous work in raising flags at Lions Park. Quite often throughout the year, flags are flown on the national days of other countries or for other significant events. The Consul General will also be involved and her staff will attend. We look forward to meeting them. Nenita Lopez-Weekes needs to be congratulated. She is the President of the Filipiniana Friends Group of Bathurst and the Central West and her organisation and her hard work need to be recognised.

After the flag-raising ceremony takes place, we go to the St Michael and St John hall where there is usually great cuisine for everybody to enjoy, and dancing and other activities that everyone can join in. We are all entertained, and proud and pleased to be involved. The Filipino community has had a very strong connection with the Bathurst Regional Council. A number of years ago several hundred dollars was spent buying books for the library. This literature was bought so that people could find out about the history, culture and life of people of the Philippines. It is a great resource, which many people in Bathurst enjoy—especially the youth of the community. It is with pleasure that I am able to stand here today and speak about this wonderful event next Saturday at which I will be very proud to represent the New South Wales Parliament.

### ITALIAN UNIFICATION 150TH ANNIVERSARY

**Mr CHARLES CASUSCELLI** (Strathfield) [4.20 p.m.]: I bring to the attention of the House that this week, many tens of thousands of Italians and Australians celebrated the 150th Anniversary of the Unification of Italy. I am an immigrant from that land that changes governments as often as we change our socks. Since World War II there have been 61 changeovers of governments in my birth country of Italy—this is true democracy in action according to my father. If the number of changes of government was the measure, I would argue that Italy is the greatest democracy in recent history. What is democracy, if not the ability for a people to chuck out its government if they feel that their government no longer represents their interests? Italians are very good at making their interests known to whoever is willing to listen to them—and in some cases even if you do not want to listen to them. It has been said by someone important, "It is not impossible to govern Italians. It is merely useless."

The history of the country that prompted that observation, and specifically its unification, is a grand story of struggle, of war, of set-backs, of hope and of vision. A series of political and military events resulted in a unified Kingdom of Italy in 1861. The principal players included Giuseppe Mazzini, an Italian patriot, who spearheaded a national revolutionary movement. Another player was Count Camillo di Cavour who became Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Sardinia in 1852. A third player in this epic event was Giuseppe Garibaldi, who was an Italian nationalist revolutionary hero and leader in the struggle for Italian unification and independence. A united Italy was finally established in 1861. Since then, the term "Italian diaspora" refers to the large-scale migration of Italians away from Italy in the period roughly beginning with the unification of Italy in 1861 and ending with the Italian economic miracle in the 1960s. The Italian diaspora involved nearly 25 million Italians and it is considered the biggest mass migration of contemporary times.

My parents, Domenico and Maria Casuscelli, my brother, Antonio, and I were part of this mass migration. On a world stage Italians have greatly influenced and contributed to science, the arts, technology, culture, cuisine, sport and banking. Let us reflect for a moment on the names and achievements of the following: Archimedes—I know most of you did not think he was Italian, but he actually was; Enrico Fermi; Galileo Galilei; Alessandro Volta; Dante Alighier, known as Dante; Thomas Aquinas; Eugenio Barsanti, who developed the first internal combustion engine driven by gas; Enrico Caruso; Giovanni Caselli, who invented the first fax; Francesco Cirio, who developed the concept of putting vegetables in cans in 1856, much to our shame; Christopher Columbus, who influenced global exploration for decades if not centuries; and Leonardo Da Vinci. I could go on.

Italian people are generally known for their regionalism, attention to clothing and modern fashion—note myself—family values and devoutness to the Christian faith, and its association with the Catholic Church. Arguably their greatest contribution to Western civilization was writing and the Latin script. My view is that their greatest contributions, albeit more recently, include Sophia Loren, Gina Lollobrigida, the Roma Football Club—currently sixth on the Italian Soccer League table—Ferrari motor vehicles, chianti wine, pasta, pizza, lasagna, risotto, tiramisu, and panettone.

There has been little acknowledgement of the Italian connection with Australia's history, but let it be known that in 1770 when Captain James Cook sailed his ship, the *Endeavour*, into Botany Bay one of his crew was an Italian seaman named Antonio Ponto. The first Italian to set foot on Australian soil did so at the very beginning of the colony's "official" history. But he was not the first Italian to actually see Australia. In 1520,

Ferdinand Magellan's voyage to the Pacific Ocean included a number of Italian crewmen. One, Antonio Pigafetta, recorded the epic journey in his log. Later, in 1789, Alessandro Malaspina led a scientific voyage to the South Pacific on behalf of the Spanish crown. In the early 1800s a small number of Italian convicts was unfortunate enough to be arrested by the British and transported to the penal colony in New South Wales. But let us get this straight: the majority of prisoners were from the British Isles, not from Italy.

In conclusion let me say that the impact of Italian immigrants on the development of our country cannot be overstated in mining, infrastructure including roads, railways, water and ports, farming, small business and professional services. Let all of us rejoice and join with our Italian friends and neighbours in celebrating the 150th anniversary of the birth of a nation that has contributed so much on a global and national scale and even local community scale.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 4.25 p.m. until  
Tuesday 14 June 2011 at 1.00 p.m.**

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