

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Tuesday 21 June 2011

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

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

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT AMENDMENT (ELECTIONS) BILL 2011

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

### DESTINATION NSW BILL 2011

#### Agreement in Principle

**Debate resumed from 17 June 2011.**

**Mr PAUL LYNCH** (Liverpool) [10.00 a.m.]: I lead for the Opposition in debate on the Destination NSW Bill 2011, which is not opposed by the Opposition. The object of the bill, which was provided to the Opposition on Friday last, is to establish Destination NSW as a government agency having functions in relation to the development of tourism and the procuring of major events. The main purpose of the bill is effectively a bureaucratic one, to merge the two public agencies of Tourism NSW and Events NSW to form Destination NSW, which will have two separate divisions. The agency will also, as we understand it, be accompanied by a Visitor Economy Taskforce, which, the Government says, will be charged with developing a strategy to double tourism expenditure in New South Wales by 2020. The agency will comprise a director general of Destination NSW and three industry representatives. In addition, Destination NSW will also, as we understand it, take on the role previously assigned to the greater Sydney partnership for the marketing brand "Sydney".

The functions of Destination NSW are set out in clause 13 of the bill and include marketing and promoting New South Wales as a tourist destination and as a destination for the hosting of major events; to promote travel to and within New South Wales; to promote major events; to identify, attract and procure major events for New South Wales; to develop tourism ventures; to implement strategic plans, as approved by the Minister from time to time; to prepare at least three months before the beginning of each financial year of Destination NSW a corporate and business plan for approval by the Minister; to prepare, on such occasions as the board requires, an operation plan for approval by the board; to construct, establish, maintain and operate tourist facilities; to establish, maintain and conduct enterprises relating to tourism; to provide travel and information services relating to tourism; to market travel and related services; and to carry out, or arrange for the carrying out of, research in relation to tourism and major events.

I would appreciate a response from the Minister in due course about a number of matters. If the Government is effectively merging agencies will that lead to any job losses? What will be the employment consequences arising from this bill? There seems to have been one job loss already as, according to weekend newspapers, Mr Parmenter has resigned from Events NSW. Beyond that position, what is likely to happen to employees of the organisation? I ask the Minister how this will affect the Government's commitment to allegedly reduce advertising. It seems to me that, if the Government is to be taken seriously and applying the normal meanings of words in the English language, the significant number of functions of the body referred to in clause 13 must lead to increased advertising. That seems to be contrary to some of the objectives and claims that have been made by the Government. I would appreciate it if the Minister could clarify that.

As we got the bill only last Friday, the forensic analysis that one would like to apply to a document such as this has not been possible in such a short time. I am also interested to know whether any other consequential amendments to other legislation will be made as a result of this bill. It seems to me there might need to be some that have not been referred to in the bill, and clarification from the Minister in that regard would be of assistance also. I note that Destination NSW will get a property acquisition power under clause 16, and that is probably not unreasonable. However, one's attention is always drawn when new government bodies are set up with powers to acquire property.

Has the Government given any thought to precisely what sort of property it is looking at acquiring? What are the parameters for that? Another matter about which the Opposition would like some clarification is what Destination NSW means for regional New South Wales. Much of the rhetoric around the legislation seems to be Sydney-centric, almost Sydney central business district-centric. Where does it fit in with rural and regional New South Wales, which includes Wollongong and Newcastle? That information would be of use to the Opposition.

Visitors to New South Wales inject more than \$28.2 billion a year into the New South Wales economy, directly supporting 162,500 jobs—which is nearly 5 per cent of all jobs in New South Wales. New South Wales attracts more tourists than any other Australian State or Territory, with approximately 36.3 per cent of all international and domestic overnight visitors coming to New South Wales in the year ending September 2010. Of our domestic visitors for that period, New South Wales attracted 23.4 million overnight visitors, who spent more than \$12.5 billion during their stay. In that period New South Wales retained its lead on the international front with the number of international visitors to New South Wales increasing by 6.6 per cent in the September 2010 quarter, which is above the national average increase in visitors of 5.6 per cent. Visitor nights were also up by 8.8 per cent in that quarter.

There has been a long history of attempts to support tourism. In November 2008 the former Government showed its commitment to the tourism industry with an investment of an additional \$40 million over three and a half years on top of Tourism NSW's recurrent budget to implement a new tourism strategy for New South Wales. In the first year of that strategy's implementation quite a significant amount was achieved. The target for tourism in the State Plan was reset, and became 160.6 million visitor nights by 2015-16, which would see \$19.2 billion in visitor spending. Two new tourism campaigns were launched for Sydney and regional New South Wales worth approximately \$22 million a year. The new campaigns were launched domestically and in New Zealand, China, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

The role of the Tourism NSW board was strengthened by creating three new industry reference groups: Sydney, regional and international. New ministerial taskforces were established to address tourism issues relating to education, planning and investment, local government and national parks. The Tourism and National Parks Taskforce was established to report on ways to promote and protect the State's natural and cultural heritage values while allowing appropriate use of national parks and reserves. One of the important recommendations of that taskforce was realised with the passing of the National Parks and Wildlife Amendment (Visitors and Tourists) Bill 2010.

The Tourism Planning and Investment Taskforce was established to give advice on ways to increase tourism-friendliness in the planning system and to attract tourism investment. The Tourism and Education Taskforce was established to identify supply and demand strategic issues to inform the New South Wales Tourism Industry Plan and to develop an Education Tourism Plan for New South Wales. The ministerial Tourism and Local Government Taskforce was established to develop recommendations to encourage local councils to improve and better integrate local government planning for tourism into their overall planning processes.

A significant amount of work has been done in recent years to support tourism. Certainly a number of the matters I have referred to, and other initiatives, were based on the O'Neill report, which was developed in 2008. Certainly that has direct relevance to this bill and to this proposal. If we are talking about what came out of the O'Neill report, it is perhaps important to get the whole picture and not just a part of it. As I indicated at the outset, the Opposition does not oppose the bill.

**Mr ANDREW GEE** (Orange) [10.12 a.m.]: I support the Destination NSW Bill 2011. As Minister Souris has previously stated, the bill establishes a statutory body, Destination NSW, to market and promote New South Wales, undertake event acquisition and implement strategies to double tourism expenditure by 2020. Whilst New South Wales enjoys a strong reputation for the high-quality tourism that visitors can experience in this State, the bill recognises that we can do more to promote regional and rural New South Wales as a destination of first choice for visitors from Australia and overseas so that tourism in our regions reaches its full potential.

The tourism and events industries generate billions of dollars a year and support and create tens of thousands of jobs in communities throughout regional and rural areas. In fact, in many country and coastal towns tourism is the lifeblood of their economies. The New South Wales Government is committed to helping hardworking regional and rural tourism operators and event organisers attract more visitors and make a significant contribution to building up local economies throughout New South Wales. This is vitally important in the Central West, where our growing tourism industry needs the valuable support that this bill provides.

How does this bill support tourism in New South Wales, including in the Central West? The creation of Destination NSW unifies tourism bodies in New South Wales and gives them a single voice and stronger focus. One need look no further than clause 13 of the bill to see how valuable this legislation will be. Clause 13 (1) sets out the functions of Destination NSW. Paragraph (a) of clause 13 (1) provides that one of the functions of Destination NSW is to promote New South Wales as a tourist destination and as a destination for hosting major events. Paragraph (b) of clause 13 (1) provides that another object is to promote travel to and within New South Wales. We need a body to do just that in regional New South Wales and, in particular, in Central West New South Wales.

Orange and Mudgee have both gained international reputations for their outstanding wines and food. I note with some pride that Angullong Wines, which is operated by the entrepreneurial Crossing family in Orange, are served in this Parliament. Recently I visited Stein Wines in Mudgee and saw another great example of a tourism drawcard. Indeed, if you visit Mudgee on the weekends you will struggle to find a parking spot in the main street because of the growing numbers of tourists visiting the region from Sydney. Orange hosts its annual wine week and Mudgee hosts its annual wine festival and wine show. Orange also hosts an annual food week, which I had the pleasure of opening just a couple of months ago with a key organiser, Cynthia Jarratt.

Destination NSW will provide direct benefits not only to the hoteliers and restaurateurs of regional New South Wales but also to our winemakers and primary producers. Destination NSW will not only benefit our major regional centres around New South Wales but our smaller towns as well. I draw the attention of the House to another beautiful town in my electorate, Molong. The main street of Molong is National Trust classified and there are many beautiful heritage buildings throughout the town. Increasing tourism will have a positive effect on historic towns such as Bathurst, Mudgee, Orange and Dubbo.

Another object of the bill as provided by paragraph (j) of clause 13 (1) is to establish, maintain and conduct enterprises relating to tourism. Tourist facilities across New South Wales will benefit from the support of Destination NSW. One such facility in my electorate is the Gulgong Pioneers Museum. Gulgong was the scene of one of this State's great gold rushes. It is the former home of Henry Lawson and has 130 National Trust classified buildings. It is now home to one of Australia's best collections of artefacts and displays of our pioneering past.

Paragraph (e) of clause 13 (1) provides that one of the functions of Destination NSW is to develop tourism ventures, and by so doing innovation in tourism will be fostered. Many people in regional New South Wales will be delighted to hear that. One area that I hope will be a beneficiary of the bill is the Cumnock area. The residents of the Cumnock and Yeoval areas were concerned that tourists driving from Orange to Dubbo were bypassing their towns. So they decided to do something about it. Led by the 2010 New South Wales Woman of the Year, Christine Weston, they developed the world's longest sculpture trail; 120 kilometres long with about 50 sculptures of animals riding bikes. Some of the sculptures are more than two metres high. They are displayed in farm paddocks and house yards from Cumnock through to Yeoval and Dubbo. I have taken my own children to see them and I can vouch for this initiative's effectiveness.

I cannot now drive past the Cumnock turnoff at Molong without impassioned pleas from my children to drive past the animals on bikes sculpture display. These types of initiatives will benefit from Destination NSW. Paragraph (i) of clause 13 (1) provides that another function of Destination NSW is to construct, establish, maintain and operate tourist facilities. Again, this is great news for the people of regional New South Wales. Tourist attractions such as the world famous Wellington Caves, the Burrendong Dam, which holds three and a half times more water than Sydney Harbour, and the Burrendong Arboretum, which is home to 200 species of Australian trees and wildflowers, all add to the economic lifeblood of my electorate. I know that there are similar attractions in other electorates such as Bathurst, Dubbo and Myall Lakes—indeed all across regional New South Wales—that provide valuable economic support to their communities.

Besides the obvious benefits that it will have on regional New South Wales, the bill is important because it will unify Tourism NSW and Events NSW. It will stop the duplication of effort and improve coordination in our tourism planning. Under the previous administration events were slipping over New South Wales's borders to our north, south and west. The Kiwis may have pinched a few of our events as well. We had leaky tourism borders, and this bill will move to protect those tourism borders. I note that a recently released report listed 15 conventions between now and August 2016 that Sydney will not host because other State governments supported bids with financial and logistical support and the previous New South Wales Government did not.

That constitutes hundreds of millions of dollars in lost revenue and tens of thousands of visitors heading to capital cities in other States. John O'Neill was so disillusioned that he left Events NSW. We cannot let that continue, and that is why Destination NSW and this legislation are so important. When in opposition the New South Wales Coalition made an election commitment to establish Destination NSW, and this bill delivers on that commitment. The Coalition has set an aggressive target: to double tourism expenditure by 2020. Tourism's role in rebuilding the New South Wales economy is critical. Tourism consumption in New South Wales contributes \$28.7 billion to the New South Wales economy and directly provides over 160,000 jobs.

Tourism in New South Wales provides more jobs than agriculture, forestry, fishing and the mining industries combined. Events contribute significantly to tourism in New South Wales. The establishment of Destination NSW will provide a coordinated, united approach and will increase our capability to create new opportunities to make Sydney and New South Wales a global destination of choice for national and international visitors. We need New South Wales, and in particular regional New South Wales, to grow and prosper. For this to happen we need regional tourism to grow and prosper and we need Destination NSW. That is why I strongly commend this bill to the House.

**Mr RYAN PARK** (Keira) [10.19 a.m.]: I thank the Government for bringing in this bill. We will not be opposing the bill; indeed we support its principles. As a member representing a regional New South Wales electorate, as do many in this place, including Madam Speaker, I know how important it is to get tourism and major events right. I shall speak in some detail about this. One of the first things I did when I was elected to this place was to write to Events NSW and to the Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Hospitality and Racing. I encouraged the Minister to ask the Events NSW board to come down to the Illawarra so that people like me and you, Madam Speaker, my colleagues on this side of the Chamber, local council representatives and, most importantly, industry representatives can get the ear of the key tourist drivers and tourist brains across New South Wales.

It is vitally important that the tourism focus is well beyond the inner city area. Those of us in regional New South Wales know how important it is to get tourism and major events right. With all due respect to our colleagues in Sydney-based seats, events that come to Sydney are fantastic, but often they are accessible to only a relatively small number of people. Those in regional New South Wales need to be able to access first-class events as well. If this bill is about making sure that Tourism NSW and Events NSW work together to better drive tourism and major events in regional areas, then there will be no bigger supporter of the bill than I will be. I really hope that that is what the bill is about, and that it does not merely provide for a name change.

I ask the Minister again to enable regional representatives to engage with Events NSW in a bipartisan way, because I come from a community that is doing it tough with regard to employment, a community that has had its fair share of hardships in recent years, and a community that has its advantages but also disadvantages in being so close to Sydney. I would like the board of Events NSW and key players in Tourism NSW, in the newly combined Destination NSW, to leave Sydney for a weekend and come down to places such as the Illawarra and talk with me, my colleagues and local councils to see what we can do to have more skin in the game and get major events in the Illawarra.

Governments are not solely responsible for driving tourism in regions. It should not be this Government's responsibility or any government's responsibility to do that alone. I am certainly not about big government and ensuring that government becomes involved in every little commercial activity that goes on, but I would like Destination NSW to have a renewed focus on regional areas. That is because tourism and major events in these areas are their lifeblood: they help to sustain local economies. Big economies, such as in Sydney, can afford not to have certain things go exactly the way they want when it comes to tourism and major events—because in the city events are going on every day and every weekend. But those of us in regional communities need more skin in the game and a renewed focus by the new body so that it will engage in a bipartisan way with members of Parliament and local government authorities to drive economic growth in our region.

I pay credit to a number of people in Tourism Wollongong, led by Mr Greg Binskin, a gentleman whom you know very well, Madam Speaker. He drives an enormous amount of growth in the local tourism industry. I have been particularly impressed with his drive. I have had several meetings with officers from Wollongong council, who are stumping up significant investment to try to attract and retain major events in the Illawarra region. I have spoken with officers from Wollongong City Council and made them aware of my passion about this matter. They know that I will do everything I can to have the Minister—who is now present in the House—and Events NSW come to the Illawarra, spend a couple of days down there and talk to tourist leaders and local elected representatives about what we need to do, working together, to drive tourism.

Tourism, like many policy areas in this place, should enjoy a bipartisan approach, because we all benefit from a healthy and robust tourist industry. We all benefit from a healthy and robust major events industry. Members who represent regional electorates—most of those present in the Chamber at the moment are from regional areas, and that is fantastic—know that we particularly benefit when major events and major tourist attractions are held in our regions. As a person who is extremely proud of where he comes from, I also recognise that we have our fair share of difficulties. We have higher than average unemployment. We have challenges in attracting major events to the Illawarra simply because at times we are too close to Sydney and it is too easy for operators to base themselves in Sydney.

I want Tourism NSW to take the lead. When it has a major event coming to Sydney—and I use the example of a major rugby game—I would love the Minister and Destination NSW to say to those proposing to come to Sydney to host a major event, "Yes, we will support you; yes, we will support you financially; and yes, we will support you by trying to remove red tape"—all things that are important, and I hope the bill addresses them. But I would also like the Minister and Destination NSW to go one step further and say, "If you are coming to Sydney taxpayers will support you, but how about leveraging some of what you do into regional areas?"

We might not get a Wallabies and All Blacks match but we might get another high-level rugby match. We might not get a State of Origin event or whatever, but we might get another key sporting event from the stable of events. I am talking about the Illawarra but, to be fair, it is also the Central Coast, the Hunter and those in broader regional, rural and Central Western New South Wales who really need spinoffs from what is taking place here in Sydney to come to the regions. When you live in an area such as mine you understand the benefits of the area; you know about its natural beauty, its waterways, the escarpment and the robust local economy. But you are also aware of its challenges. I will be the first to openly welcome the Minister, the board of Destination NSW and other representatives to the Illawarra.

They could, in a bipartisan way, sit with people such as yourself, Mr Acting Speaker, as the representative for Kiama, and my colleagues on this side of the Chamber and local government members, who are trying their best to drive this and to give us advice, information and feedback on what we can do proactively so that the region will benefit from what the Minister is trying to do with Destination NSW. Regional representatives need to be involved in the process. Regional places such as the Illawarra need to be a key part of what Destination NSW will be about. I want to make sure that regional New South Wales is represented on any board. I want to ensure that we do not get only the crumbs of what comes to Sydney but are openly able to make a bid to have spinoffs of big events in the capital city or subsequent events come down to places such as the Illawarra.

I want to make sure that people such as Greg Binskin get enough time with the Minister and other important people so they can see the fantastic job that Tourism Wollongong and the broader Illawarra tourism bodies do. They do these incredibly great things for our community on very small budgets because of their passion and regional collective support. Places such as the Illawarra understand that major events and tourism are key components of an economy going forward. Why? We come from industry largely based in manufacturing and it is well-known that the manufacturing industry is facing challenges. With the high Australian dollar and other realities it will not be easy for places such as the Illawarra to thrive and survive.

I support the principle of this bill but I really want to see people on the ground in the Illawarra engaging with local tourism bodies to give us honest and frank feedback about what we may or may not be doing well. We want advice about the events we should be bidding on and those that are out of our realm. Importantly, we want to look at the various opportunities for government funding to make sure we do not miss out on events. We all agree that it is not the sole responsibility of governments to drive community tourism; it is for commercial operators and key community members to get together and sell their respective regions—and that includes those in the Illawarra—but governments do play a key role in making sure tourism bodies have sufficient funds. Governments also need to make sure that there is a seat at the table for regions such as the Illawarra. Why? So that when we get our opportunity to shine we can do so. We can attract and retain tourist dollars.

We have a large amount of escape spending because of the closeness of the Illawarra to Sydney, which continues to be a challenge for us. We all face challenges and my community is no different from any other. But we do need to put a stop to a lot of that escape spending. One way to do that is by making sure that events in the Illawarra are focused on our regional area and promoted across the State and nationally so that people see beyond Sydney Harbour—as beautiful as it is—when they visit New South Wales. It takes just over an hour to

travel south from Sydney to places that Mr Acting-Speaker and I are all too familiar with. I am hopeful and positive that the Minister, his office and Destination NSW will work closely with parliamentary members, local tourism bodies and councils to make sure that Destination NSW is truly Destination NSW and not just destination Sydney.

We want Destination NSW to be destination Hunter, destination Central Coast, destination Central West and destination outback New South Wales, and for our communities to be on the radar for funding and access to the latest information about tourism trends. I hope the Minister and his skilled group of people will tread a well-worn path to the Illawarra to make sure that our region is as much recognised as Sydney and that it receives as much attention as some of the major events held in Sydney. Mr Acting-Speaker and I both understand the importance of tourism dollars to our region. Tourism dollars play an important role in driving our local economy and showcasing what is without any doubt one of the most magnificent coastlines and hinterlands in Australia. Destination NSW must have the Illawarra region on its radar.

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD** (Myall Lakes) [10.34 a.m.]: I congratulate the Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Hospitality and Racing on the Destination NSW Bill 2011. It is wonderful to have a Minister with energy, vitality, ability and integrity. I am sure history will show what a great Minister the Hon. George Souris is. The object of the bill is to establish Destination NSW, a statutory body, to market and promote New South Wales. The term "New South Wales" includes the whole of the State—not only Sydney; all regional and rural areas. The statutory body is to undertake event acquisition and implement strategies to double tourism expenditure by 2020 for all of New South Wales.

As a past chairman of the Manning Tourism Board and as the member for Myall Lakes—a great destination in regional New South Wales that includes the two fabulous areas of the Manning Valley and the Great Lakes, including the twin towns of Forster and Tuncurry—it is great to see a bill that will create a body to oversee the combination of events and tourism. This is important because for the past 16 years New South Wales has been paralysed. New South Wales has lacked direction, it has been rudderless, and because we have lost so much to other States and countries in that time regional New South Wales has suffered. The Government made an election commitment to establish Destination NSW. The new organisation will market and promote New South Wales and will be responsible for acquiring, retaining and enhancing events. The Government has set an aggressive target for visitation to the State: to double tourism expenditure by 2020.

The Minister has already taken action with the announcement of \$5 million for the establishment of regional tourism boards. The role of tourism in rebuilding the New South Wales economy is critical. Tourism consumption in New South Wales contributes \$28.7 billion to the State's economy and directly provides over 160,000 jobs. For an area such as the Myall Lakes the number one activity, employer and economic driver is tourism. Tourism provides New South Wales with more jobs than agriculture, forestry, fishing and mining combined. Events contribute significantly to Tourism NSW. In the Myall Lakes we have seen a reduction in dairy farming, our forests have been closed, and significant restrictions have been placed on fishing—the other main areas of employment and economic drivers in the area.

Under the previous administration Tourism NSW and Events NSW operated independently of each other. There was a lack of coordination, the ability to leverage and promote events was diminished, and there was also a potential to duplicate resources and effort. This bill is not just about a name change; it is about a total change to the direction of tourism and events. It is not about glossing something up, an announcement being made and then the project being put on the shelf to gather dust, with nothing really happening. There will be a cultural change in the running of tourism and events and the delivery of those services. Destination NSW will provide a coordinated and united approach. It will increase our capacity for new opportunities to make Sydney and New South Wales a global destination of choice for national and international visitors.

The bill establishes Destination NSW as a statutory authority, provides that Destination NSW will be governed by a board of management with an independent chair drawn from industry, and sets out that the board members will include the chief executive officer of Destination NSW, the Director General of the Department of Trade and Investment, Regional Infrastructure and Services, and high-level industry representatives, including the chair of the Visitor Economy Taskforce, who will be the deputy chair of Destination NSW, at least two members of the current board of Tourism NSW and two members from the current board of Events NSW.

The bill outlines the role of Destination NSW and provides for ministerial powers. These are general powers, including the power to appoint and remove board members and to direct on Government policy. The bill repeals the Tourism NSW Act 1984, effectively winding up the Tourism NSW board. The key functions of

Destination NSW include brand management, partnerships and marketing. It is interesting that Victoria has had the same brand for many years, which is one of the reasons it has been successful, whereas in New South Wales every change of Minister resulted in a different brand. It is good that brand management will be part of the role of Destination NSW. Other key functions include demand and supply activities; international operations; destination development; event marketing, acquisition, retention and leveraging; and stakeholder management and communications.

The Visitor Economy Taskforce is an advisory body and does not require legislation to be established. The taskforce will develop a tourism strategy and work plan to deliver the Government target of doubling tourism expenditure from \$18.3 billion to \$36.6 billion by 2020. Last night the Minister announced three of the members of the task force. One is the Hon. Bruce Baird, who has had a long and distinguished career not only in politics but also in the tourism industry. He is a great acquisition and it is great for New South Wales that we have him on board. The task force will meet as soon as possible after appointment and determine a timetable of activity. An interim report is due by the end of February 2012. The final strategy and work plan is to be submitted to the Minister for approval by 30 May 2012. The task force will comprise the chief executive officer of Destination NSW, once appointed, and three senior industry representatives.

Destination NSW will bring a whole-of-government approach to tourism and major events, at both a departmental and a ministerial level. Under the former Government tourism and major events were divvied up between too many Ministers, which inevitably led to turf wars. This also left the tourism industry and private investors confused, dispirited, and with their money in their pockets. The former Government gave our interstate rivals a 16-year head start, but the O'Farrell-Stoner Government will ensure New South Wales now gets its fair share. We want to encourage investment in the tourism industry in this State and we believe in a united, whole-of-government approach. Prior to the election the Liberals and Nationals committed to injecting \$5 million worth of new funding into regional tourism as well as increasing the budget for Destination NSW by \$40 million over four years. In other words, we are putting our money where our mouth is.

The Minister has been extremely busy since the election poaching events from interstate and securing others. There is nothing better than poaching events from Victoria. Those events include the 2015 Touch Football World Cup. I note that the member for Wallsend is in the Chamber. Only recently she told the House about people from the Wallsend area going to Scotland to play in this year's world cup. I then had to point out that one of the players referred to, Kylie Hilder, was actually from Forster-Tuncurry. It is fantastic that we will have that major world cup event in New South Wales. Other events include the world premiere of Baz Luhrmann's *Strictly Ballroom*, the *Addams Family* Australian premiere in Sydney, the Australian premiere of *Legally Blonde* in Sydney, *Richard III*, starring Kevin Spacey and directed by Sam Mendes, which will be showing only in Sydney, and *La Traviata*, opera on the harbour.

That is the set-up of Destination NSW. It will drive tourism and events in this State for years. We will have a plan to take us into the future rather than lurching from year to year with Government paralysis, as we saw in the past when nothing happened. This will drive tourism. The great thing about having a strong tourism industry is that it will benefit my electorate and those of other members who represent regional New South Wales—members from the electorates of Orange, Bathurst, Dubbo and other areas from the North Coast, north west, central west, greater west, South Coast to the south west. We will all benefit from this. I know that the Minister, who is the member for Upper Hunter, is keenly aware that we can value add a tourism package for regional New South Wales when we bring people into this State and he will champion that on behalf of all members in regional New South Wales.

My area is a rich and wonderful place. It has rivers, waterways, beaches and mountains all within an easy drive of each other. The Myall Lakes area has national parks and the greatest lakes and waterways in Australia. As well as being a wonderful destination for natural attractions, we have everything from caravan parks to five-star accommodation. There are providers of all sorts of tourist activities, such as the *Amaroo* dolphin watch cruise at Forster, Bundy's Paintball at Old Bar, Forster Fishing Charters, the Big Buzz Fun Park, the Ton O' Fun Fun Park, Krambach Gardens and Blueberry Farm, Manning Valley Historical Society at Wingham, the Scottish Festival at Wingham—I was there a couple of weeks ago and it was fantastic—and the traditional country and regional festivities such as shows at Bulahdelah, Wingham, Nahiack and Taree, and rodeos—

**Mr Greg Piper:** The Big Oyster.

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD:** The Big Oyster is now a car yard. There is also the Villa D'Esta Vineyard. There is something for everyone, including the international visitors who come to Sydney. Last night

at Friends of Tourism we heard details of the huge increase in the number of cruise ship visits to Sydney. If we can get some of the people on the cruises to come to regional New South Wales they will have the most wonderful time. There are other festivals, including a new one in September, a running festival. There will be fun runs, half marathons and other events to attract people from all over Australia to Forster-Tuncurry. Of course, for many years Forster-Tuncurry held the world triathlon championships.

**Mr Chris Patterson:** Will the member for Myall Lakes be entering?

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD:** The member for Myall Lakes will not be entering but he will be watching. That triathlon championship was a great boon for the area. It has now moved to Port Macquarie and I am sharing it with the member for Port Macquarie. It is a great event. They are the sorts of attractions available in regional New South Wales and I know the Minister will make sure there is much more event funding and promotion for regional New South Wales. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms SONIA HORNER** (Wallsend) [10.49 a.m.]: The Labor Party supports the Destinations NSW Bill 2011 because we support the development of tourism in New South Wales. In 2008, following the O'Neill review into tourism in New South Wales, the Labor Government committed to investment in tourism. I support the merging of the bureaucracies of Tourism NSW and Events NSW to form one agency known as Destination NSW. I like the catchy name. I also support the objects of Destination NSW, which include marketing and promotion, promoting major events and a business plan, as set out in clause 13 of the bill.

As a regional member of Parliament, like my colleague the member for Lake Macquarie and the Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Hospitality and Racing and member for the Upper Hunter, I am concerned about the impact of the bill on the promotion of regional tourism and events. As the Minister lives in the upper Hunter, I am sure he will be keen to see that the Hunter is promoted equally as well as Sydney and other areas in the State. The member for Keira referred to the promotion of regional activities. As the member for Wallsend, which is an electorate in the Hunter region, I am interested in promoting regional New South Wales. Hunter Tourism has worked very hard to promote tourism and events in our region.

Newcastle City Council is currently debating the amount of money it will provide to Hunter Tourism. I hope Hunter Tourism is successful in receiving Newcastle City Council dollars, because Hunter Tourism undertakes important marketing initiatives in our area and we want these initiatives to continue. This bill has been introduced at the same time as major events are taking place in the Hunter. I am sure the Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Hospitality and Racing will join me on Thursday night to attend the Olyroos match against Yemen at Ausgrid Stadium. As I am a soccer fan, I hope that Parliament rises early enough for me to be able to attend. A number of our young local soccer players will play in the match, including Jason Hoffman. I look forward to seeing them play.

**Mr George Souris:** The Matildas won overnight, 3:1.

**Ms SONIA HORNER:** I congratulate the Matildas once again. The Hunter always has a strong contingent in our Matildas teams. Ausgrid Stadium holds many major events. As I am also a fan of the Knights, I want to mention that their recent win has put them in the top eight. We must make sure that the stadium facilities are used not only by the Knights but also by the Jets and the W-League Jets, which I also follow. Like the member for Keira, I also am concerned about the future of the Hunter. We have gone from being a major manufacturing city with BHP in Newcastle to no BHP and jobs have to be found outside the manufacturing industry. Tourism and hospitality fit the bill.

During my first term as a member of Parliament I became aware that with a university and two major regional hospitals in my electorate, which are the major employers in the Hunter, we had a need for more quality accommodation in the area. I spoke to government and private enterprise about this issue. I said that we had a beautiful resource in the Hunter for tourism purposes, as well as Calvary Mater Hospital, which is a research hospital, a leading regional hospital and a university, yet we had insufficient quality accommodation in the local area. In the Wallsend area we have the Hunter Wetlands Centre, Blackbutt Nature Reserve and Blue Gum Hills Regional Park. I was told that the State Government would match any private investment we obtained to undertake a tourism and accommodation audit for Wallsend.

Regional Development Australia and I went cap in hand to the university, the hospitals, Wallsend Diggers Club, Newcastle City Council and Lake Macquarie City Council and ended up with \$30,000, which was matched by the then State Government. We are now undertaking a Wallsend accommodation and tourism audit.



We want to promote the area to developers to build better tourist accommodation in our patch so that people visiting the hospitals or studying at the university will be able to stay in quality accommodation. They may also want to tour the Hunter wineries, the wetlands, the beaches in Newcastle and Lake Macquarie and enjoy a package of work- and fun-related activities.

The Wallsend accommodation and tourism audit will be completed soon. I ask the Government and the Minister to take on board the outcomes of this audit. In the short term, as part of the Wallsend accommodation and tourism audit, an investment prospectus is being developed and a launch of the prospectus will be held in our area. Key stakeholders will be invited to attend so that we can tell them about the wonderful attributes of our area. I hope that the result will be that they look for suitable land to develop. Signage is another aspect we are looking at. It is important that visitors to regional areas can find various locations. Wallsend is just off the link road from the F3.

We want better signage in our area and the rest of the Hunter so that rather than driving through Wallsend to get to Newcastle or Maitland people visit our wetlands centre, Blackbutt Nature Reserve and the regional park. The accommodation and tourism audit is also examining the needs of the medical hub in our area. With a university and two major regional hospitals, one a leading cancer research hospital, we want to ensure that we can accommodate the people who come to area to attend this medical hub. They include visiting professionals not only from around New South Wales but from around Australia and the globe. We have big aims with the Wallsend accommodation and tourism audit. With the help of Regional Development Australia, I am sure our aims will be fulfilled.

In relation to the objectives and outcomes of the Destination NSW Bill for the marketing and promotion of tourism, equal emphasis must be placed on regional areas such as the Hunter, the Illawarra and Lake Macquarie as is placed on Sydney. As the member for Keira said, we want Hunter and Illawarra representatives to have a seat at the table so that they can promote our regions. We need more quality hotels so that visitors staying in our hotels spend money in the Hunter. The Newcastle *Herald* today said that the Bogey Hole in Newcastle has been nominated as one of the seven wonders of Australia. I do not know whether the convict-built Bogey Hole will win a place in that category, but I am pleased that the Newcastle *Herald* is promoting this beautiful asset of the Hunter. I support Destination NSW. As I said, I like the catchy name. As a member representing a Hunter electorate I look forward to working with the Government to promote and market tourism in the Hunter.

**Mrs ROZA SAGE** (Blue Mountains) [10.59 a.m.]: I support the Destination NSW Bill 2011. Tourism in New South Wales, both in Sydney and in the regions, is worth \$28.7 billion annually and supports 160,000 jobs. Those jobs are directly involved in the tourism and hospitality industries. Apart from that, there is the flow-on effect to local communities, to small businesses and the jobs supported there. An increase in tourism stimulates the economy and creates jobs. In my area, the Blue Mountains, tourism is certainly the largest industry and the largest employer, with well over \$400 million injected annually into the local economy. A large majority of overseas visitors only stay in the Sydney central business district and visit the iconic attractions here when just a one or two-hour drive or train trip away there is a completely different travel experience of the stunning natural beauty of the Blue Mountains—not only a natural environment experience but also a cultural experience in this city of the arts.

Indeed, one of the winners of last week's Australian Hotels Association awards was the Old City Bank brasserie at the Carrington Hotel in Katoomba for brasserie-cafe of the year—and this was against all businesses of the like in New South Wales. Only last weekend the Blue Mountains had the Winter Magic Festival in Katoomba. There were street stalls and street entertainment. Several balls were held and many businesses offered other attractions to those participating. Usually this one event attracts over 20,000 people to the area. Then in the month of July, at the coldest time of year, we have the Antipodean Christmas, Christmas in July or Yulefest, which has become an iconic event for those who feel they miss out on the cold northern hemisphere festivities.

Sydney is a beautiful city, but the regions have so much more to add to the international tourist experience. For so long there has been little coordination to promote tourist locations further afield. Last night we heard that cruise ships coming to Sydney have a great flow-on effect, with people being offered tours further afield from Sydney, and the Blue Mountains in particular was one popular destination. Statistics taken from Tourism NSW for the year ended December 2010 show that the Blue Mountains received 645,000 domestic overnight visitors, which represented a market share of 3.9 per cent in regional New South Wales, and 81,000

international overnight visitors, representing a market share of 13 per cent of visitors to regional New South Wales. So much more can be done to further promote our region and entice both domestic and international tourists just that little bit further away.

I believe that the holistic approach of Destination NSW will certainly benefit regional areas outside metropolitan Sydney. I strongly support the bill today establishing Destination NSW as a new statutory authority—cohesive, coordinated and well resourced. The intent of this body will be to double tourism expenditure by 2020, a goal that is most welcome in the Blue Mountains as the tourist numbers this will produce inevitably flow to regional areas. The establishment of Destination NSW will bring together the budgets, knowledge and expertise of Tourism NSW and Events NSW into one consolidated and coordinated organisation.

For too long there has been a piecemeal approach to events and tourism. Events NSW has been in effect working on its own with no coordination between it and Tourism NSW. It is blindingly obvious that large major events will draw people from all over—people requiring accommodation, people who will most likely stay before and after the event. In the past this has not been capitalised on. Logic would argue that large events and other tourist experiences have a symbiotic relationship, with each building and enhancing the other. The establishment of Destination NSW will correct the situation and create a multiplier effect to our tourism dollar.

The New South Wales Government will provide \$400 million for Destination NSW, a promised boost of \$40 million and the provision of a further \$5 million especially for regional tourism. This will give Destination NSW the ability to leverage and promote events more effectively. I certainly know that the Blue Mountains, Lithgow and Oberon Tourism organisation in my area is very excited with the extra funding boost. They expressed this enthusiasm when the Minister for Tourism, George Souris, and Premier Barry O'Farrell launched this commitment at the Fairmont Resort in Leura during the election campaign—and what a great place to launch it. The announcement ensures \$250,000 to each regional tourist organisation.

The Blue Mountains, Lithgow and Oberon Tourism organisation has already looked at many new and innovative projects to boost tourism in the greater Blue Mountains area, including an Indigenous experience run by the local Indigenous community. When I go on holidays, especially overseas, I want to see the local culture, and this wonderful initiative will enhance the tourism experience in our area. The organisation has also considered a festival of walking to capitalise on the popularity of one of the major attractions of the Blue Mountains, which is bushwalking—bush tracks of different levels, from easy to difficult, demonstrating that locals who know tourism can come up with innovative new tourist products. Destination NSW will have an industry-led, highly focused board of management with one overarching priority: selling Sydney and New South Wales to the world.

The best way to achieve an increase in tourist market share is to tap into industries with a vested interest in the success of the venture—the tourist industry itself. As such, the board of management governing Destination NSW will comprise high-level industry representatives, at least two members from the current board of Tourism NSW, two members from the current board of Events NSW, the Chief Executive Officer of Destination NSW and the Director General of Trade and Investment, Regional Infrastructure and Services. There will be an independent chair of this authority drawn from industry. Who knows better than the industry itself? The Government should not tell industry what to do but should receive input directly from industry. The State of Victoria showed us how a well-organised and coordinated body can achieve very impressive results.

With good guidance, the latest campaign "New South Wales—see where it takes you" will be just as effective. I had the pleasure of attending the launch at the winter ball at the Fairmont Resort in Leura with the local tourist association and representatives from Tourism NSW, and I look forward to this campaign promoting New South Wales, and especially regional New South Wales. With the creation of Destination NSW and the New South Wales Government's commitment to stimulating and supporting tourism, we now have the best chance in a generation to rebuild and reinvigorate New South Wales' reputation and destination appeal. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr GREG PIPER** (Lake Macquarie) [11.08 a.m.]: I will speak very briefly to the Destination NSW Bill 2011. I note that the Opposition supports the bill and, as an Independent, I understand why that would be the case. I note that the Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Hospitality and Racing is at the table, which is very pleasing. This is good legislation.

**Dr Geoff Lee:** And a good Minister too.

**Mr GREG PIPER:** A good Minister and good legislation. Tourism is obviously very important throughout the country, the State, the regions and at the local level in local areas. There is probably no time more important than now to address issues relating to domestic tourism, particularly with the strength of the Australian dollar disadvantaging domestic tourism. This legislation will give heart to many people involved in the tourism industry. Many of our regions—some more so than others—have invested heavily in the outcomes of a healthy tourism industry.

I will speak parochially for the moment about Lake Macquarie and the Hunter region to point out that they have many attractions to offer. It is important for competitive tension among different providers to exist—between tourism operators in local government areas, regional tourism organisational sectors and State governments. It is important at a holistic level that State and national governments provide opportunities in which tourism players are able to advance for the benefit of tourism and the community. I congratulate the Minister and the Government on the bill providing for a significant increase in funding to create tourism opportunities.

Over many years I have been very much involved in trying to assist tourism in my role as the Mayor of Lake Macquarie. I have been a member of the boards of the local tourism association and the regional tourism organisation and I have seen firsthand the struggle that they have endured in obtaining resources and the problems they encounter. For the most part the problems are caused by a lack of ability for smaller tourism operators, either as a result of a lack of funds or being time poor when trying to run their businesses, to participate in the broader management of tourism in their local areas. The resources provided by the legislation will assist people, organisations and businesses that have a capacity to provide input.

The member for Wallsend referred, while expressing support for the bill, to some things that are happening in the Newcastle area. She mentioned the cooperative approach between Newcastle City Council and Lake Macquarie City Council in the provision of cycleways. I acknowledge not just the former Government for its investment in cycleways in the Newcastle-Hunter region, but in particular the current Federal Government whose significant investment has allowed us to finish one of the great cycleway sections between Newcastle and Lake Macquarie, the Fernleigh Track. Local tourism operators can piggyback on facilities that are provided as investment in infrastructure by local and other levels of government. Local government provides a great deal of un-hailed infrastructure for the tourism industry. Infrastructure facilities are not recorded as an investment in tourism, but that is what they actually are.

I note the former Mayor of Gosford, Chris Holstein, is present. He would recognise that on the Central Coast there is a very strong commitment by local government to providing tourism facilities. While the Minister is present, I take the opportunity to announce a fantastic event that will occur in 2014 in the city of Lake Macquarie—the International Children's Games. In 2007 I was invited to attend in 2008 the International Children's Games in San Francisco. I agreed and accompanied a delegation of 14 young people between the ages of 12 and 15 to participate in sporting activities at the games. More than 150 different cities from approximately 50 different countries throughout the world were represented. The International Children's Games are operated under the auspices of the International Olympic Committee. The 2014 games will attract approximately 1,800 young people from countries throughout the world to Lake Macquarie and Newcastle to participate in sport at a high level, but without recording the results.

The point about the International Children's Games is not competition so much as the creation of friendships and understanding across borders and across cultures—something that is magnificent to behold. I cannot think of a better investment we could make than in children of the world at that age coming to appreciate the similarity between cultures and breaking down barriers such as religious practice, cultural differences, ethnicity and skin colours. It is a way of children learning to appreciate that what makes us different is not nearly as important as what makes us similar. I have been delighted to participate twice in the International Children's Games and take a delegation first to San Francisco and last year to Bahrain and witness young people growing in their understanding of the world.

In 2014 the Lake Macquarie district will host the first International Children's Games that have ever been held in Australia. The games will be magnificent but we believe the total delegation will be up to 3,000 people. It is estimated by the organisers of the games that because Australia is such a distance from the countries that traditionally participate, particularly Europe, Asia and North America, many of the delegates will take the opportunity to extend their visits. I mention that in the context of this debate to remind the House that that type of opportunity exists and that we should secure those opportunities to advance tourism either by promoting the event in New South Wales at the time or by befriending delegates, drawing them back to visit and having them spread the word about Australian, New South Wales and local tourism destinations.

I commend the bill to the House. This is very good legislation that hopefully will tidy up some of the confusion and conflict that I have observed over many years in the provision of tourism facilities and in support for tourism in New South Wales. Tourism in this State has become jaded, not for one particular reason but more from a series of decisions resulting in a lack of investment leading to a decline. Tourism certainly has been a very difficult market to enter. This is very good legislation. I again acknowledge the Minister and the Government for their efforts. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr CHRIS PATTERSON** (Camden) [11.17 a.m.]: I support the Destination NSW Bill. The bill is extremely important in that it offers potential to contribute to the New South Wales economy and provide many employment opportunities for the people of New South Wales. Closer to home, Sydney, which is one of the most beautiful cities in the world, will benefit tremendously from the Government's tourism policy. This Government recognises Sydney as the major gateway to Australia. Sydney has a vital role in supporting New South Wales tourism, hospitality and events sectors. Sydney is the jewel in New South Wales' crown. Tourism, hospitality and events are essential industries to the New South Wales economy. It is exciting that they generate and support thousands of jobs in both Sydney and the remainder of New South Wales. The industry is worth billions of dollars each year to the New South Wales economy.

There is not a larger employment-generating industry in New South Wales than the tourism and hospitality industries. They provide more jobs than agriculture, forestry, fishing and mining industries combined. I believe that the tourism and hospitality industries also provide jobs to a wider base in the community in the form of full-time employment and part-time work that take in nights, weekends and a combination of both. These industries do this despite no support or importance being placed on them in the past. The former Government placed no importance on securing major events over its last four terms of office; its track record actually was embarrassing. Not only was no significance placed on securing events; priority became somewhat of a sport to losing major events to Queensland and Victoria.

The sky is the limit in potential for this neglected market. With the introduction of this bill and actually having a Government that supports the tourism and hospitality industries, New South Wales will become the premier destination within Australia and flourish once again. Destination NSW will be a statutory body to market and promote New South Wales, undertake event acquisition and implement strategies to double tourism expenditure by 2020, resulting in huge profit increases for local businesses, leading to a huge increase in local jobs as a flow-on effect. New South Wales will consolidate and coordinate the skills and knowledge of Tourism NSW and Events New South Wales to ensure a united and coordinated approach. By bringing this knowledge and experience together the world finally will see that New South Wales and Sydney as its jewel unquestionably are up there with the world's most appealing places to visit.

All members acknowledge that Sydney and New South Wales are Australia's number one destinations; it is time that the remainder of Australia and the world realised it also. The Government has confidence in Sydney's potential to stand on the world platform and take its place as one of the world's greatest cities. The former Government prided itself on keeping secret the jewels of New South Wales, fearing that people might actually come and enjoy our wonderful tourism attributes. Sydney is world-renowned as having hosted the best Olympic Games in 2000. Without doubt this put us on the world stage and highlighted to hundreds of millions of people worldwide the wonderful attributes of Sydney. If people did not know before the Sydney Olympics the wonderful destination of Sydney and New South Wales, they certainly do now. It is criminal that Australia's tourism jewels in Sydney and further afield in New South Wales were completely ignored and never promoted by the former Government.

We have one of the most beautiful and vibrant central business districts in the world. However, to sell just this area would be selling Sydney short, because many attractions and destinations are within walking distance or a short cab or bus ride from the central business district. Whether it is the fashions in Paddington or Double Bay, the food in Cabramatta or Parramatta, the breathtaking northern beaches or any one of the uniquely diverse communities that surround Sydney, we will encourage people to visit these attractions. Every member in this Chamber would agree that our electorates are waiting to be discovered and explored by tourists. The people of Camden encourage tourism because Camden has so much to offer. It has bed and breakfast, caravan park and motel accommodation for anyone wanting to explore our area. Camden and the entire Macarthur region are steeped in history and therefore have many historical attractions.

Through John Macarthur and his descendents Camden is known as the birthplace of Australia's wheat, wine and wool industries. Local homestead "Camelot" has been the backdrop to many Australian movies, the

most famous being *Australia* starring Hugh Jackman and Nicole Kidman, and has hosted many weddings and functions. James White, owner of Chester, the winner of the 1877 Melbourne Cup, built Camelot with his winnings. As mayor of Camden Council, and with the help of hospitality icon Max Hitchins, we secured Camden as a stopping point on the tour of the 2009 Melbourne Cup. The famous cup tour came to Camden and was taken to local schools and local hotels, culminating in a ball in the historic grounds of Camelot—making it without doubt the social event that year in Camden.

Camden boasts its own museum, airport, wineries, markets, art and craft fairs, family and community expos, car shows, hot air ballooning, ghost tours, golf courses, shopping, food and wine festivals and is home to the Australian Botanic Garden, Mount Annan. This Government takes tourism so seriously that one of the first things the Premier did on being elected was announce free entry to the Australian Botanic Garden—with the member for Wollondilly, Jai Rowell and the member for Campbelltown, Bryan Doyle and me. I am pleased to report that this announcement has exceeded all expectation, with visitor numbers to the botanic garden nearly doubling. If I were to name everything Camden and its surrounding suburbs had to offer I literally would be here all day. Everybody in this Chamber knows Sydney's potential.

This Government supports that potential and is committed to ensuring that Sydney is recognised and given the credit it deserves for being one of the world's greatest cities. This bill has my total support. The newly established Destination NSW will be well resourced; it will offer a coordinated approach and promote this State in a very professional fashion. In the past Australia's jewel, Sydney, has been overshadowed by Queensland's Gold Coast, the Northern Territory's outback experience and Victoria's vibrant sporting and shopping cultures. New South Wales, and specifically Sydney, have more to offer than all of these places put together and Destination NSW will shine the spotlight for all to see. The Government is honouring its election commitment to establish Destination NSW as a statutory authority.

The bill provides that Destination NSW is governed by a board of management with an independent chair drawn from industry to ensure experience, knowledge and competitiveness with the rest of Australia. The bill indicates that the board members will include the Chief Executive Officer of Destination NSW, the Director General of the Department of Trade and Investment, Regional Infrastructure and Services, and high-level industry representatives, including the chair of the proposed visitor economy taskforce, at least two members from the current board of Tourism NSW and two members from the current board of Events New South Wales.

This will ensure that our Government meets its target to double tourism expenditure from \$18.3 billion to \$36.6 billion by 2020. Also involved will be representatives from organisations and bodies such as business chambers, the Tourism Industry Council, the Tourism Transport Forum, the Australian Hotels Association, regional tourism organisations, the airline industry and business owners. Government representatives will include Treasury, Planning and Infrastructure, Transport, National Parks and Aboriginal Affairs. This final strategy and work plan will be submitted to the Minister for approval by 30 May 2012.

Tourism currently provides over 160,000 jobs and contributes \$28.7 billion to the New South Wales economy. Tourism is vital in rebuilding the New South Wales economy. Future tourism growth for Sydney and regional New South Wales requires infrastructure. This Government is committed to investing in infrastructure that will support and positively impact on future tourism growth. The Government's commitment will ensure that Sydney becomes a major tourism gateway business and leisure tourism destination. Only yesterday, the Premier announced a period of consultation to ensure that the new convention centre, a much-needed tourism attractor promised before the election, will meet industry needs. The Premier said:

We're moving on this quickly but are also aware we need to get it right, so I make no apologies for extensive consultation with the experts.

The Premier then said:

Hosting the meetings in Sydney will cement this city's reputation as a global financial hub and will provide an opportunity to utilise the new convention and exhibition facility and showcase the new developments at Barangaroo.

This reinforces the Government's commitment to make New South Wales Australia's number one tourist destination. I commend the bill to the House.

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

**STATUTE LAW (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) BILL 2011****Bill introduced on motion by Mr Greg Smith on behalf of Mr Barry O'Farrell.****Agreement in Principle****Mr GREG SMITH** (Epping—Attorney General, and Minister for Justice) [11.31 a.m.]: I move:

That this bill be now agreed to in principle.

The Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2011 continues the established statute law revision program that is recognised as a cost-effective and efficient method for dealing with amendments of the kind included in the bill. The form of the bill is similar to that of previous bills in the statute law revision program. Schedule 1 contains policy changes of a minor and non-controversial nature that the Minister responsible for the legislation being amended considers to be inconsequential to warrant the introduction of a separate amending bill. That schedule contains amendments to 13 Acts and three regulations. I will mention some of the amendments to give members an indication of the kind of amendments that are included in the schedule.

Schedule 1 amends various Acts in the portfolio of the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. Amendments to the Police Act 1990 make provisions relating to the employment of executive and non-executive administrative officers in the New South Wales Police Force consistent with equivalent provisions for other public sector employees in the Public Sector Employment and Management Act 2002. Also, amendments to the Fire Brigades Act 1989 will update references to "NSW Fire Brigades" as a consequence of its change of name to "Fire and Rescue NSW". Schedule 1 makes a minor amendment to the Election Funding, Expenditure and Disclosures Act 1981 in relation to the entitlements of political parties to administrative funding based on the number of their elected members. This amendment clarifies that a party's elected members include those elected at a joint sitting of members of Parliament.

**Mr Jamie Parker:** A good amendment.

**Mr GREG SMITH:** I thought the member for Balmain would be pleased about that. Schedule 1 makes a number of amendments to the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998. These include extending a regulation-making power with respect to probity checks on persons involved in the control or management of licensees or proposed licensees of children's services to probity checks on the licensees or proposed licensees themselves. Amendments made by schedule 1 to the Holiday Parks (Long-term Casual Occupation) Act 2002 will bring a standard term of an occupation agreement for a holiday park site into line with a requirement in that Act limiting the duration of occupation. The amendments also clarify and consolidate the standard terms of occupation agreements that concern the options and method for payment of occupation fees under such agreements.

Schedule 1 amends the Residential Tenancies Act 2010 to allow rent to be increased under a residential tenancy agreement, whether or not the increase is specified in the agreement, if the agreement is for a term of two years or less, rather than a term of less than two years. Other amendments to that Act will extend to landlords' agents, certain offences relating to the terms of residential tenancy agreements and payment of rent by tenants that currently apply only to landlords, and will clarify the circumstances in which a warrant for a possession of residential premises may be issued as a result of a termination order for frequent failure to pay rent owing.

Amendments are also made by schedule 1 to the Associations Incorporations Act 2009 to make it clear that it is the responsibility of an association, rather than its public officer, to lodge financial reports, and to the Wild Dog Destruction Act 1921 to enable members of the Wild Dog Destruction Board to be appointed or reappointed for a term of up to three years, rather than a fixed term of three years. The last schedule 1 matter I will mention is the amendments to the Swimming Pools Act 1992. That Act currently requires a swimming pool on the premises of a hotel or a motel to be surrounded by a child-resistant barrier that is located immediately around the swimming pool. The amendments will extend that requirement to swimming pools on the premises of certain other types of tourist and visitor accommodation.

Schedule 2 deals with matters of pure statute law revision consisting of minor technical changes to legislation that the Parliamentary Counsel considers are appropriate for inclusion in the bill. Examples of amendments in schedule 2 are those arising out of the enactment of other legislation, those correcting numbering and typographical errors and those updating terminology. Schedule 3 contains amendments that enable or are

consequential on the repeal of Acts and instruments by schedule 4. The amendments include the transfer into various Acts of the provisions of Acts and instruments repealed by schedule 4. Schedule 4 repeals 98 Acts and a number of instruments and provisions of Acts and instruments that are redundant or of no practical utility, including those that contain only amendments that have commenced.

A number of the repealed Acts—I emphasise this—relate to the construction of railways that were enacted mainly in the early part of the last century. Either the railways concerned have been constructed or the legislation can no longer be used to authorise any railway construction. The repeals do not affect the continued operation of railway lines, which under the Transport Administration Act 1988 can only be closed and removed with parliamentary approval. For abundant caution, the bill, in conjunction with section 29A of the Interpretation Act 1987, continues to provide a power for the Governor by proclamation to revoke the repeal of any Act or instrument repealed by the bill and restore its operation.

Schedule 5 contains general savings, transitional and other provisions. These include provisions dealing with the effect of amendments on amending provisions and savings clauses for the repealed Acts. The various amendments are explained in detail in explanatory notes set out beneath the amendments to each of the Acts and statutory instruments concerned or at the end of the schedule concerned. If any amendment causes concern or requires clarification, it should be brought to my attention. If necessary, I will arrange for Government officers to provide additional information on the matters raised. If any particular matter of concern cannot be resolved and is likely to delay the passage of the bill, the Government is prepared to consider withdrawing the matter from the bill. I commend the bill to the House.

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

### **DESTINATION NSW BILL 2011**

#### **Agreement in Principle**

**Debate resumed from an earlier.**

**Mr CLAYTON BARR** (Cessnock) [11.40 a.m.]: I am delighted to support the Destination NSW Bill 2011, given that Cessnock has the pleasure and privilege of hosting 2.7 million visitors each year. There is no doubt that governments of all political persuasions have different opinions about the best way to present New South Wales as a tourism destination, but their underlying belief is that New South Wales should be the premier destination in Australia for tourism and travel. I commend the Government for putting this matter on the agenda in its early days. I am also delighted to acknowledge that the Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Hospitality and Racing and I have neighbouring electorates. Sometimes the natural tendency is to promote Sydney to the detriment of other regions. However, given that the Minister is from the Hunter, a regional area, and given that a number of Coalition Government members are from regional areas, particularly members of The Nationals, I appreciate that we will talk about areas other than Sydney.

In his response I ask the Minister to draw my attention to the opportunities to attract tourists to regional areas. Information and statistics for the Hunter suggest that it hosts 2.7 million visitors per year. In the past 20 years domestic tourism in regional centres has significantly declined; fortunately the vineyard area has managed to buck that trend. Domestic tourism has grown primarily in metropolitan areas—undoubtedly, Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Hobart, Brisbane and Perth—which have enjoyed the tourism dollars for the past 20 years. Three years ago the global financial crisis impacted significantly on tourism in my region. It impacted on businesses, then on jobs and the take-home dollars of families, young people and businesses themselves. It is important to get things back on track and to make the most of the opportunities at hand. I understand that \$3 million will be made available for regional tourism.

**Mrs Roza Sage:** Five.

**Mr CLAYTON BARR:** I acknowledge the member's interjection that \$5 million will be made available for product development for regional tourism. It is a bidding war. I will take \$6 million. Does anyone want to offer me \$6 million, or perhaps \$7 million? My area needs some basic infrastructure. The Hunter Expressway, that will virtually pass the front door of the vineyard area, will significantly change the way people travel into and out of the Sydney region. Something as simple as proper signage will ensure that travellers do not miss the opportunity to stop and visit the vineyards and instead drive straight past them. The \$5 million for regional tourism will impact on businesses, such as Hunter Valley Wine Country Tourism, by encouraging travellers to turn off the expressway and spend some of their tourist dollars in the vineyards before they pass through to other significant and beautiful parts of the Hunter, such as Singleton, Muswellbrook and beyond.

Earlier I called the Chief Executive Officer of Hunter Valley Wine Country Tourism about this bill. He told me something significant, that is, beds in Sydney are at saturation point. He said that it is all well and good to talk about a cruise ship terminal for Sydney—which I appreciate will not impact on beds—a new convention centre for Sydney, or bringing more events to Sydney, but where will the beds come from if Sydney is already at saturation point? I call on the Minister and the Government to think of areas and events outside of Sydney. Newcastle harbour, which is not as beautiful as Sydney or Port Stephens harbour, could be home to a cruise ship terminal. I would welcome the opportunity for such a development.

I have worked in the hospitality industry in the vineyards for some time. When I worked at the local pub I served international and interstate visitors with drinks or dinner and I asked them about their travel plans. They told me quite openly and willingly that even though they arrived in Sydney they could not wait to leave Sydney. They hired the first available car and hit the road: They did not want to be in the city, they wanted to be in other places. They stopped at the vineyards en route to Tamworth, Armidale, the mid North Coast, potentially Dubbo, Orange or wherever else they were going.

**Mr Troy Grant:** Hear! Hear!

**Mr CLAYTON BARR:** How could one not go through Dubbo on the way to somewhere? Quite often people promote Sydney as the essential destination for international tourists. As I said in my inaugural speech and more recently, that might be because Sydney has the international airport. I suspect that if Cessnock, Newcastle or Lake Macquarie had an international airport people may well avoid landing in Sydney, which may alleviate traffic congestion and bed saturation numbers. Therefore I ask the Minister to consider establishing an international airport somewhere other than Sydney—Cessnock would be the ideal spot. I acknowledge that New South Wales has some magnificent, beautiful and wonderful destinations. I mentioned Dubbo fairly flippantly but if one has not been to the Dubbo Zoo and its region, or Orange during autumn when the leaves have fallen to the ground, or to the North Coast one is well and truly missing out.

New South Wales has many beautiful places outside of Sydney, a city whose beds are at saturation point. I welcome the opportunity for Destination NSW to explore and implore the board to promote opportunities for events to be held outside of Sydney. Recently, the member for Newcastle defended Surfest, which has been held in Newcastle for more than 20 years. We were talking about holding a major surfing event in Sydney for the international surfing community. I appreciate the economics of such an event, that is, major sponsors want events in a major centre to attract major crowds, but if we keep feeding into the centrifugal force of the Sydney central business district we continue to increase its gravitational pull. We must look outside of that argument and promote areas outside Sydney.

**Dr Geoff Lee:** He is using science.

**Mr CLAYTON BARR:** That is right, I was using a little bit of physics. I read it somewhere. Dr Karl probably told me. I ask, implore, request and require the Minister in his response to identify what Destination NSW will do to attract opportunities to areas other than the Sydney central business district. The member for Keira spoke about the benefits of the Wollongong region. The members for Dubbo and Gosford, both beautiful areas, are in the Chamber and want to talk to this bill. I reiterate that we have so much that we can do. The member for Balmain from the inner west of Sydney might not qualify for this argument but I appreciate his presence in the Chamber. Some Government members played down or belittled the commitment and contribution made by the former Government. I have printed several pages of achievements of the previous Government in tourism. However, I will put those aside because I note the bipartisan approach on this initiative.

I commend the Government for what it is doing—not because Labor did anything wrong, but because this Government will do things differently. Differences are good, and we should take different approaches at certain times. We must reach out and touch in as many ways as possible the international community and the interstate communities that would come to visit New South Wales. If we keep going down the same avenue, the path will become well worn and we will end up capturing the same customers, and that does not always achieve the best result. I commend the bill. I congratulate the Minister on his appointment and I welcome the opportunity that he brings to the Hunter, Dubbo and other regions.

**Mr TROY GRANT** (Dubbo—Parliamentary Secretary) [11.50 a.m.]: I fully support the Destination NSW Bill 2011 and congratulate the Minister on the establishment of the statutory body proposed by the bill.



The bill establishes Destination NSW as a statutory body, and provides that Destination NSW will be governed by a board of management with an independent chair, drawn from industry. The bill indicates that the board members will include the Chief Executive Officer of Destination NSW, the Director-General of the Department of Trade and Investment, Regional Infrastructure and Services, and high level industry representatives, including the chair of the Visitor Economy Task Force, at least two members from the current board of Tourism NSW and two members from the current board of Events NSW. We in New South Wales are lucky to live in one of the world's unique environments, being within easily accessible distance of rugged outback deserts, tropical rainforest, sparkling coastlines, beaches, snowfields and picturesque country towns.

Though I do not represent an electorate that has beaches and the like, the Dubbo electorate has some of the most beautiful and diverse regional landscapes, and offers some of the best opportunities in tourism that this State and country have to offer. I commend the bill from a number of different points of view. We have heard strong support for the bill from members opposite—a clear indication that the Minister has got this exactly right. The reason he has it exactly right is that, while this State enjoys a really strong reputation on the quality of tourism and experiences that visitors can enjoy throughout regional New South Wales, where my particular interests lie, we know that we can do more to promote regional and rural New South Wales as a destination for visitors from Australia and overseas. In short, we know we can do better.

And in order to do better, and ensure that we support tourism, which is such a key player in the economic structure of our regional communities, this is the road map that the Minister has prepared. It is structured so well that it will give a clear focus on desired tourism outcomes and the economic stimulus that we require. The bill will provide—as the O'Farrell-Stoner Government said from the beginning of the election it would do, and has so demonstrated throughout the early stages of its term in office—a genuine opportunity for communities and key stakeholders to contribute to the future of our State, particularly in this very important area.

As I indicated earlier, I represent many diverse communities. Populations in those communities number from 500 to the tens of thousands. What do some of the smaller communities, such as the wonderful communities of Yeoval, Canowindra and Eugowra, have to offer in the way of tourism? Those are towns that offer some of our most wonderful heritage, including much of the bushranger history that has shaped our nation's history. They have uniquely beautiful buildings and landscapes, with emerging industries in wine and local wares that tourists like to visit and seek out. Canowindra is renowned for the hot air balloons that operate in that small community.

Travel up the Newell Highway and you come to Forbes, a wonderful community in a rich agricultural area. It has enormous tourism potential. Again, it is on a major thoroughfare, sitting between Melbourne and Brisbane. Local tourist operators are making great strides in bringing more business to town and boosting the economy. They need to be encouraged. It was said earlier that tourism promotion does not lie with government alone. That is absolutely correct. It is a joint partnership between the State and national governments, local government and individual tourist operators. Forbes is a great example of the local tourist operator making a contribution, with a great car museum and many historic buildings that travellers can enjoy.

A little further up the highway is Parkes. Obviously, it has the dish that is synonymous with the community and played such a special role in man's landing on the moon. That major facility is a testament to the community and plays a very important part in our nation's history. An example of how regional New South Wales can contribute is the Elvis Festival, which is held every January in Parkes. If you want to pull on your blue suede shoes, or want a hunka hunka burning love, then all you need do is travel to Parkes in January for this wonderful festival. Though in its infancy, this week-long festival is generating some \$8 million for the local economy. That is an outstanding result. This is a clear example that regional New South Wales has a lot to offer in the way of tourism.

Further north is Dubbo, in the northern part of my electorate, the real jewel in the crown of tourism is the Taronga Western Plains Zoo, which enjoys international acclaim. In its 34 years of operation, its gates having opened in 1977, it has welcomed more than eight million visitors. It is the first open range zoo in Australia, and the first to develop zoo accommodation. It has won many awards, including recently for the Zoofari Lodge. The zoo attracts more than 200,000 visitors to our region annually; it is an outstanding facility. I am very pleased to inform the House, as I have heard the Minister say on a number of occasions, that this is the Minister's favourite tourism destination, and we welcome him at any time. The operators of the zoo are to be

commended. They are always looking to capacity build that wonderful facility, but not just for the facility itself; they always have one eye on the broader picture and work hand-in-hand with other tourist operators throughout the Dubbo electorate.

I remind the House of the zoo's significant international appeal. It has the world's first rhino embryo in-vitro fertilisation program. In the past few weeks the program has conducted the first stage of the rhino embryo transfer. This is a high-level, world-class innovation, and we are enormously proud that it is occurring in Dubbo. The zoo is working with the regional tourism organisations, which are engaged in a lot of conversation about amalgamating those inland operators. That is a wonderful initiative, and I encourage all those operators in our region to continue those discussions, because that initiative sits perfectly with the focus and goal of the Minister's vision for Destination NSW. In short, it is a case of united we stand, divided we fall. The Minister has got the bill right. We will have better coordination and use of resources and increased capacity of all organisations in Destination NSW as a whole. It will ensure that local governments and tourism operators get better potential from such an organisation. I commend the bill to the House.

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

## **INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION AMENDMENT BILL 2011**

### **PUBLIC INTEREST DISCLOSURES AMENDMENT BILL 2011**

**Bills introduced on motion by Mr Barry O'Farrell.**

#### **Agreement in Principle**

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL** (Ku-ring-gai—Premier, and Minister for Western Sydney) [12.01 p.m.]:  
I move:

That these bills be now agreed to in principle.

The New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government is committed to improving accountability and ethical standards in public administration. As part of that commitment, our 100 Day Action Plan promises to introduce legislation to strengthen the protection of whistleblowers and the operation of the Independent Commission Against Corruption. The Government is pleased to introduce these two bills and so to further deliver on that commitment. These bills form part of a range of measures that the Government is taking to restore confidence in public administration in New South Wales.

I will deal firstly with the Public Interest Disclosures Amendment Bill 2011. The Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994 plays a critical role in maintaining the integrity of public administration in this State. It does this by protecting public officials who disclose wrongdoing in the public sector in accordance with the Act. Known as "whistleblowers", they bring to the attention of Government and the community wrongdoing and corruption. They deserve to be protected. The Act makes it a criminal offence to take detrimental action against a public official substantially in reprisal for making a public interest disclosure. We recently were reminded how serious reprisals against whistleblowers can be in the matter of Gillian Sneddon. Members will recall that Ms Sneddon claimed to have suffered victimisation, bullying and harassment at the hands of Milton 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.

Earlier this month the Supreme Court dismissed Gillian Sneddon's action against the State, but it awarded damages of more than \$400,000 in her favour against the former Speaker of the Parliament and the former Labor Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, the jailed paedophile Milton Orkopoulos. 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 at RailCorp. 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.

This bill improves the protections afforded to persons such as Gillian Sneddon and Bimla Chand who make public interest disclosures and it strengthens the capacity of the Ombudsman to oversight public

authorities and resolve disputes. First, the bill expands the type of disclosures that can be made to the Chief Executive, Local Government, in the Department of Premier and Cabinet regarding wrongdoing by local councils. Currently the Act only permits public interest disclosures to be made directly to the chief executive in relation to serious and substantial waste of local government money. As the Division of Local Government can investigate a range of other conduct by local councils, the Government considers that public officials should be able to disclose a wider range of wrongdoing directly to the head of that division and receive the protections under the Act.

To implement this, the bill will also allow the chief executive to receive disclosures about corrupt conduct, maladministration, breaches of pecuniary interest obligations under the Local Government Act and a failure to exercise functions properly in accordance with the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 by councils. The bill will also impose express statutory obligations on the heads of public authorities. These include responsibility for ensuring that the public authority has a public interest disclosure policy, that staff are aware of the policy and the protections of the Act, and that the public authority complies with the policy and its obligations under the Act. Placing these obligations in legislation will assist in emphasising the importance of top-down support for public officials who make public interest disclosures. It is also proposed to empower the Ombudsman to assist in resolving certain disputes that might arise as a result of a public official making a public interest disclosure. New regulation-making powers have been included in the bill for this purpose.

To assist with prosecutions of offences of taking reprisal action against whistleblowers, the bill will also clarify that responsibility for investigating and preparing a brief of evidence lies with the appropriate investigating agency. This will assist in providing proper briefs of evidence to the Director of Public Prosecutions for the prosecution of offences of taking reprisal action. The Director of Public Prosecutions will be responsible for prosecuting offences. The bill will also improve the feedback from agencies to whistleblowers about their concerns. Public authorities will be required to send a copy of the agency's policy to a person who has made a public interest disclosure and to acknowledge receipt of a disclosure within 45 days. This requirement will need to be included in the public authority's public interest disclosures policy.

Legislation passed last year established a Public Interest Disclosures Steering Committee in March. Currently its members are the Ombudsman, as chairperson, the Director General of the Department of Premier and Cabinet, the Auditor-General, the Commissioner of the Independent Commission Against Corruption, the Commissioner for the Police Integrity Commission, the Chief Executive, Local Government, and the Commissioner of Police. The role of the steering committee is to provide the Premier with advice on the operation of the Act and recommendations for reform. The bill will include the Information Commissioner on the steering committee as public interest disclosures can be made to the Information Commissioner regarding a failure to exercise functions properly in accordance with the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009. The Government looks forward to working closely with the steering committee. It will give careful consideration to any suggestions for further enhancements to the Act which the steering committee may make.

New annual reporting obligations on public authorities will commence on 1 January 2012. These reports will provide useful data to the Public Interest Disclosures Steering Committee, and the Ombudsman for his new oversight role, to analyse whether the Act is operating effectively to protect whistleblowers. In addition to these annual reports, the bill will also require each public authority to provide on a quarterly basis to the Ombudsman statistics regarding its compliance with the Act. This will facilitate increased oversight by the Ombudsman of public authorities' compliance with the Act.

I turn now to the Independent Commission Against Corruption Amendment Bill 2011. The New South Wales Coalition was responsible not only for introducing whistleblower legislation to this Parliament but also for establishing the Independent Commission Against Corruption through legislation in 1988, but we recognise that two decades later the Act needs to be strengthened. After 16 years of Labor numerous examples of corrupt conduct have shown the continuing need for a strong anti-corruption body in this State. Investigations over the period of the former Labor Government have found a number of Labor members of Parliament guilty of breaching entitlement codes. Several local councils, such as the Labor-controlled Wollongong council, have also been exposed engaging in corrupt practices. The public deserves a government committed to stamping out corruption and that is why my Government committed to strengthening the Independent Commission Against Corruption as part of its 100 Day Action Plan.

The bill I introduce today will strengthen both the Independent Commission Against Corruption and the Inspector of the Independent Commission Against Corruption. A strong Independent Commission Against Corruption will proactively work to prevent corruption and fearlessly investigate allegations when they are

made. The bill implements the recommendations from two reports released in 2010 by the Parliamentary Joint Standing Committee on the Independent Commission Against Corruption, which are supported by the Independent Commission Against Corruption commissioner, as well as two more recent requests for amendments by the commissioner.

The bill amends section 14 of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act to clarify the commission's powers to gather and assemble admissible evidence for the prosecution of a person for criminal offences in connection with corrupt conduct. This will facilitate the assembly of comprehensive briefs of evidence for the Director of Public Prosecutions to support prosecutions arising from corruption investigations. Amendments to sections 35 and 37 of the Act will streamline the process for the production of privileged documents to the commission, so that it is not always necessary for the person producing the documents to appear in person at the commission.

The bill will insert a new subsection into section 57B of the Act to permit the reports and findings of the Inspector of the Independent Commission Against Corruption to be published more broadly. These amendments will clarify that the inspector may communicate his findings and recommendations to the Independent Commission Against Corruption commissioner, Independent Commission Against Corruption officers, complainants and any other affected parties for the purpose of resolving a complaint or dealing with a matter. The inspector will also have broader powers to report on his activities to Parliament under amendments the bill makes to section 77A. The bill also provides that section 40 of the Surveillance Devices Act 2007 does not prevent the Independent Commission Against Corruption from providing information about its use of covert surveillance to the Inspector of the Independent Commission Against Corruption.

The bill's amendment to section 104 of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act will ensure that the original intent of subsection 104 (11) is preserved. Originally the section provided that decisions of the Independent Commission Against Corruption commissioner relating to the appointment, discipline and removal of staff of the Independent Commission Against Corruption may not be appealed to the Industrial Relations Commission. It is important that the Independent Commission Against Corruption commissioner have control over the appointment, discipline and removal of staff. Given the nature of the work of the Independent Commission Against Corruption, the commission should not be placed in the position of having to maintain the employment of a person in whom the Independent Commission Against Corruption commissioner has lost confidence.

As part of our strategy to improve honesty and integrity in New South Wales, this bill will strengthen the operation of the Independent Commission Against Corruption. I foreshadow that there will be further legislation about the level of court in which matters relating to jurisdiction will in future be heard. This flows from suggestions from the Independent Commission Against Corruption commissioner that the Attorney General is currently taking up with the commissioner and the Acting Director of Public Prosecutions. These two bills form a part of a series of measures that we are taking not just in relation to whistle blowing and anti-corruption but also in other areas to restore public confidence in the administration of government and deliver openness and transparency, and I commend the bills to the House.

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

## **PARLIAMENTARY, LOCAL COUNCIL AND PUBLIC SECTOR EXECUTIVES REMUNERATION LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2011**

**Bill introduced on motion by Mr Barry O'Farrell.**

### **Agreement in Principle**

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL** (Ku-ring-gai—Premier, and Minister for Western Sydney) [12.12 p.m.]:  
I move:

That this bill be now agreed to in principle.

This bill will extend the Government's public sector wages policy to elected officials, to State parliamentarians, local mayors and councillors, to senior executives in the public service and to statutory officeholders. The

Government's public sector wages policy is about delivering fair wage increases to hardworking public servants. It is also about ensuring that the State budget can be brought under control. This means we will be able to get on with the business of delivering the infrastructure and services that this State needs and that its people deserve.

Last week this Parliament passed the Industrial Relations Amendment (Public Sector Conditions of Employment) Bill 2011. That legislation requires the Industrial Relations Commission to give effect to the Government's wages policy when making decisions relating to public sector salaries. It is now appropriate to extend the policy to other officeholders who are paid from the public purse. If the policy is good enough for a public servant then it is certainly also good enough for senior executives and for elected officials. I note that over the past four years when Labor imposed its 2.5 per cent wages policy on the public service it had no constraint on members of Parliament, elected officials and other officers.

That is why, for the first time, the Government's wages policy will be formally extended so that it applies to elected officials and to senior bureaucrats. The independent tribunals which set the remuneration of those officials will be required to give effect to the same policy on salary increases that the Industrial Relations Commission is required to apply to public servants. Obviously, we do not pretend that a cap on salary increases is felt in the same way by highly paid executives as it is by ordinary public servants, but the point is that we should not apply a policy for workers that we are not willing to apply to ourselves.

Schedule 1 to the bill extends the wages policy to members of Parliament. Currently the basic salary of New South Wales parliamentarians is set automatically by reference to the salary paid to members of the Commonwealth House of Representatives less \$500. This means that any increase in the salary of Commonwealth members of Parliament flows automatically to State members of Parliament. This bill will break that nexus to ensure that members of Parliament cannot receive salary increases above what is prescribed in the public sector wages policy. Going forward, the salaries of New South Wales members of Parliament will be determined by an independent tribunal—the Parliamentary Remuneration Tribunal. This ensures that parliamentary salaries continue to be set by a process that is independent and at arm's-length from the Government.

The tribunal will, however, only be able to approve salary increases for members of Parliament up to the amount prescribed in the Government wages policy. Unlike public servants, who will be able to receive an additional increase where there are demonstrated employee-related savings, members of Parliament will not be able to claim that they should receive a higher salary because of productivity savings. Capping the basic salary of members of Parliament at 2.5 per cent will mean that Ministers, Parliamentary Secretaries, Presiding Officers and other parliamentary officeholders will also be subject to the same cap. Under the Parliamentary Remuneration Act the additional salaries of Ministers and other officeholders are set as a percentage of the member's basic salary. Accordingly, any cap on the basic salary will flow through automatically to cap the additional salary of Ministers and others named.

Schedule 2 to the bill applies the same policy to elected officials at the local government level, to mayors and councillors. It provides that in future the Local Government Remuneration Tribunal will be required to give effect to the Government wages cap when setting the range of fees for mayors and councillors. Finally, schedule 3 to the bill extends the policy to determinations of executive remuneration made by the Statutory and Other Offices Remuneration Tribunal. This means that the Government's wages policy will apply to the Chief Executive Service, the Senior Executive Service and statutory officeholders whose remuneration is determined by the Statutory and Other Offices Remuneration Tribunal Act. The Statutory and Other Offices Remuneration Tribunal will be required to apply the policy when determining the salary bands for each Senior Executive Service level.

As with other public servants, any increase above 2.5 per cent will be payable only where productivity savings have been achieved. To pass on any increase the tribunal will need to be satisfied that these savings have been achieved and are attributable, at least in part, to the category of officers concerned. Of course, this does not mean that any individual Senior Executive Service officer will automatically receive the tribunal determined increase. Individual officers will continue to be paid having regard to their individual performance. High-performing Senior Executive Service officers may receive increases beyond 2.5 per cent provided that any increase is within the Statutory and Other Offices Remuneration Tribunal approved band. Poorly performing Senior Executive Service officers may receive less than 2.5 per cent or no increase at all.

Schedule 4 to the bill makes consequential amendments to the Health Services Act to ensure that the public sector wages policy also applies to visiting medical officers and to executives of the Health Senior

Executive Service. I mention briefly that judges and magistrates have been excluded from the bill. Although the salaries of New South Wales judicial officers are determined by the Statutory and Other Offices Remuneration Tribunal, it is generally accepted that there should be broad consistency of pay between Federal and State judiciaries. That said, it is concerning that in recent times salary increases for judicial officers have significantly outpaced those for all other public sector officers. For the time being, it is appropriate that judicial officers, as defined, be excluded from the bill. This will ensure that appropriate relativities across Federal and State judiciaries can be maintained.

We will, however, continue to monitor increases in judicial salaries to ensure that these do not place undue pressure on State finances. The Government's wages policy is designed to strike a balance between maintaining the value of wages for public servants and the ability of the State budget to fund wage increases. The wages policy we are implementing is the same as Labor's wages policy implemented in 2007 yet—unlike Labor—we are prepared to have this policy apply equally. With this legislation the wages policy will apply to members of Parliament, senior public servants, mayors and councillors as well. Not only is that fair, it is appropriate and necessary if we are to get on with the business of delivering the infrastructure and services that this State needs and the public deserves. I commend the bill to the House.

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

## **DESTINATION NSW BILL 2011**

### **Agreement in Principle**

**Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

**Mr JAMIE PARKER** (Balmain) [12.19 p.m.]: The object of the Destination NSW Bill 2011 is to establish Destination NSW as a government agency with the purpose of developing tourism and procuring major events. The Greens are generally supportive of the bill, but I will address a few questions to the Minister to which I hope he will respond during his reply. The tourism industry contributes significant income and employment to New South Wales and has the potential to greatly expand its contribution. Clause 12 provides that the principal object of Destination NSW is to achieve economic and social benefits for the people of New South Wales through the development of tourism and securing major events. Clause 13 sets out the functions of Destination NSW, which include marketing and promoting New South Wales as a tourist destination and as a destination in which to host major events.

Consolidation of the State's various tourism bodies should increase the effectiveness of tourism promotion and deliver improved tourism performance. I note the contributions to the debate made by rural and regional members. There is a clear need for the Government to consider more investment in rural and regional transport. Expansion of transport facilities should be supported by every member of this House. While rural and regional New South Wales in particular has a great deal to offer, in the past it has suffered from a lack of government support and the failure of governments to encourage people to visit not just Sydney but the remainder of the State. While The Greens generally are supportive of the bill, I sound notes of caution in relation to the desire to attract major events. The issue has been considered in recent years by the Auditor-General.

Any deals done with promoters to attract major events must be economically justified and must comply with relevant legislative provisions for the protection of the environment. One area of significant concern to The Greens in recent years was the willingness of the former Government to override environmental protections in formulating extremely generous deals with event promoters. Often the deals resulted in the State spending large amounts of money for negligible financial return, while the process led to significant environmental damage. The \$121 million of public money spent on World Youth Day and the tens of millions of dollars spent on the V8 races at Olympic Park are examples of the former Government doing a deal with event promoters that involved spending millions of dollars of taxpayer's money.

In the case of the V8 races, the former Government introduced legislation to override State environmental protection laws, resulting in significant damage being done to the Olympic Park precinct for negligible economic benefit. Frequently the former Government understated the cost and overstated the benefit of hosting major events. I ask the Minister to commit to what the Premier discussed only five minutes ago in this House—transparency—and recognise that there should be more transparent processes and a greater release of

information and cost-benefit analyses for major events as well as more details, within the constraints of commercial-in-confidence, of contractual arrangements that the Government undertakes to promote major events.

Let us leave behind the bad old days of opaque deal-making of the former Government. In particular, when it comes to cost-benefit analysis the Government should recognise Destination NSW as an important opportunity to demonstrate the Government's bona fides in relation to openness and transparency. I draw members' attention to the Auditor-General's report on the V8 races released in June 2010. The Auditor-General stated,

The five races are estimated to cost \$10 million more than planned and provide nearly 25 per cent fewer benefits than expected.

In relation to World Youth Day, the Auditor-General stated:

The costs to the state for the World Youth Day festival in Sydney were \$64 million more than initially budgeted. This raised concerns about whether the government is receiving the right advice on major events.

Members have called for increases in funding for rural and regional transport yet a major event cost New South Wales taxpayers \$64 million more than was originally budgeted. It is obvious that there is an opportunity for the Minister to work closely with Destination NSW to ensure that the type of advice the Government receives on events and the cost-benefit analyses upon which the Government relies when embarking on major projects are rigorous, economically responsible and deliver the result that I know the Government is looking for, which is a significant increase in tourism to ensure that the State continues to grow and we have a burgeoning economy. It is hoped that the creation of Destination NSW will result in the Government receiving much better advice on the potential costs and benefits of major events in both economic and environmental terms. With respect, I ask the Minister to address those issues during his reply and indicate that the Government will address the lessons that have been learned from mistakes made by the former Government.

I trust that the current Government will ensure that cost-benefit analyses and initial budgeting, which was a feature of the past, are not the approach adopted in the future. One area of tourism that is of particular interest in my electorate of Balmain is the cruise ship industry. As many members know, cruise ships are experiencing increased demand. Cruise ship tourism offers significant potential to attract increased numbers of tourists not only to Sydney but also to other areas throughout the whole of New South Wales. I trust that Destination NSW will consult extensively with the cruise ship industry to ensure that appropriate facilities are made available for the berthing of cruise ships in Sydney Harbour. Members know that I have asked several questions about moving the cruise ship terminal from Barangaroo to White Bay. That move is opposed by the industry, Carnival Cruise Lines, the Tourism and Transport Forum, local councils and the local community. It is supported by Joe Tripodi, and that is about it.

In my view and in the view of the industry as well as operators that will use the facility it is important for the Government to consider this move very carefully. The installation of such significant infrastructure, which will cost approximately \$70 million, should be in a place where industry wants it—and industry does not want it in White Bay—and in a place in which the community wants it. And the community does not want it in White Bay either. We should also make sure that the bay's precinct, which includes White Bay, Black Wattle Bay and Rozelle Bay, is dealt with in an integrated and constructive manner not only so that local businesses and local residents benefit but also so that tourism, which has developed for the most part due to Sydney's beautiful harbour, continues to flourish.

While I sound notes of caution in relation to this bill, The Greens look forward to the Minister addressing the concerns during his reply. I know that the Minister is approaching this legislation with goodwill. I trust that New South Wales will avoid some of the terrible and egregious overspending of initial costings that befell the former Government. The most important thing in my mind is that cost-benefit analyses, which are the most critical steps, are carried out properly. The Government must make sure that the work of Destination NSW is open, transparent and accountable, that it will maximise the capacity of the State to receive the best result from expenditure, and that all the people of Sydney and New South Wales will benefit as we provide a wonderful experience for people who visit this great country.

**Dr GEOFF LEE** (Parramatta) [12.27 p.m.]: I support the Destination NSW Bill 2011, which reflects the Government's whole-of-government approach to tourism and major events at both ministerial and departmental level. Destination NSW combines the Tourism and Major Events portfolios under the administration of one Minister, our excellent Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Hospitality and Racing, and

Minister for the Arts, George Souris, to overcome turf wars and provide coordination across portfolios that are closely linked. The importance of major events in tourism to the State's economy cannot be underestimated. Tourism generates 160,000 jobs and a turnover of \$28 billion. Destination NSW will bring together budgets, knowledge and expertise to double tourism by 2020. It will become one consolidated organisation to make New South Wales the most appealing destination in the world for business or leisure.

Destination NSW will be a statutory body that will market, promote and position New South Wales and Sydney as the most appealing places to visit. It will promote Sydney for hosting major events, international conventions, exhibitions and association conferences. The Government already has committed to delivering a cutting-edge new convention facility to create more than 20,000 square metres of new space to complement the Sydney Showground at Olympic Park and facilities at Darling Harbour. Destination NSW will encourage investment in the tourism economy of this State through a whole-of-government united approach. Prior to the election the New South Wales Liberals and Nationals announced an increase in budget by \$40 million for Destination NSW over four years.

Sydney is the gateway for tourism and major events. It is a world-class city and a global city. We want to build upon the opportunity that New South Wales affords, and we have already started. Since the election the Minister has announced major events that include the 2015 Touch Football Cup, Baz Luhrmann's *Strictly Ballroom*, which will be a world premiere, *The Addams Family*, which is an Australian premiere, and *Legally Blonde*, which is another Australian premiere.

Sydney not only is the gateway to New South Wales, but also Australia, and it has natural advantages that we must leverage, such as the world's best harbour. Experiences on the harbour such as cruises, whale watching, jet boating or fishing, which is what I like, are open to all people, whether domestic or international visitors. Sydney also has its iconic Sydney Opera House and Sydney Harbour Bridge. Tens of thousands of people climb the bridge every year to gain a better perspective of Sydney and enjoy what it has to offer. We have cultural destinations, some of the best museums in Australia, the Art Gallery of New South Wales and many great theatres. Similarly we have the Darling Harbour, Pitt Street Mall and The Rocks shopping precincts. There is something for everybody, international or domestic.

But there is more to New South Wales than Sydney. Within an hour or two drive tourists also can enjoy the northern beaches. I am sure the member for Pittwater would agree that those beaches are spectacular. Sailing on the waters of the Pittwater also is a fantastic opportunity for visitors. The member for Blue Mountains already has attested to the beauty of Wentworth Falls, shopping in Leura, the expansive views surrounding the Three Sisters and the bushland setting for walking, leisure activities, food and accommodation. Of course, the member for Maitland will attest to some of the world's best vineyards, wine tasting and accommodation in the Hunter Valley. Rural areas also offer excellent destinations. Whether it is Dubbo, Orange or the Thredbo snowfields, New South Wales has something to offer everybody and every taste. However, most people do not understand that right at Sydney's doorstep is its best-kept secret: Parramatta, which also has many hidden secrets. I shall share with the House some of the secrets of wonderful Parramatta.

**Mr Andrew Fraser:** Where is Parramatta?

**Dr GEOFF LEE:** It is 25 kilometres west of the Sydney central business district. Parramatta is the geographic heart of Sydney and serves the whole of western Sydney. Parramatta is a fantastic place. One needs to take only a quick leisurely 40-minute RiverCat ferry trip from Circular Quay to Parramatta and pick up the loop bus seven days a week for a free tour around the major destinations of Parramatta, including shops, eateries and cultural places of interest. The free loop bus is a four-year \$2.4 million funding commitment of the Minister for Transport. Parramatta also is renowned for its eat street: a crowded vibrant area that is open daily for almost 24 hours where people share in Middle Eastern, Asian, Italian, modern Australian cuisine either for take-away, fine dining or café-style dining. Visitors can attend Rosehill racecourse, the home of the spring carnival and the Golden Slipper. The club is considering spending a couple of hundred million dollars to expand and upgrade the facilities to make it a prestigious destination.

Of course, the Parramatta district also has the suburb of Harris Park. Many people do not know that Harris Park has transformed in the past five years into what is known as little India. I visit Harris Park regularly to eat Indian food. My favourite eateries include Ginger's, Billu's Eatery and Bombay Masala because they offer authentic food until 12 o'clock at night. Harris Park is a safe area and has changed so that we can share its vibrancy with a wonderful Australian-Indian community. Of course, the Riverside Theatre is another key



attraction in Parramatta. Many members of Parliament make the special trip to attend the Parramatta Riverside theatres, which host over 700 performances every year. Another key destination point is Parramatta Stadium, home to the almighty Eels.

**Mr Andrew Fraser:** Almighty? What happened to them last year?

**Dr GEOFF LEE:** This football club has had a distinguished and credible reputation for many years. Of course, the Parramatta district has other clubs, including the Parramatta RSL and Parramatta Leagues Club. I attended the Parramatta Leagues Club for the opening of its new Firehouse Bar, which is a new stylish bar offering southern Italian food—pizza, pasta and tapas. Patrons can sit in comfort to eat, drink and view the football stadium from the club's rooftop. The Firehouse Bar is a wonderful addition to the club. Parramatta also has cultural events in addition to sporting events. The Parramatta artists' studio precinct is a progressive area providing for contemporary artists' productions.

The studio offers affordable residential and non-residential facilities and exhibition space for emerging and established contemporary practitioners and creative industry professionals to display their art and craft. It definitely is a place to visit by jumping on the loop bus. Of course, there are also the iconic parts of Parramatta as the birthplace of the nation some 25 kilometres west of Sydney. When Governor Phillip wanted to feed the colony he turned to Parramatta. Parramatta Park is the location of old Government House, which was the place the first Government located before moving to this place in which we meet today. Elizabeth Farm was John Macarthur's first residence and now hosts the biennial olive festival and many artist exhibitions.

The public also can visit Lancer Barracks, which are the first barracks occupied continuously for over 100 years. Parramatta also has the Female Factory, an important icon that we want to preserve. In the 1800s some 10,000 to 12,000 women passed through this reformatory institution, and it is complemented by the Female Orphanage, which is now situated in the grounds of the Rydalmere campus of the University of Western Sydney, comprising the oldest three-storey buildings in Australia and through which thousands of female orphans passed. Of course, Parramatta also has the old Kings School for which plans are being considered to refurbish and use as a potential arts cultural precinct adjacent to the almighty Parramatta River.

The Parramatta River is a wonderful natural icon that runs through the centre of the city and hosts the annual carp fishing contest, about which I spoke yesterday in this place. Not only do people from all ages enjoy catching the carp, this event helps to clean up the river, which is an essential element in looking after the environment. Parramatta holds sensational events. Minister Souris understands the vital importance of the need to decentralise events to Parramatta. The New Year's Eve festival includes fireworks, music and jet boat displays on the river. I was able to attend this year's celebrations along with around 30,000 to 35,000 people at what is really a family event because the fireworks commenced at 9.00 p.m. and people had left the precinct by 12.00 a.m.

Australia Day celebrations are held each year in Parramatta Park. I was privileged again to attend this year where there were also hot air balloons and different sorts of entertainment starting at 5.00 a.m. This spectacular event was attended by over 70,000 people. A Thai festival is held on the banks of Parramatta River usually attended by around 10,000 people. The Chinese New Year Festival is held in the Chinatown section of Parramatta. We have a diversity of these types of cultural events, including parts of the decentralised Sydney Festival. Parramasala Festival is a unique South Asian festival for the Australian-Indian community attended by roughly 50,000 people. It is unique because no other place in Australia holds a comparable event. We look forward again this year to growing that cultural event in support of the Indian community.

Of course, there also are the new community markets set up by the Parramatta Stadium Trust and held in the trust's car park to utilise areas previously not used for the convenience of the community. Those markets enable farmers, artists and local businesses to promote their wares. For those who enjoy picnicking, the Parramatta River frontage recently was enhanced to beautify the area for everyone and will be enhanced further. We also have the wonderful Parramatta Park. I encourage anyone interested in Parramatta to visit the Discovery Centre. I commend Parramatta City Council for hosting, supporting and encouraging tourism in Parramatta, and for its strategic planning of the city. All these events and different destination points would not be possible without the generous support of Parramatta council.

The Olympics in Sydney in 2000 should have been the catalyst for New South Wales to realise its full potential, yet this full potential has not been realised. I am encouraged by the Premier, who wants major events diversified from the central business district to reduce congestion. Parramatta is such an ideal place. It is not

about moving the whole event but about extending the event to Parramatta. Parramatta is ideally situated to service western Sydney, which is home to 2.2 million people. Indeed, one in 10 people in Australia live in western Sydney, and Parramatta is at the centre. The New South Wales Government is committed to investing in vital infrastructure and services to support major events and tourism for both Sydney and rural tourism. That is why Destination NSW is essential to realise the full potential of New South Wales. I congratulate the Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Hospitality and Racing, and Minister for the Arts on his dedication to tourism and events in New South Wales. That is why I support the Destination NSW Bill. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr RICHARD AMERY** (Mount Druitt) [12.40 p.m.]: The Destination NSW Bill 2011 is designed to establish a government entity called Destination NSW, which will be a government agency with functions relating to the development of tourism and obtaining major events for the State. I listened to many of the contributions, including that of the member for Parramatta. In supporting the bill, it does not follow that the bill is here because it is necessary to greatly improve tourism. The State, under the former Government and now this Government, has been very successful in both general tourism and in attracting major events to the State. Indeed, New South Wales has been number one for a long time, and no doubt it will continue to be the number one tourism destination.

I refer members to many questions and speeches made in the House by previous Ministers and Premiers to support my assessment about the success of New South Wales, Sydney and the regions in attracting tourism to our region. Tourism as a brand or product does not get the attention it deserves, especially when we see the economic value it produces for a State and the many businesses that rely on that trade. A good example of the magnitude of the industry comes to mind: when I was agriculture Minister I was involved in many briefings about disease outbreaks that affected the United Kingdom. Mad cow disease comes to mind, and the foot and mouth outbreaks were devastating to farming industries in the United Kingdom. The movement of people and livestock was restricted, and the whole cattle population in a certain area was slaughtered. The emotional side of that was world attention.

While the main focus was rightly on the farming sector, the impact on the United Kingdom tourism industry was greater, if we only measure the economic impact. We watched the terrible scenes of animals being destroyed and cremated on funeral pyres and we heard about the suicide of farmers in that particular region, yet the numbers show that the economic hit was in tourism as the countryside and regions were virtually closed down. As I said, tourism received secondary notice, probably fairly, but the economic impacts were greater in the tourism industry. In New South Wales at about the same time we had the outbreak of Newcastle disease. While the impact was nothing like the United Kingdom experience, it was not long before the impact on the management of the disease became apparent, affecting the poultry industry in some regions, particularly the Central Coast of New South Wales.

After we had restrictions, road blocks and so on, we started to look at where the major impacts hit. It was the tourist trade. In that case the main issue was to prevent another disease outbreak, but the economic hit was to the people running motels and businesses, roadside dining places and holiday resorts. It has been said many times that just about every business has a stake in a successful tourist trade in their area and in the State. It is interesting to see what places or events attract people to visit an area and spend their money. Why do they choose particular locations to visit? All the publications on Australia feature the national icons, including the Sydney Opera House and the Sydney Harbour Bridge. Indeed, everything Sydney is always on the list. Also featured are the Great Barrier Reef, Ayers Rock or Uluru, the Great Ocean Road from South Australia to Victoria and various locations in Tasmania.

Today I heard that some country towns in New South Wales have become quite successful in attracting tourism to their towns. I recall a town in Tasmania called Sheffield, named after the big steel city in England, where murals were put up all over town to make the town different and to attract tourists. Busloads of tourists were diverting to the town just to see the murals. It is interesting to see how some towns, local councils and so on are becoming entrepreneurial in how they attract people to their little part of the world. I will not repeat the statistics, but I will recount some experiences of family I hosted in Australia.

Over the past decade I had some cousins from England visit. First it was Irene Howell from Nottingham and later Marlene and Robert Gudgeon from Whalley in Lancashire. Both of those trips, at different times, resulted in them staying in Sydney with family—including me. As visitors to Sydney they asked what sites would be interesting, and they asked the locals what we thought they would like to see. They also came with many of their own ideas. I suppose the question is: how do people in the northern parts of England find out about attractions in Australia? Obviously Australia and Australian tourism are publicised worldwide. As visitors to Sydney my cousins had destinations they wanted to see.

I will highlight the venues they wanted to see while they were in Sydney: the Sydney Opera House, the Sydney Harbour Bridge, Parliament House, Hyde Park and Darling Harbour. Being from England, they wanted to see Botany Bay, the landing place of Captain Cook. Everyone over there wanted to see Bondi Beach, so putting a toe in the sand at Bondi was on the agenda. However, as a local I do not see any difference between Bondi Beach and any other beach on the coast of New South Wales, but visitors from the northern hemisphere have to see Bondi Beach. The Sydney heads and lunch at Watsons Bay come to mind. Moving out of the Sydney environment, they also wanted to see the Blue Mountains, particularly the Three Sisters and the various villages around the Blue Mountains area.

I noted the comments of the member for Keira about the Illawarra. The scenery of that region was popular with my guests, especially the blow hole at Kiama, various points around Wollongong and the like. I will not detail the entire trip and bore members to death with my experiences, but it was an education to me what people coming to this country had in mind that they wanted to see. They had got their information from tourism promotions in the United Kingdom, perhaps reading magazines, taking advice from travel agents and so on. The various destinations I mentioned were very much on their agenda. One of my favourite locations is in country New South Wales. I am pleased that members have mentioned the New South Wales regions because they must always battle to take a slice of the tourism dollar. I have a longstanding interest in the town of Cootamundra. My daughter's family live there, and I own a weekender in the town.

My United Kingdom visitors saw this town on a family visit, and the visit to Bradman's birthplace was appreciated. Towns like Cootamundra are struggling to attract their share of the multibillion dollar tourism industry. We all hear about Tamworth and its country music focus, and Parkes was mentioned earlier as having done extremely well in such a short time by creating an annual event around the king of rock and roll, Elvis Presley. These events attract a large number of people, all spending money on accommodation, meals, fuel for cars—any activity that creates money and business, and supports business, which in turn supports jobs. The member for Parramatta referred to all of his electorate. Like him, I represent western Sydney where perhaps a lot of the people who spend money on tourism reside. My area does not have the big tourism attractions of the coast or Parramatta, but there has been substantial investment by tourism builders, with the resort at the Rooty Hill RSL Club.

When I became a member of Parliament there were virtually no motels in the region but now they are all around Blacktown. Blacktown has done substantial work to restore old buildings but not to the same level as Parramatta. The Featherdale Farm is a big attraction for tourists on the bus circuit. The member for Parramatta highlighted mini-tourism on the weekend, with the market fraternity attracting people to towns and cities. Indeed, the Parramatta, Windsor and the Hawkesbury councils have done that very well. Thousands of people are attracted to spend money not only in the markets but also in nearby restaurants. For a long time Blacktown City Council has had an aversion to approving markets; instead, it should pick up its game and promote weekend markets. Destination NSW could brief the council on how much money weekend markets bring to a region. Goulburn benefits from them and they complement a number of its major events, including the Big Merino markets.

The Opposition supports this bill. People have many reasons to choose an area in which to holiday and spend their money. The role of Destination NSW will be to continue to keep New South Wales at the forefront of tourism in this country. My briefing note shows that up until September 2010 visitors injected approximately \$28.2 billion a year into the New South Wales economy, supporting 162,000 jobs, nearly 5 per cent of all the jobs in this State. New South Wales attracts more tourists than any other Australian State or Territory, with approximately 36.3 per cent of all international and domestic overnight visitors coming to New South Wales in the year ending September 2010. New South Wales has always been the number one tourist spot. We wish Destination NSW all the very best of luck and good wishes for continued success in keeping our tourism industry at the forefront in this country. The Opposition will not oppose this bill.

**Mr MARK COURE** (Oatley) [12.52 p.m.]: I support the Destination NSW Bill 2011 and further development of tourism in New South Wales. I commend the Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Hospitality and Racing for introducing this bill. In New South Wales we are lucky to live in one of the world's unique environments within easy, accessible distance of rugged outback desert, tropical rainforest, outstanding beaches, snowfields and picturesque country towns. In 2009-10 New South Wales received 2.7 million international overnight visitors. Visitors spent almost 61.3 million nights in the State, up 5.6 per cent on the previous year. New South Wales received 52.4 per cent of visitors, and 34.6 per cent of nights spent in Australia. The average length of stay in New South Wales was 22.6 nights, up by 1.6 nights on the previous year. International overnight visitors spent on average \$5.8 billion in New South Wales.

The Government's creation of a new statutory tourism authority, Destination NSW, is a demonstration of its commitment to dramatically boost tourism and help rebuild the State's economy. The new statutory authority will drive the Government's determination to double tourism expenditure in New South Wales by 2020. Destination NSW represents another key election commitment achieved under the Government's 100 Day Action Plan. The Government recognises the vital role that Sydney, as Australia's major global gateway and the nation's only global city, plays in supporting the New South Wales tourism and major events sector. Tourism and events are essential tools for rebuilding the New South Wales economy. They generate and support tens of thousands of jobs in Sydney and regional New South Wales and are worth billions of dollars a year to New South Wales.

It is commonly accepted that in 2000 Sydney played host to possibly the best Olympic Games ever held. Sydneysiders, and people all around the world and the State, saw this city's potential as a global events and tourism destination. It is also now accepted that we did not fully realise the opportunity to follow up on Sydney's success with the Olympic Games. This Government believes in Sydney's potential and is committed to helping Sydney realise its true calling as one of the world's greatest cities. We want to expand our marketing of Sydney, not just the central business district and the city's iconic attractions—there is a much bigger story to be told about Sydney's diverse precincts. We have heard earlier speakers talk about regional New South Wales. In Sydney, whether we are talking about fashion in Paddington or Double Bay, food in Cabramatta or Parramatta, the stunning natural environment of the Blue Mountains, our beaches in the southern suburbs or the uniquely diverse communities that make up my electorate, New South Wales has a lot to offer.

I strongly support the Destination Bill 2011, which will establish Destination NSW as a new statutory authority cohesive, coordinated and well resourced, and which is long overdue. Destination NSW will play a major part in helping to put Sydney firmly in the global spotlight as Australia's leading leisure and business destination. The establishment of Destination NSW will also bring together the budgets, knowledge and expertise of Tourism NSW and Events New South Wales into one consolidated, coordinated organisation that will market, promote and position Sydney—and New South Wales—as one of the world's most appealing places to visit. Destination NSW will have an industry-led, highly focused board of management, with one overarching priority—selling Sydney and New South Wales to the world. Promoting Sydney as a destination for hosting major global events, and more importantly securing those events, will be an important function of the new organisation.

While years of under-investment in Sydney's tourism and major events potential, including in infrastructure, have taken their toll, this Government is focused on helping Sydney fully realise its true potential, and I commend the Minister. The Government is committed to investment in infrastructure projects in Sydney that will have a significant positive impact on this city's future business and leisure tourism growth and that of regional New South Wales for which Sydney provides a major tourism gateway. The Government recognises that Sydney needs a world-class international convention and exhibition centre for this city to keep its rightful place as Australia's leading international host city for corporate, professional and association conferences and exhibitions. This is long overdue.

We have committed by 2015 to deliver a cutting-edge facility that will create in excess of 20,000 square metres of new floor space, which will ensure Sydney remains the premier city for international meetings and gatherings in the Asia-Pacific market. The new Convention Centre and the Sydney Showground facilities at Sydney Olympic Park, combined with Darling Harbour, will give Sydney more convention and exhibition space than any other city in Australia. In Sydney we have a priceless global asset the full potential of which is as yet not fully realised. With the creation of Destination NSW and the Government's commitments to invest in vital infrastructure and services to support tourism and events operators and visitors to Sydney, we now have the best chance in a generation to rebuild and reinvigorate Sydney's reputation and destination appeal. I support the bill and I commend the Minister for introducing it in the House.

**Mr RICHARD TORBAY** (Northern Tablelands) [12.59 p.m.]: I support the Destination NSW Bill 2011. I agree with the overwhelming majority of what has been said in this debate. From my perspective many well-intentioned government agencies, departments and offices have undertaken work to support tourism and events in New South Wales. In many cases numerous communities have worked very hard, usually with local government and other community organisations, to support and promote not only our regions and communities but also the whole State, including Sydney.

Though the agencies have been well-intentioned, have worked very hard and also been supportive, often they have also been fractious. Despite the best of intentions, that fractiousness can be less than helpful in

achieving the outcomes sought. That the bill will bring the agencies together is a very positive step, and I commend the Minister and the Government for bringing it forward. The momentum created by a whole-of-government approach to tourism can assist in many ways, not only to achieve efficiencies and channelling of information to all of the organisations, which of itself has benefits. Destination NSW, in supporting Sydney and the enormous assets that make this city an international and global centre, can also unlock much information and direct some of the positive momentum generated there to assist regions. Unlocking that information may enable regions to include in programs events that they otherwise might not have known existed, such as sites and destinations to see, events to go to and so on. That can be of great assistance.

Sydney is a magnificent city. There is no doubt about that. People internationally, as the member for Mount Druitt pointed out, regard Sydney as having traditional icons that they want to see. But regions also play a significant part in enhancing the attractiveness of New South Wales. Many people of this State and Australia have not seen those attractions in our regional centres. I hope that the coordination of Tourism NSW and Events NSW will ensure that the data that those bodies have collected, as well as the work that they have done regarding connections, functions and events that they have been supporting, will not be lost, but all of that valuable material will be put together under this newly structured body and made available to regional communities.

The electorate of Northern Tablelands and the New England area have wonderful events. I know that the Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Hospitality and Racing is no stranger to that area of the State. Opera in the Paddock, in Delungra—a very small community in the Inverell shire—is a fantastic event. I acknowledge that Events NSW had been actively supporting that event. I am confident that Destination NSW will give more support to the area. The Celtic Festival is held in Glen Innes. I am not sure that the Minister's Celtic colours or mine will be on display there. This is an international event, and Glen Innes is very proud of that. It now generates the attendance of between 6,000 and 10,000 in that community. That is a great outcome, and one that they have been building for many years. Again, Tourism NSW has supported a range of programs.

The ambassador for our region, Paul Mercurio, said recently at a function I attended—greatly supported by Tourism NSW—that New England has the wine, with the new geographic indicator, the last and most recently allocated. We no doubt have the food, but also the natural resources and the environment. Some of our natural resources are the most stunning to be seen anywhere. Unfortunately, that is one of the best kept secrets of this State. If you have not taken a fleet helicopter through the gorges of New England, I can assure you that you have not seen all of the treasures of New South Wales. They are an absolute sight to behold, and not many people have seen them. I have taken a flight on many occasions, and very much appreciate the natural beauty. If more people knew about this attraction, more people would be drawn from much further afield.

I support the Destination NSW Bill. In closing, I remind the House of an example of what happened when we last collaborated and worked together. I mentioned it a moment ago: the wine geographic indicator. More than 22 cellar doors and more than 40 wineries have established in the New England area, an extraordinary outcome. These wineries are located from Tenterfield through to the Northern Tablelands, to Armidale and across to Inverell and Glen Innes, the Gwydir and Uralla. When they came together as a geographic region the momentum generated far and away exceeded anything that anyone anticipated. Until that time, they had regarded themselves strictly as competitors. They still market their own products, but now that is done under the one banner of the New England wine region.

The bill seeks to do that structurally with the coordination of Tourism NSW and Events NSW. I believe that will generate momentum and positive outcomes through attracting visitors to New South Wales. I believe it will also assist regions if that communication flow is in place and recommendations are available to each other. In my view, it will demonstrate that working together means that, while we market our individual products, we establish a brand and a momentum from which New South Wales and all of its centres will be beneficiaries. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN** (Cronulla) [1.06 p.m.]: I support the Destination NSW Bill 2011. In particular, I invite the attention of the House to the potential exciting implications that the bill and Destination NSW have for the electorate of Cronulla in general, and the Kurnell Peninsula in particular. In his agreement in principle speech the Minister spoke of the unique and spectacular assets that Sydney and regional New South Wales have, including the harbour, incredibly varied scenery, the best beaches and coastline, destinations that uniquely represent the Australian way of life, and the culture and history of Aboriginal people. We have all those things in the Cronulla electorate. Mr Acting-Speaker Provest, as a member of the Cronulla diaspora, would be well aware of that.

What is exciting about the implications of Destination NSW for the electorate of Cronulla is, first, what I will call the ripple effect that greater generation of tourism for Sydney will have; and, secondly, the potential for integration of events management and tourist management in the electorate of Cronulla. Cronulla has the longest stretch of sand in Sydney. It is the only beach in Sydney that is accessible by train. And while others speak of their wine growing capacity, we in Cronulla have many cafes and restaurants, some of them world class, which have great foods and wines.

It is that potential that will be the beneficiary of what I call the ripple effect from tourism that major events in the hub of Sydney or elsewhere in Sydney will generate and flow to Cronulla—which is at the end of a train line, the only beach in Sydney on a train line. There are great tourist attractions not only within the Cronulla electorate but also in its surrounds. The world's second-oldest national park across the Port Hacking, the pristine waters of Port Hacking itself, the bohemian villages of Bundeena and Maianbar across the river, New South Wales' largest regional gallery at Hazelhurst in Gympie, and of course the Botany Bay National Park at Kurnell make Cronulla a great destination in its own right for tourists.

That brings me to the second way in which Destination NSW has exciting potential implications for Cronulla, that is, the ability to have a whole-of-government approach that integrates Cronulla as a tourist destination but also as a place of exciting events, a place where Opera in the Park, down at Cronulla beach, the Cronulla Spring Fair, various art festivals and so on, as well as sporting events, can attract tourists to the Cronulla electorate and to the shire in particular. What is important is that we will now have a coordinated, consolidated whole-of-government approach that brings these different tourist event strands together.

I refer now to the Kurnell Peninsula in particular. The year 2020 will be the 250th anniversary of Captain Cook's landing at Kurnell, which will be a great milestone in Australia's modern history. It is a great opportunity to bring Kurnell up to speed and, as I said in my inaugural speech, give it the funding and recognition it deserves as the birthplace of modern Australia and the place where we can celebrate the achievements of Australia since European arrival and settlement, and also honour and respect our Indigenous heritage. We will need a whole-of-government approach within the New South Wales Government and also across the different tiers of government—Federal, State and local—to make sure we capitalise on the potential that the 250th anniversary of Captain Cook's landing brings to Kurnell.

My Federal colleague Scott Morrison, the member for Cook, has spoken in the Federal Parliament about the 2020 task force that he has initiated, which seeks to bring together local Indigenous, business, community, and Federal, State and local government representatives to best exploit the opportunity that 2020 provides for Kurnell. He has spoken of his vision for 2020 in Kurnell, which I share, and which could include things such as an additional monument with upgraded walkways and signage; rebuilding of the wharf at Kurnell to provide ferry and launch access from Brighton-Le-Sands and to Port Hacking; a world-class high-tech museum of Pacific discovery, with a permanent Cook exhibition and an Indigenous interpretative centre; an on-site venue with major catering facilities to support functions and events, as well as cafes and restaurants; an upgrade of Silver Beach promenade; and a proper heritage drive on Captain Cook Drive with a separated cycleway from Elouera Road to Kurnell.

The 250th anniversary in 2020 provides a great opportunity for some or all of these things to be put in place, which the task force will investigate. The whole-of-government approach that Destination NSW represents provides a great opportunity to integrate, on the one hand, what I hope will be an exciting event in 2020 for the 250th anniversary and, on the other hand, all the underlying tourist attractions of the Cronulla electorate in general and the Kurnell Peninsula in particular. While there are many reasons to commend the Destination NSW Bill 2011 for its exciting implications across New South Wales, I commend it in particular for the potential it has in Cronulla.

**Mr NICK LALICH** (Cabramatta) [1.12 p.m.]: I understand time is of the essence so I will try to make my speech on the Destination NSW Bill 2011 as brief as possible. I hope that with this change Destination NSW will continue to support not only major festivals but also our local festivals. In my electorate of Cabramatta we have many festivals; with our multicultural community we would arguably be the festival capital of New South Wales. In September we have the Moon Festival, which is attended by some 60,000 people from all over Sydney. The economic benefit to our local businesses is massive. We also have the Lunar New Year Festival, Vesak Day, or Buddha's birthday, and the Sydney International Food Festival, which is an important festival as it highlights the large variety of foods that are on offer in Cabramatta.

I must mention that this festival is hosted by celebrity chef Mr Luke Nguyen, and it attracts large crowds to our city and Cabramatta. Other important festivals are the Serbian Folkloric Festival, our Latin

American festivals, Colo Colo and Cabraloa, and the many Italian festivals that are held throughout our city. I would say we have at least one Italian festival a month. There are six or seven communities from villages in Italy that hold religious festivals and there is one a month. I can tell members that as the State member for Cabramatta and the mayor I go to many fundraising functions and festivals. Visitors to New South Wales inject some \$28 billion a year into the State economy supporting 162,500 jobs, which is nearly 5 per cent of all jobs in New South Wales.

Mr Acting-Speaker Provest made a private member's statement recently regarding the large rock festival Cooly Rocks On, which is held in Coolangatta, and the economic benefit that brought to your city as well as the large number of people it attracts to the region. I have been to that festival but I have to say I have not seen you there. You tell me you know how to rock and roll but I have not seen you dancing on the stages or even in the street. I can tell you the car shows are wonderful and I agree with you it is a great festival. I understand why you did not mention the festival that is held on the same weekend at Port Macquarie, because you are 100 per cent for the Tweed. The rock festival at Coolangatta brought about 60,000 people and much-needed funds to the Tweed that weekend.

Some of the Government speakers said the Labor Government did very little for tourism in its 16 years in office, but New South Wales attracts more tourists than any other Australian State or Territory, with around 36.3 per cent of all international and domestic overnight visitors coming to New South Wales in the year ending September 2010. Of our domestic visitors for that period, New South Wales attracted 23.4 million overnight visitors, who spent more than \$12.5 billion during their stay. New South Wales retained its lead on the international front with the number of international visitors to New South Wales increasing by 6.6 per cent in the September 2010 quarter, which is above the national average increase in visitors of 5.6 per cent. Visitor nights were also up by 8.8 per cent in the quarter. I wish Destination NSW every success. The name has been changed, but I hope Destination NSW will carry on the programs the Labor Government initiated and other new initiatives that I know will come to the fore. I support the bill.

**Mr JOHN BARILARO** (Monaro) [1.16 p.m.]: I support the Destination NSW Bill 2011. I understand there is a time limit on speeches today so I will cut to the chase. Destination NSW will be a statutory authority established under this bill, which was introduced by the Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Hospitality and Racing. For me the interest lies in regional and rural tourism and its organisations and operators, especially in the Monaro electorate. I am lucky enough to represent an electorate in which there is a strong sense of the value of tourism. My electorate is home to the beautiful Snowy Mountains and with the recent opening of the snow season my electorate has enjoyed seeing some of the biggest visitor numbers it has seen in the past five years.

The importance of tourism in the Snowy Mountains is that it has a domino effect right down the highway on businesses, communities and a range of different industries, and communities such as Jindabyne, Adaminaby and Cooma are the beneficiaries of such a strong tourism industry. As I mentioned in my inaugural speech, my electorate is blessed with a unique tourism product which I intend to champion as Australia's winter playground—the majestic Snowy Mountains. Right at the foot of the mountains is the picturesque Jindabyne, framed by beautiful Lake Jindabyne. Thinking of all things Australian, Adaminaby is the home of the Big Trout. Who could miss the Big Trout? If members follow the Big Trout story they will know that this year it appears on the back of Redheads Matches packets as part of Australia's Big Things theme, paying homage to some of the country's most iconic attractions.

In saying this I may get an argument from other members about their electorates but there is nowhere in Australia like the Snowy Mountains. In winter there is certainly no better place to be in this country. The Australian alps are among some of the oldest snow-covered alpine landscapes in the world and the twisted snow gums are a feature during winter and are truly spectacular. Tourism is a big part of the New South Wales economy and we have heard about the numbers and the expenditure of \$629 million on tourism in the Snowy Mountains alone. Competition for visitor dollars is increasing and the promotion and development of the Snowy Mountains region is very important to me as the member for Monaro.

The region has great tourist potential but, sadly, like most regional and rural New South Wales communities it does not get the attention it deserves. Only 18 per cent of the international tourism dollar escapes Sydney. We must recognise the full value of tourism because, together with agriculture, manufacturing and service industries, it is an important part of the fabric of society today. Not only does much of the international dollar not escape Sydney but only a small proportion of the \$500 million spent annually on the New South Wales ski season actually gets out of Sydney.

We already have great organisations promoting the Snowy, such as Tourism Snowy Mountains, the Chamber of Commerce, the shires and councils and, using a similar theme to Destination New South Wales, we have Destination Jindabyne, which is a good group promoting tourism in the region. Of course, we cannot go past the resort owners in the mountains—at Thredbo, Perisher and Charlotte Pass, just to name a few—with a common goal and commitment to develop the Snowy Mountains into a leading tourist destination in Australia.

I was concerned that under 16 years of Labor we gave every other State a head start, but under a new Liberal-Nationals Government, with Destination NSW, that will stop and we will get our fair share. Over the weekend we saw an advertising campaign—the "Play Melbourne" visitor campaign—launched by the Victorian Minister for Tourism and Major Events to attract more Sydney tourists to Melbourne. This is evidence that States are serious about stealing the tourism dollar away from New South Wales, but thank God for Minister George Souris having the foresight and vision to have ready, in the first 100 days, the Destination NSW Bill. I quote his comments in regard to the Victorian campaign:

Victoria is clearly rattled to be launching an attack on New South Wales during the bleakest months of a traditional Victorian winter.

In response, the Victorian Minister for Tourism and Major Events said—and this was quite disturbing:

It made sense to launch the campaign in Sydney because it is Melbourne's biggest market for interstate travellers. We love Sydneysiders to visit Melbourne. We want more of them to come here.

In the spirit of State of Origin, they sound like fighting words. I urge all New South Welshmen to holiday in the beautiful regions of this great State of New South Wales, like the Snowy Mountains, and give the Vics the flick.

**Mr GEORGE SOURIS** (Upper Hunter—Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Hospitality and Racing, and Minister for the Arts) [1.21 p.m.], in reply: I thank all members who contributed to debate on the Destination NSW Bill 2011 and expressed commitment to tourism, highlighting tourism in their own electorates and the hopes and aspirations they have for their electorates. I was hoping that the contribution of members would do precisely that. We had the opportunity to hear of tourism events and plans for the future. I am delighted that this bill has received the support of both sides of the House. It is an expression by all members of good will towards tourism and major events.

The two divisions—Tourism NSW and Events NSW—will be heartened, as will the whole industry, whether it be tourism operators, accommodation providers, attractions operators, regional tourism or the arts, sport and convention industry, to hear the speeches that have been made in the House today in relation to Destination NSW. In many respects, the debate focused on regional tourism, about which I am delighted. We have renewed focus and leadership from the Government and the Parliament, new direction and a whole-of-government approach. I believe those themes dominated the contributions that members made.

I thank the member for Liverpool for his contribution. If time permits I will return to some of the points he raised as the shadow Minister representing the shadow Minister in another place. The member for Orange spoke in relation to his electorate in the heart of the Central Tablelands. It is a major regional city in the centre of the State. The member for Keira gave us an Illawarra focus. The member for Myall Lakes gave us a coastal tourism and events focus. The member for Wallsend approved of the name, Destination NSW, and presented a Hunter perspective, as did a number of other members, and as I would have if I had the opportunity to speak as a member representing my electorate.

The member for Blue Mountains focused particularly on regional tourism and referred to the fact that our regional tourism policy was launched in her electorate. The member for Lake Macquarie supports Destination NSW and made reference to the strength of the Australian dollar and the requirement for renewed effort regarding tourism because New South Wales—and indeed Australia—has become more expensive relative to exchange rates. He referred to the International Children's Games to be hosted in Lake Macquarie in 2014. The member for Camden referred to the employment-generating potential of tourism. I focus particularly on that as one of the State's most significant economic drivers. Almost the best and fastest way to stimulate an economy and to generate jobs is through tourism. Tourism and major events languished under Labor and this is the potential and impetus to regain the initiative. The member for Camden mentioned especially the iconic attraction of the botanic gardens at Mount Annan and I was delighted to hear him do so.

The member for Cessnock, who is a neighbour of the Upper Hunter electorate, gave a regional and Hunter focus and referred to signage on major roads, which comes up frequently when I talk to local members



about tourism. The member for Dubbo, who is the custodian of my favourite tourism destination, the Western Plains Zoo, mentioned the rhinos, but I would like to mention the twin king cheetahs that were born at the Western Plains Zoo—two of only half a dozen in the whole world, which alone is sufficient to attract someone to the zoo. The member for Dubbo made the point that tourism spread is not just in major regional cities and the metropolis of Sydney, every small town or village has a contribution to make to the heart and soul of our heritage. I especially enjoyed hearing that.

The member for Balmain made reference to the need for more transparent benefit-cost analysis and, whilst I agree that it is always better to be more open and transparent in government, he would understand the need for some level of commercial confidentiality, particularly as this is a competitive area and the last thing we want to do is to telegraph our benefit-cost analysis and the potential bid money that might be involved in attracting major events to our interstate and international competitors. The member for Parramatta made the point that Destination NSW gives us a single focus and indeed a Western Sydney focus, a decentralisation focus. The fact that Parramatta is the geographic heart of the metropolis is only one point, but it is emblematic of the decentralisation that we are searching for in tourism. The member for Mount Druitt was also supportive of tourism's aims and ideals.

The member for Mount Druitt referred to impacts in other areas, whether they be in agriculture or elsewhere, reflecting on tourism. He mentioned mad cow's disease in the United Kingdom and Newcastle disease in New South Wales as being of relevance. The member for Oatley related the value of tourism to the economy and made reference to the Olympics as the forerunner of major events and tourism in New South Wales. He urged the Government to follow through the legacy that the Olympics provided us, a legacy that was not followed through by the previous Government, and in Sydney we are looking to realise our full potential. The member for Northern Tablelands made reference to country and regional contributions and the potential for flow-through to regions. The member for Cronulla referred to the great heritage in his area—the Kurnell peninsula in particular—the focus on the history of Australia, and the events that will lead to 2020.

The member for Cabramatta also focused on tourism, particularly multicultural festivals that abound in our State, and particularly those focused on his electorate. The member for Monaro is the custodian of one of New South Wales iconic tourist destinations, the Snowy Mountains—a world-class tourist destination. I particularly observed that he used the term "Destination Snowy". It may well be that he has hit on something that could flow through to our tourism effort, the use of the term "Destination". I conclude by saying that during the debate I received a text message from the former Minister for Tourism, Ms Jodi McKay, who offered a message of support and goodwill for this legislation. I thank the House and all members who contributed to the debate, and I commend the bill to the House.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

**Bill agreed to in principle.**

#### **Passing of the Bill**

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

*[Acting-Speaker (Mr Mr Geoff Provest) left the chair at 1.30 p.m. The House resumed at 2.15 p.m.]*

#### **BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

##### **Notices of Motions**

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

#### **PARLIAMENTARY PRIVILEGE**

**The SPEAKER:** I take this opportunity to remind members of the briefing session on parliamentary privilege that will be held on Wednesday 22 June 2011 in the Waratah Room commencing at 1.30 p.m. The briefing will be presented by Mr Bruce Cantrill, Special Counsel from the Crown Solicitor's Office. I encourage all members to attend.

## QUESTION TIME

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

### IDENTITY CONCEALMENT

**Mr JOHN ROBERTSON:** My question is directed to the Premier. What action is his Government taking to prevent discrimination against Muslim Australians?

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** For the benefit of people in the gallery, I point out that this is a question that is asked when someone is not prepared to take a position on a matter that is before the courts. What happened in the original incident and yesterday outside a court in Sydney were unacceptable incidents because they promote discord and division within our society. Everybody, regardless of religion, race or gender, is required to obey the law—New South Wales law, not religious law or laws of other countries. For example, when a person applies for a drivers licence, irrespective of whether that person is a Catholic, a Muslim, or a Muslim who wears a burqa or nicab, that person is required to show his or her full face to be photographed. When I last visited London, 11 years ago—

**Ms Noreen Hay:** And they would not let you in?

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** Regrettably, they let you out. When I was last in London in 2000, I travelled there on a Middle Eastern airline. I noticed the number of people who wore burqas and nicabs and who removed the veil when the customs official asked them to show their identity. That is the way in which the law is meant to operate. In a country in which there are many freedoms, including the freedom to practise religion, freedom of assembly, and the freedom to think what we want to think, we do not tell people what to think, what to wear or what to do unless one or other of those things has an adverse implication for other people.

Rights are accompanied by obligations. Under our law, police have the power to ensure when necessary that people prove their identity. As I stated last year and the year before that when I opposed proposals in the upper House to ban burqas and nicabs, if laws are not clear, I am happy to support police proposals or any police measure to strengthen those laws. Whether a person wears a motorcycle helmet, a mask of any form, a nicab, or a face mask as some of our Asian citizens do—or a clown mask, which I am sure the member for Wollongong is not wearing at present—if police believe there is a security threat or an issue, they should use their powers to require those wearing such attire to prove their identity. As I said, I do not support bans on what people wear, nor do I support unfounded attacks upon our police, including racism accusations.

I am concerned because as I was having lunch at 1 o'clock I heard Chris Smith on 2GB replay an interview he apparently recorded the day before—that is, yesterday—with Mamdouh Habib. I am not familiar with the full details of the case, but what Mr Habib told Mr Smith on air yesterday, which was replayed at 1.10 p.m. today, was that he in fact was the individual who accompanied Mrs Matthews to the police station when the statutory declaration was lodged. If that is true, and that is what I heard—I have asked for the transcript to be sent to the Attorney General for action—that makes a mockery of yesterday's court decision. Nothing in yesterday's court decision, nothing in the antics outside the court, and nothing in the video and audio recording of the original incident—in which the police officer concerned behaved, frankly, in a very restrained manner—brings credit to anybody. It seeks to promote division and discord.

We live in a society that is open, liberal, stable and successful, and for more than 220 years people from all parts of the world have contributed to it. At various times over those 200 years people have been subjected to discrimination for a variety of reasons. During certain parts of the nineteenth century a person could not be elected to this place if he or she was a Catholic, and today we have a Catholic Premier of the State. Let us not be half-pregnant about this, and let us not play to media interests that simply want to throw out berley by not taking a position on the issue. This side of the House stands for a multicultural and successful society, one in which people are not stigmatised and in which everyone is required to obey and respect the law of the land.

### INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS:** My question is addressed to the Premier. What action is the Government taking to raise funds for essential infrastructure in New South Wales?

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** I thank the member for Menai for her question and her interest in this area. As we indicated before the election, we are determined to address the New South Wales infrastructure backlog that we inherited. This city houses 20 per cent of the nation's population, yet under Federal Labor and the former State Labor Government we received less than 2 per cent from Infrastructure Australia's first round of funding. When billions of dollars were on offer as a consequence of the Howard surplus, Sydney and New South Wales missed out because those opposite could not competently make a case that the nation's largest city and State had infrastructure needs that affected individuals, businesses and the State's economy. Those opposite did nothing throughout 16 years to address the infrastructure backlog. Of the eleven rail lines that were promised to be built, seven of which were to be in what was Labor's heartland of western Sydney, how many were built?

Half a rail line was built in 16 years despite 11 being promised, seven of which were in western Sydney. No wonder on 26 March western Sydney deserted Labor in droves. I noted on Antony's Green blog a couple of days ago some interesting figures about what happened in western Sydney on 26 March. As he said, the Liberal Party won a majority of the vote in western Sydney with a first-preference vote of 43.5 per cent compared to 36.6 per cent for Labor, and a Liberal two-party preferred vote of 53.8 per cent compared to 46.2 per cent for Labor. As he said, this is the first time the Liberal Party has ever outpolled Labor in western Sydney. That was due largely to Labor's neglect of the infrastructure needs of the west; the neglect we are overcoming already with our commitments to road funding that I announced with the member for Penrith and other members at Erskine Park on 25 May. We will get on with the job and build the infrastructure that New South Wales has been denied for so long.

We also are honouring another election commitment to set up Restart NSW to raise the capital needed to build essential infrastructure for New South Wales. Restart NSW will be funded from three sources. First, through whatever windfall tax receipts we receive. We know that in its first decade of office Labor received more than \$8 billion in windfall tax receipts. That is money received over and above that expected. Was it put aside to invest in economic infrastructure like roads, rail or ports? No. That money was wasted across all government areas. The good times came and went without any bonus or dividend for the people of this State. Second, through whatever unlocking of assets we can realise. We indicated during the election campaign commitments surrounding the desalination plant.

The proceeds from that commitment also will find their way into Restart NSW. As the Treasurer acknowledges, funding infrastructure also involves responsible borrowing within the triple-A credit rating, including the Treasurer's proposal for Waratah Bonds. These bonds will give mum and dad investors, superannuation funds and others an opportunity to invest in government-backed bonds to help overcome the infrastructure backlog in this State. The bonds will provide a great return rate for people like the members of Hunter's Hill Probus Club who are present in the gallery today and others across this State as we seek with the community to overcome the backlog. I am pleased to repeat and advise the House that 30 per cent of the fund will be reserved for projects in regional areas.

We are a government that wants to ensure that we govern for all of New South Wales, not just for Newcastle, Sydney and Wollongong, which for 16 years Labor thought was New South Wales. Unlike Labor, which ploughed all its money into projects for its mates, we will leave it to Infrastructure NSW to determine the priorities for how funds are spent. In other words, an independent body without any obligation to do any favours will ensure that funds are allocated to best benefit the public and the economy, and best provide the most immediate benefits to New South Wales. That means that funding will go to viable infrastructure projects such as public transport and road projects to reduce congestion, water utilities and freight facilities.

Funds can also be allocated to hospitals and other health projects, as well as to local infrastructure in regional areas that are affected by mining operations. Members opposite have never seen a system like this in their life. Frankly, when it came to the allocation of funds, the former Labor Government always set up projects according to where the votes were, as was demonstrated by former Premier No. 41 with the Rozelle Metro. Members opposite asked which seats would benefit, not how the State would benefit, not how a project would ensure that New South Wales becomes number one again, and not how New South Wales and its opportunities would grow. We will resolve infrastructure in this State and we are starting to do that immediately.

#### **AUSTRALIA IS DYING FACEBOOK GROUP**

**Mr ROBERT FUROLO:** My question is addressed to the Attorney General, and Minister for Justice. Why is the Attorney General friends with the Facebook group Australia is Dying when it regularly posts messages inciting violence against Muslim Australians, calls Muslim people "dogs" and encourages Australians to fear Islam?

**Mr GREG SMITH:** Frankly, I do not know how to use Facebook. If I am a friend, it is because my daughter, who generally rejects people, has been away on her honeymoon. If groups that hate Muslims exist, then I abhor them. I think they should be condemned in the strongest terms.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Attorney General is answering the question.

**Mr GREG SMITH:** Indeed, I think asking a question like that, without checking first as to whether I had knowledge—

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

**Mr GREG SMITH:** —shows that the member for Lakemba has sunk to a lower level than that which I held him in before.

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

**Mr GREG SMITH:** Getting back to the issue of discrimination against Muslims—

**Mr John Robertson:** What are you going to do about it?

**Mr GREG SMITH:** The police Minister and I will examine the proper circumstances relating to identification and whether the law is sufficient at the moment or needs changing when somebody insists on wearing what could be seen as a disguise.

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

**Mr GREG SMITH:** The problem is that for 16 years the former Labor Government tolerated activities. Earlier, I heard the Premier say that people who break the law in this country must be punished, notwithstanding their background. It does not matter whether they are Catholic, Protestant, Buddhist or Islamic; if they break the law, they must be punished.

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

**Mr GREG SMITH:** If members opposite are the subject of charges as they have been—

**Ms Anna Watson:** Get back to your Facebook page.

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

**Mr GREG SMITH:** —with people like Milton Orkopoulos, who broke the law—

*[Interruption]*

What did Labor members do about that man? Did he remain their friend? He broke the law and he was punished.

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

**Ms Linda Burney:** Madam Speaker, Standing order 129—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! If the member for Canterbury wishes to take a point of order, she should seek the call.

**Ms Linda Burney:** Point of order: I refer to Standing Order 129. This question is about why the Attorney General is friends on Facebook—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I am aware of the terms of the question. The member for Canterbury will resume her seat.

**Mr Brad Hazzard:** To the point of order: Clearly the Minister is addressing the relevant issues. It is relevant that the member for Lakemba distributed racist documents during his election campaign and told the local community that the Liberal-Nationals were anti-Muslim. The member has an appalling record—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Leader of the House will resume his seat. Before the Attorney General continues I will rule on the point of order regarding relevance. If members of the Opposition had listened to the introductory remarks, they would have heard the Attorney General clearly answer that question. Unfortunately they were not listening to the answer; they were interjecting and calling out. All members will come to order. The Attorney General has the call.

**Mr GREG SMITH:** Of course, the member for Lakemba no longer lives in Lakemba—

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

**Mr GREG SMITH:** As for the member for Canterbury, I remind members that the former Labor Government presided over a period when crime rates and the jailing rate of young Aboriginals increased considerably. I do not believe the Labor Government did much to alleviate that. The Government and I are determined to make a serious attempt to cut those numbers so that those people get justice and jobs, have dignity and feel proud to be Aboriginal. The same thing applies to people with a Muslim background. Like most people who come to this country, if they want to be Australians, they will be Australians; they will accept our laws. They should accept that whenever they come to a country they must adjust to that country. I am afraid that suggestions are made by racists such as the member for Lakemba—

*[Interruption]*

I am not a racist. I am the opposite of a racist.

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

**Mr Robert Furolo:** Point of order: What an outrage for the Attorney General—

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

**Mr Robert Furolo:** —to accuse a member of being a racist. If he wants to make that allegation, he must do so by way of substantive motion.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I uphold the point of order and I ask the Attorney General whether he is prepared to withdraw that remark.

**Mr GREG SMITH:** I withdraw the suggestion that the member for Lakemba is racist. However, I make the point that if he wants to ask questions in which he assumes I am a racist, as he did, I would ask him to withdraw that suggestion.

*[Interruption]*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

*[Interruption]*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I remind the member for Wollongong that it is a disgrace to continue to interject while I am on my feet. All members will cease their shouting at each other across the Chamber. I understand that emotions are heightened, but the behaviour members have displayed during question time is totally unacceptable. I do not understand it. Members who ask provocative questions should expect to get the answer they probably deserve. I ask members to consider the wording of their questions before asking them. This is not an unusual position for a Speaker to take on provocative questions. I refer members to rulings by previous Speakers on this very matter.

*[Interruption]*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I will not tolerate this behaviour; it will cease. Members who wish to have aggressive private conversations will do so outside the Chamber.

## LITERACY AND NUMERACY

**Mr JOHN FLOWERS:** My question is directed to the Minister for Education. What action has the Government taken to deliver on its commitment in the area of literacy and numeracy?

**Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI:** I thank the member for Rockdale for his question and his interest in genuine public policy; it is in stark contrast to questions asked by members opposite. As we know, numeracy and literacy are an important foundation for any person's education—including people from the Labor Party. Before I talk about the Coalition's numeracy and literacy action plan I draw the attention of the House to examples of why literacy particularly is so important. On that momentous day of 26 March I went to all the polling booths in my electorate. I shook hands with constituents and campaigned right up until 6.00 p.m., as I know all members on this side were doing. I saw the corflute with a picture of the Labor candidate for Murrumbidgee.

What drew my attention to it was essentially the lack of attention that Labor paid to the electorate of Murrumbidgee. Labor could not spell the name of the electorate Murrumbidgee correctly, which demonstrates how seriously Labor took the campaign in Murrumbidgee. Worse than that, it was authorised by the campaign director, as it should be, who happened to be a schoolteacher. The Labor Party authorised the corflute and misspelt the largest word on it. But it does not stop with Labor candidates; it goes all the way to the top. Last week the Leader of the Opposition moved a notice of motion in relation to industrial relations, public servants, teachers, principals, nurses. "Principals" was spelt "principles", so he got his school principals and his lack of principles mixed up.

The Government has a well-designed plan with the support of stakeholders in the community to improve numeracy and literacy particularly amongst young people at our schools. The approach that our Government is taking to literacy and numeracy is to get it right from the very beginning. We have already moved responsibility for early childhood and care education into the Department of Education and Communities—another big tick on our 100 Day Action Plan. Our plan will deliver more support for early intervention through the progressive allocation of 900 additional teachers during five years—again, an investment in the early years of education.

Today I announce that we have already established a ministerial working group comprising educational experts which will provide advice and direction in creating our action plan to improve the literacy and numeracy standards of students. Our advisory group will be headed up by an independent chair, Dr Ken Boston. Dr Boston is a highly regarded educational leader and well respected by both sides of Australian politics. He is a former chief executive of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority in the United Kingdom and for six years was Director General of the New South Wales Department of Education and Training. The advisory group will have three principal nominees, two teacher nominees, three education experts at professorial level, one representative of a non-government organisation and one representative of the Aboriginal Education Consultative Group Inc.

The Ministerial Advisory Group will provide me with expert advice on early literacy and numeracy learning and on the implementation plans to support the delivery of the action plan, and will play a vital role in reviewing progress of the implementation of our plan. As I said, the advisory group comprises a mixture of practitioners, principals, teachers and academics with Dr Boston as its chair. It is a mixture of metropolitan and regional professionals with a principal and a schoolteacher from regional New South Wales. It has a mixture of representatives from both government and non-government schools, that is, Catholic schools and government schools. As I have said before, it does not matter where one goes to school, this Government will support kids at risk. That is our 100 per cent commitment and that is why this cross-sectoral, highly qualified and accomplished group of people will be advising this Government on one of our key objectives, that is, to make sure that every student in New South Wales has the opportunity to excel in numeracy and literacy. [*Time expired.*]

## AUSTRALIA IS DYING FACEBOOK GROUP

**Ms LINDA BURNEY:** My question is directed to the Minister for Mental Health. Why did the Minister not delete Australia is Dying as his Facebook friend when the following comments appeared in the newsfeed? I warn members that what I am about to quote is extremely offensive.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I remind members of my previous ruling on this matter.

**Ms LINDA BURNEY:** The quote is, "Shoot the lot, enough of freedom for these putrid Muslim dogs".

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I remind members that the purpose of question time is for members to ask questions of Ministers seeking information. That is a fairly provocative question. In future I will rule out of order questions that are provocative in the extreme.

**Mr KEVIN HUMPHRIES:** I am not sure I really should answer that question because I think if that is the sort of question that is going through the leadership group of the Opposition the member for Canterbury should really consider why she is here. She has been afforded a privilege to come into this place. It has been granted to her by the people of New South Wales, the same as with all of us. I suspect the member for Canterbury is seriously eroding that privilege. It was eroded significantly on 26 March. The people of New South Wales did not leave the member for Canterbury; she left them.

**Mr Michael Daley:** Point of order: Under the standing orders the member for Canterbury has every right to ask that question. It is a specific question about why the Minister—

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

**Mr Michael Daley:** The point of order is that the Minister has no right to lecture us.

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

**Mr Michael Daley:** The standing orders permit the member to ask that question.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member was permitted to ask that question. The member for Maroubra will resume his seat.

**Mr Michael Daley:** They defame us up hill and down dale. They don't like it because the shoe is on the other foot.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call the member for Maroubra to order for the second time. I remind the member for Maroubra that I allowed the question. However, as I said, in future I will rule out of order questions that are provocative in the extreme.

**Mr Brad Hazzard:** To the point of order: Quite apart from the fact that the question is clearly distasteful, I also point out that questions should relate to the matters under the Minister's administration of public affairs.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I chose not to rule that question out of order. However, in future I will rule such questions out of order.

**Mr Michael Daley:** Further to the point of order: The Leader of the House selectively quoted from Standing Order 126. Paragraph (1) states:

Minister may be asked a question which relates to:

1. Public affairs;

A Minister's Facebook page is about as public as it gets.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I have allowed the question and the Minister is answering it.

**Mr KEVIN HUMPHRIES:** I have no problems answering that question.

**Mr Andrew Fraser:** Point of order: I draw your attention to Standing Order 128, which states that questions should not contain inference or imputation. I believe, even though the question has been allowed, it should be ruled out of order now.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I have allowed the question.

**Mr KEVIN HUMPHRIES:** We have all been afforded a privilege to be in this House.

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

**Mr KEVIN HUMPHRIES:** Many of us would have no idea about many of the attachments that come across the electronic interface.

**Mr Michael Daley:** It's got your photo on it.

**Mr KEVIN HUMPHRIES:** I have seen your photo in a few places too, mate. They were a bit undesirable too.

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

**Mr KEVIN HUMPHRIES:** I am happy to take the question of the member for Canterbury on notice because if anything on my Facebook site resembles what has been alleged I am happy to address it, as would any member. The first two questions targeted by the Opposition at the commencement of this session were about the return to work of people who had mental health difficulties. Opposition members sought to attack that. They have sought to attack people who are representing some portfolios I feel strongly about involving disadvantaged groups such as Indigenous people.

Opposition members have sought to attack every marginal group in this State and now they are inciting issues that are not for this place in that context. They are abusing their position and they will be judged on that. On 26 March, as I said and Labor's former leaders have said, they walked away from the people of New South Wales, as everybody in the public gallery knows. They actually crawled away. It is a deep, dark hole, and I suspect members opposite will be in it for a very long time; in fact, the people of this State have buried them in that hole. I suspect the Leader of the Opposition will never get out of that hole.

#### **ALCOHOL-RELATED VIOLENCE AND ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR**

**Dr GEOFF LEE:** My question is directed to the Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Hospitality and Racing. What is the New South Wales Government doing to crack down on alcohol-related violence and antisocial behaviour in our licensed venues?

**Mr GEORGE SOURIS:** I thank the member for Parramatta for his question and commend him for his interest in the subject matter. The community is rightly concerned about alcohol-related violence and antisocial behaviour. In the lead-up to the recent election the Liberals and The Nationals developed alcohol-related policies that represent real action to tackle irresponsible alcohol service and irresponsible behaviour. Alcohol abuse can be associated with neighbourhood disturbance, offensive behaviour, vandalism, assaults and other violent incidents. A strong message is required to make it clear to problem venues and drinkers that the community will not tolerate bad behaviour. The Government's election commitments included measures that reinforce the need for individual responsibility by patrons, such as expanded move-on powers for police and a new intoxicated and disorderly offence.

The Government is also taking action, however, to apply tough sanctions to licensed venues that are repeatedly associated with violent behaviour or refuse to abide by the law. The centrepiece of the Government's approach to problem venues is a "three strikes and you're out" policy. It will target licensed venues that are repeatedly associated with serious incidents, and will provide for escalating penalties in the form of increased conditions and restrictions. These will target irresponsible alcohol practices and improve the management and operation of licensed venues to increase the safety of patrons and the local community.

While a three strikes system must be able to take action where there are repeated problems, it must also be able to react quickly where there is a very serious incident that brings into question standards of management and operation of a licensed venue. The three strikes system needs to be able to respond where incidents lead to serious harm to patrons and to the local community. The types of incidents I am referring to would include a liquor licensee or staff of a licensed venue permitting violent behaviour such as an assault that results in severe injuries. An example of such an assault would be a glassing. A licensed venue that serves large numbers of intoxicated persons during a function would also represent a serious incident. This is particularly so given the local impact that releasing large numbers of drunks onto the street at one time can have.

Providing a large amount of alcohol to a minor would also be a serious incident under the three strikes scheme. Licensees and venue staff have very clear legal obligations when it comes to underage drinking. The liquor laws apply a zero tolerance approach to this issue and licensed venues must abide by that. Allowing significant numbers of people to possess or use illicit drugs on licensed premises is also a serious incident. And



breaching a number of key licence conditions at the same time clearly would warrant a strike under an effective system given that those conditions would have been imposed to ensure responsible operation of a licensed venue. It is also critical that decisions made under the three strikes system be properly informed to ensure key information is taken into account. The Government is considering how a range of critical issues should affect the imposition of strikes on problem venues.

Matters such as the compliance history of a licensed premises and the history and nature of violent incidents at the premises are important. The relative size of a licensed venue and the number of patrons who regularly visit the premises can obviously impact on a licensee's ability to prevent incidents and should therefore be taken into account. Changes to the licensee and business operators, over time, will also have an impact on the imposition of a strike where that relies on a history of repeated bad behaviour. These are all factors which can affect regulatory decisions under a responsive three strikes system to ensure a fair outcome that protects the community and ensures the imposition of strikes is warranted. The three strikes scheme will protect the public from alcohol-related violence and rogue licensees, and will be introduced very soon.

### AUSTRALIA IS DYING FACEBOOK GROUP

**Mr GUY ZANGARI:** My question is to the Deputy Premier. Given his statements to the *Daily Telegraph* that, "I'm very careful of what I do on Facebook," why is he friends with a group called Australia is Dying, which makes derogatory remarks about Islam?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Government members will come to order. The Leader of the House has the call.

**Mr Brad Hazzard:** Point of order: Madam Speaker, you previously ruled that if similar questions were asked you would rule them out of order. I ask you to rule this question out of order. Clearly, this line of questioning is outside the Minister's appropriate brief, and it is quite distasteful and improper.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members should refer to—

**Mr Michael Daley:** Madam Speaker—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member will resume his seat. I am ruling on the point of order taken under Standing Order 128, which sets out the nature of questions that can be asked and should not be asked. I will hear from the member for Maroubra before I rule that question out of order.

[*Interruption*]

**The SPEAKER:** Order! My decision is in accordance with my earlier ruling.

**Mr Michael Daley:** Madam Speaker, the only qualifier you earlier put on potential questions of that sort was that if they were inflammatory you would rule them out of order.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I did not use the word "inflammatory". The member should check *Hansard*.

**Mr Michael Daley:** Or provocative, or to that effect.

**The SPEAKER:** I used the word "provocative".

**Mr Michael Daley:** Yes, to that effect. Madam Speaker, you have allowed the previous question, and the question of the member for Fairfield is less provocative than other questions that have been asked today. So, having allowed the earlier question, in light of your conditional ruling I submit the question was not out of order.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I was extending some latitude and some tolerance to Opposition members' questions, and warning them about the wording of their questions. However, I repeat: Members should acquaint themselves with the standing orders, especially Standing Order 128, in terms of imputation and inference in particular. I rule the question out of order.

## CARBON TAX

**Mr GARRY EDWARDS:** My question is directed to the Treasurer. What impact will Labor's proposed carbon tax have on New South Wales, including the impact on the New South Wales Government's coal-fired generators?

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** I thank the member for his question, and acknowledge the great skiff club that he represents. It is very telling that the Opposition today has been throwing dirt, getting down into the gutter, when issues of substance affecting families across this State are not being addressed, such as Labor's carbon tax. We know that Labor's carbon tax will damage the New South Wales economy, cost jobs and further burden New South Wales families already struggling to meet cost of living pressures. When those opposite were in government—which seems a long time ago—we know that in 2008 their Government took some economic modelling that looked at the impacts of a carbon pollution reduction scheme on the New South Wales economy. The findings were very grim indeed. The 2008 modelling showed that New South Wales was particularly vulnerable. Indeed, it showed that in relation to our black coal generators there would be a negative impact greater than \$5 billion.

The compensation to be paid to generators was almost entirely for brown coal generators in Victoria—almost nothing for New South Wales. The question is: What did that Government do about that? Well, the reports gets worse, because modelling commissioned by the Energy Users Association of Australia—conducted by Deloitte's and recently released—showed that Federal Labor's carbon price and renewable energy target will slash 127,500 jobs across this country by 2020, and that it will cut real wages by 5 per cent. It all goes to show that it is economic madness to introduce a carbon price without any movements from China, the United States or Japan. It has also increased uncertainty about the cost of living for families across the State. Last week the monthly Consumer Sentiment Index survey showed that consumer confidence fell again. Bill Evans of Westpac said consumers across the State were anxious about a carbon tax, and he added:

While economic conditions and interest rates are usually the most recalled items, it is unusual for tax to register such interest ... it appears that despite steady interest rates and falling petrol prices concerns about the introduction of a price on carbon are rattling households.

They are rattling households from one end of the State to the other. What do we hear from those opposite? As the Minister for Energy put it so well, we hear the sounds of silence. We are hearing nothing from those opposite. What have we heard from their counterparts in Canberra? Every member of this Government is determined to stop this tax. We are determined to stick up for the people of New South Wales and we want to talk to the Federal Labor Government and express our concerns. We want to go from our streets and communities to Canberra and ask: What are you doing?

What have Federal Ministers said? Three weeks ago we wrote to the Ministers and tried to get in touch with them. We have emailed them, we have called them, we want to go and see them—Treasurer Swan and Ministers Combet and Ferguson and all the rest. What have they done? They have ignored the State Government and in doing so they are ignoring every family in this State. Why do we want to see them? Because we want to look at the facts. Last week Danny Price took the extraordinary step of saying that Greg Combet was making misleading and inaccurate statements. He said Greg Combet was simply wrong to claim the carbon price used by Danny Price was \$46. He said he did not know where Combet got that number from. When jobs and investment are at risk this is not acceptable to the people of New South Wales.

We want to stand up for every family in this State and say to those in Canberra, "Listen to what the families and communities are saying. Listen to our concerns and address them." Just as importantly for this House at this time is where the Leader of the Opposition stands on this issue. He is over there with his mates going through Facebook while every family in this State wants to know where he stands. Time is up for you, Captain Solar. You need to stand up and tell the people of New South Wales whether you are for the carbon tax or against it. Every family in this State wants to know. Is this just an outpost for the Federal Government or is the Leader of the Opposition going to stand up for the people of New South Wales and say, "No carbon tax for this State"? Until the Leader of the Opposition does that he is selling out this State to his mates in Canberra. The O'Farrell Government will not do that. [*Time expired.*]

## NORTHERN TABLELANDS ELECTORATE COUNTRYLINK SERVICES

**Mr RICHARD TORBAY:** My question is to the Minister for Transport. Can the Minister give an assurance that there will be no cuts or reductions to the Northern Tablelands CountryLink Xplorer rail and bus services to and from Armidale and other centres in my electorate?

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I thank the member for his question and suggest the Opposition learn from him how to ask a question. For the benefit of all members, CountryLink currently operates a daily return Xplorer train service between Sydney and Armidale, as outlined in the member's question. The O'Farrell Government has always been committed to delivering transport services to the people of the Northern Tablelands. I am pleased to inform the member that there are certainly no plans to reduce or cut these services, because, unlike those opposite, this side of the House understands the needs of rural and regional New South Wales. Rural and regional New South Wales passed judgement on members opposite on 26 March and we have at least 25 fine examples of their judgement. The appalling treatment of CountryLink by those opposite contributed to their party's decimation in rural and regional New South Wales.

They did not care about public transport issues in rural and regional New South Wales. It is a long and disgraceful record. Before the 2003 election Labor's election promise brochure said that the Government had kept "our promise not to close any country railway lines". But what did they do straight after the election? As highlighted by the member, those opposite closed the Casino to Murwillumbah railway line in 2004. What a disgrace, as my colleagues from northern New South Wales can attest. Indeed, Labor did want to stop the CountryLink service to Armidale and in 2003 they commissioned a review. This announcement triggered a large rally in Armidale by residents who opposed the reduction, and rightly so. Michael Costa, the Minister at the time, was forced to back down but Labor continued its attacks on CountryLink. It did not end there. In 2006 Labor began its cuts to CountryLink travel centres. A total of 11 CountryLink travel centres were closed.

**Mr John Robertson:** It started with Nick Greiner. You don't tell the full history.

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I know the Leader of the Opposition is embarrassed about this.

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I know the member is embarrassed. He wants to keep me quiet about CountryLink because his record on this issue is appalling. It was not enough to close 11 travel centres; they also cut staff in Bathurst. I am sure the member for Bathurst would have something to say about that. They cut staff in Orange and Dubbo and reduced the opening hours of the Parkes office. It gets worse. The year 2006 also marked Labor's introduction of its infamous pensioner booking tax on CountryLink services. This is when Labor thought it was acceptable to charge pensioners to use their free travel vouchers. What a disgrace. Labor's idea of reform was to charge pensioners to use free vouchers.

In fact, Labor was gouging up to \$3.5 million a year from pensioners. Labor was pinching money directly from pensioners' pockets at the rate of nearly \$10,000 a day. It was only after strong pressure from members on this side of the House that they were forced to back down. How many times have we brought petitions to this place to force them to back down? Their own 2007 Transport Reliability Report revealed that declining patronage on CountryLink was due to "the impact of the increase in travel costs faced by pensioners using CountryLink services". In fact, Labor's long-term neglect of the rural and regional rail network resulted in CountryLink losing a quarter of its trips. Those trips were lost through Labor's incompetence. In 1997 there were 2.5 million trips a year on CountryLink.

That figure had fallen by over 27 per cent, to only 1.8 million, by 2009-10. What an absolute disgrace. On-time running was another area in which Labor failed in relation to CountryLink. The Auditor-General found last year that CountryLink has not met its on-time running target for years. Can anyone guess when was the last time CountryLink met its on-time running target? It was in 2002-03, nearly 10 years ago. When it comes to CountryLink the other side of the House represents neglect, ripping up lines, cutting services, falling patronage, falling on-time running, and increased fares and taxes. This side of the House is committed to delivering to rural and regional New South Wales, and all the people of New South Wales, the public transport they deserve. [*Time expired.*]

## PLANNING REFORMS

**Mr TONY ISSA:** My question is directed to the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure. What progress has the Government made on its commitment to repeal part 3A?

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** I thank the member for Granville for that excellent question about one of the major issues of concern to the New South Wales community. I note how wonderful it is to have in the House not only a member of Lebanese origin but one who got a 13.3 per cent swing and said goodbye to one more member of the Labor Party that had been part of the problem for so many years. When the Coalition came to Government one of the first issues on which I sought advice was how many part 3A applications were sitting in the queue.

This is the part, of course, that has caused so much consternation to the community in the past six years. I found there were 530 part 3A applications. We asked ourselves how we could bring back some democracy and move as quickly as possible on behalf of the new Government to address this issue without causing undue concern to the business community. We determined that any applications that had been there for more than two years with no action being taken, or any that might have been shovelled in at the last minute by the Labor Party, should be removed.

**Mr John Barilaro:** There were plenty of those.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** There were plenty of those. We have moved approximately 60 of them off to local government and the others are being dealt with at the moment through the old system. At the same time, today I expect we will have a brand new planning system to deal with truly State-significant development as a result of the bill that is being debated in this Chamber and will pass through the upper House. What underpinned the concern about part 3A was the community's inability to trust the Labor Government. That was the real concern. A succession of planning Ministers on the Labor benches had shown that they could not be trusted; the community found they could not be trusted. I was hopeful that there would be no further indicators of that when I looked at the 530 part 3A applications that were in the list, but did I find some that were dud deals?

Yes, Coogee Bay Hotel was the first one. Coogee Bay Hotel was a hot topic prior to the election and I found that on 10 December 2010—that is, 106 days before the election—Coogee Bay Hotel had been taken in under part 3A. Minister Kelly was the Minister for Planning but he is a bit busy at the moment, a bit preoccupied. He had 106 days to tell the community; one would think that would be the bottom line. If I had accepted an application under part 3A, particularly where there was a great degree of community concern, I would at least share that with the community. However, in 106 days the Minister failed to do that and what was the community's answer? The community's answer is the new member for Coogee, with a 15 per cent swing his way, and I congratulate him.

We kept looking and found another application relating to Rhodes, and this one is classic Labor—"Let's see if we can get this thing to fit our part 3A requirements. Can we get it up to 16 storeys? Yes. It is in the part 3A list." This was another application for a massive residential development at Rhodes, but was the community told prior to the election it had been brought in? No way. So the community spoke and we have the answer—we have the new member for Drummoyne, John Sidoti, Mr 24.4 per cent—auguri, congratulazione, well done. We now have Minister Kelly taking the long walk to the Independent Commission Against Corruption. He does not have a great track record. I will not say a lot about that because I am sure the commissioner will want to deal with it, but at least in regard to two major applications under part 3A the former Minister, who is now taking the long walk to the Independent Commission Against Corruption, did not share that with the community. The Coalition is returning trust, honesty, integrity and transparency, which is what Labor took away.

### PRISON POPULATION

**Mr NATHAN REES:** My question is directed to the Attorney General. I refer to the commitment the Attorney made in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on 25 July last year to cut the jail population by a fifth. How will he achieve this without reducing sentences for assault, fraud, theft and drug offences?

**Mr GREG SMITH:** I thank the member for his question. I recall that when the number of people in jail reached 10,500 he bragged about it. I thought it was a tragedy, quite frankly—a tragedy to our society. The way we are going to do this, for a start, is by emphasising rehabilitation.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Opposition members will listen to the responses to questions they have asked.

**Mr GREG SMITH:** We are going to back it up, something that the previous Government did with the intensive correction orders. They will be wearing anklets, doing community service—

**Mr Nathan Rees:** In Epping?

**Mr GREG SMITH:** They will not all be in Epping.

**Mr Nathan Rees:** So there will be none in Epping?

**Mr GREG SMITH:** No, there will be people wherever they are. I am just saying we have a policy that the electorate obviously was pleased with, and the Government lost its nerve on law and order, because our policy deals with fighting drug offenders by trying to help them get off drugs in a much more serious way than those opposite tried. That is why we are going to have a 300-bed intensive drug treatment centre and a second Sydney Drug Court—something the previous Government failed to do. It only selected people in the west and south-west. We agree that the Drug Court has been successful—we are big enough to say it is working—so we are going to have a second one to cover the rest of Sydney. We support also what Labor did at Toronto.

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

**Mr GREG SMITH:** There are many things we will do, acting upon decisions made elsewhere as well. We are looking around the world and in other States, for example in Victoria, to see how that State reduced its recidivism rates to 34 per cent while we still languish at about 40 per cent. Victoria has a prison population of only about 4,500, while the prison population in New South Wales is 10,000. They must be doing something right in Victoria, so we look to that State for guidance. We also look to England, where Tony Blair used the same sort of script as Bob Carr—tough on crime and tough on the causes of crime—yet Cherie Booth, the wife of Tony Blair, conducted a royal commission after Blair retired and found that the hard line in Britain, similar to the hard line in this State, had failed. It was costing the community a fortune and was leading to high recidivism. That is partly the reason for fighting it this way, because recidivism makes one's house and car unsafe, takeaway food store, bank and petrol station unsafe—indeed, wherever there is a cash register it is unsafe.

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

**Mr GREG SMITH:** We will actually do something. Little is achieved by putting people in jail for a long time unless one tries to protect the community from violence—

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

**Mr GREG SMITH:** If one is trying to protect the community from violence, they should be kept in jail for a very long time.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Opposition members will come to order. It is their question and they will listen to the answer.

**Mr Nathan Rees:** The backbench has gone white.

**Mrs Barbara Perry:** Are you embarrassed?

**Mr GREG SMITH:** I am not embarrassed at all; they are a very good-looking bunch. It is better to look towards them than the crowd opposite, which does not look its best when angry, I am afraid—sorry about that. As I was saying, we are looking for ways to improve the situation so that our society becomes more lawful. Crime rates are down, but more people are going back to jail than there should be.

**Mr Richard Amery:** That is why crime rates are down.

**Mr GREG SMITH:** That is what we are attacking.

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

**Mr GREG SMITH:** That is what Labor's Minister Graham West, the Minister for Juvenile Justice, sought to achieve, but what happened? Cabinet rejected his suggestions. What did he do? He resigned in protest.

He took the honourable course of leaving and did not run again, so Labor lost the seat and has been replaced by a magnificent new member, Bryan Doyle, a former chief inspector. The people of Campbelltown saw the injustice of what had happened to Graham West and they thought, "We'll support the Liberals because they will do something for juvenile justice. They will do something to try to turn children around before they are led into a life of crime." The mob opposite was not interested in that. All they were interested in was bashing the law and order drum and, unfortunately, everyone went deaf.

**Question time concluded at 3.18 p.m.**

## **RACISM ALLEGATION**

### **Personal Explanation**

**Mr ROBERT FUROLO**, by leave: I obviously take great offence at the claim from those opposite, including the Leader of the House and the member for Terrigal, that I am a racist. I was raised in a family that taught respect for all people, people of all religions and cultures. In fact, in my inaugural speech I specifically raised the need to repudiate bigotry.

**Mr Chris Hartcher**: Point of order—

**Mr ROBERT FUROLO**: There are no points of order on a matter of personal explanation.

**Mr Chris Hartcher**: I saw you. The member is entitled in a personal explanation to explain how his character is impugned, not to make a speech about his personal values.

**The SPEAKER**: Order! I remind the member for Lakemba that standing orders require personal explanations to be brief. There is no provision in the standing orders for personal explanations to be the subject of debate. The member should indicate how he has been offended by remarks made in the House.

**Mr ROBERT FUROLO**: I reject entirely the suggestion or claim that I am a racist. I have devoted my professional life to upholding the values of respect, unity and peace. A suggestion to the contrary is fallacious.

**The SPEAKER**: Order! I note the member's point.

## **MEMBER FOR LAKEMBA**

### **Personal Explanation**

**Mr CHRIS HARTCHER**, by leave: I wish to make a personal explanation. The member for Lakemba said that I accused him of racism. I was at Lakemba on 25 March and I witnessed him handing out inflammatory racist literature.

**The SPEAKER**: Order! That is not a personal explanation.

## **AUSTRALIA IS DYING FACEBOOK GROUP**

### **Personal Explanation**

**Mr ANDREW STONER**, by leave: I wish to make a personal explanation. Earlier today the member for Fairfield sought to impugn my character and reputation in relation to a Facebook entity of some type called Australia is Dying. I was not aware that I was a friend of such a group. I was not aware of any comments as reported during question time being made by that group. I have since been advised that I was a friend of the group, but the group has now been deleted.

## **VARIATIONS OF THE RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ESTIMATES AND APPROPRIATIONS FOR 2010-2011**

**Mr Baird** tabled, pursuant to section 26 of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983, variations of the receipts and payments estimates and appropriations for 2010-11 arising from the provision by the Commonwealth of Specific Purpose Payments in excess of the amounts included in the State's receipts and payments estimates—Department of Education and Communities.

**Mr Baird** tabled, pursuant to section 24 of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983, variations of the payments estimates and appropriations for 2010-11 flowing from the transfer of functions between various agencies under the Public Sector Employment and Management (Departments) Order 2011, dated 19 June 2011.

### **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**.

#### **Mental Health Services**

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

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

#### **Infrastructure NSW**

**Mr CHRIS PATTERSON** (Camden) [3.22 p.m.]: The motion of which I gave notice earlier is that the House supports the Government's establishment of Infrastructure NSW to deliver the infrastructure that the people of New South Wales need. My motion deserves priority because it details the positive, practical and achievable plans that the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government has for New South Wales. The motion deserves priority because we are getting on with the job of delivering pre-election commitments and on the 100 Day Action Plan to introduce legislation for the creation of Infrastructure NSW.

Many members who spoke during debate on the Infrastructure NSW Bill referred specifically to identifying public infrastructure needs, establishing priorities and recommending time lines for delivery. Many members spoke advisedly on project procurement, contractual arrangements, best practice, delivery and funding modes. Those comments will ensure that the Government is armed with necessary information to re-energise and deliver the State's infrastructure program. That includes major infrastructure projects such as road and rail transport links, energy networks, water and sewerage systems, healthcare facilities and recreation facilities such as stadiums and parklands.

The motion deserves priority because infrastructure is critical to the social and economic wellbeing of my community, the Sydney community and the many and varied rural communities that comprise this great State. The motion deserves priority because it outlines and highlights the failures in infrastructure delivery of the former New South Wales Labor Government over the previous four terms of government. Labor's on again, off again mantra about major projects is well known. The people of New South Wales highlighted that in March. Let us not forget that John Robertson was a Minister for Transport in the former Government.

**Ms Noreen Hay:** Point of order: The member should be arguing why his motion is urgent and deserves priority instead of dealing with the substance of the motion.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Sometimes it is necessary for members to deal with the substance of the motion, but I remind the member that he should be arguing why his motion should be accorded priority.

**Mr CHRIS PATTERSON:** The motion should be given priority because, in simple terms, the Leader of the Opposition is all talk and no action when it comes to major infrastructure delivery. Now he is the self-proclaimed most energetic Leader of the Opposition this State has ever seen. However, I have not seen him at all. I ask where he has been and I invite him to see me after the debate if he needs to know where Camden is on the map and if he needs to know how important Camden is to south-western Sydney.

This motion should be accorded priority because John Robertson's record as a former Minister for Transport was far from energetic in relation to infrastructure delivery, and I suspect that his performance has not

improved as Leader of the Opposition. This Government will end the rule that resulted in projects being awarded for political purposes, not in the public interest. For far too long members opposite put together infrastructure projects at Sussex Street behind closed doors and in consultation with union bosses. They did whatever they thought would get them across the line at the next election. A case in point is the \$500 million wasted on the Rozelle Metro. This Government will end those days.

This motion deserves priority because Infrastructure NSW will put in place the 20-year infrastructure strategies that this State so desperately needs—strategies that have been so neglected by Labor for far too long. Infrastructure NSW will put in place the five-year infrastructure plans that are attached to forward estimates, thereby allowing members of this House and the other place to represent the views of their communities on the State's infrastructure needs. This motion deserves priority because the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government is serious about a whole-of-government approach to ensure that infrastructure projects are delivered on time and on budget and about making New South Wales number one again.

### **Public Sector Wages and Employment Conditions**

**Mr JOHN ROBERTSON** (Blacktown—Leader of the Opposition) [3.27 p.m.]: As I outline reasons that my motion deserves to be accorded priority, I remind Government members of the thousands of police, nurses, teachers and other public servants in each of their electorates who look to this House to protect their interests. The O'Farrell Government's new workplace laws have been finalised with the introduction of a regulation to help to fill the great blank space that the Government's new laws have created. Members will recall the Premier and Treasurer said that that is the blank space in which only good and fair things for our public sector would be written, yet what do we see in that big blank space? It is a regulation that puts at risk wages and conditions for nurses, teachers, firefighters and every other public sector worker. They have been misled, and addressing that issue deserves priority.

The O'Farrell Government's first regulation under this Act specifically excludes protecting basic working rights and caps wage increases below the rate of inflation. No matter how the Treasurer spins it—he has left because he is embarrassed—this means a cut in real wages for the people on whom we rely to teach our kids, care for the sick and keep us safe. Many of these workers are in essential services: services we need to operate across our State. What is done to support the cost of living of these essential workers? Members opposite cut their real pay. No wonder the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported on 20 May that these laws could see an exodus of vital front-line workers to other States—so much for making New South Wales number one again.

Basic working conditions like penalty rates, shift loadings and carers' leave have all been excluded from the Government's list of minimum conditions. I highlight carers' leave because in this place just last night the member for Menai and the member for Oatley spoke about their commitment to the carers of our State. They were nice words, but they were very light on with action now that we have seen this regulation. It is appalling to vote for a bill to put at risk the rights of carers who tend to those families. What hypocrisy and what a disgrace. Do those members at least acknowledge that this issue deserves priority? The greatest reason this matter deserves priority lies not in what is in the regulation but what is not in the regulation. The regulation reveals also that our police were deceived when they were told they would be exempt from the new laws.

The Act contains no exemption for police, which is what any reasonable person would have expected from the Premier's promise. Also, no ongoing exemption for police exists in the regulation. This matter deserves priority because we now can see in black and white that the so-called police exemption has been a lie all along. Police will be brought under the new laws as soon as their next wage agreement expires. These changes are from the Premier, who talked for 10 minutes at the last Police Association conference in full election mode about the need for greater respect for our police. Hear! Hear! There is no respect in misleading our police with overt promises followed by covert betrayal in the fine print. It represents the very worst of the mean, tricky and slippery politics that one can only ever expect from a lifelong Liberal hack who was shoehorned into the premiership.

**Mr Brad Hazzard:** Point of order: Obviously the member should be addressing the reason his motion should be accorded priority. If he is going to attack anybody, he should do so by way of substantive motion. He knows that the truth is that the commitments given by the Coalition to police stand. He should not now seek to attack personally any member on this side.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I remind the Leader of the Opposition that attacks on other members should be by way of substantive motion.



**Mr JOHN ROBERTSON:** To the point of order: I am arguing the substantive facts and that this is about debating whether the Police Association was misled. I would be happy for the Government Leader of the House to support my motion so that it can be debated fully.

**The SPEAKER:** The member may continue.

**Mr JOHN ROBERTSON:** The Premier misled our police: it is as plain and simple as that. If misleading our police is not a matter of priority in this House, shame on this House.

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

## **BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

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

#### **Motion by the Hon. Brad Hazzard agreed to:**

That the business before the House be interrupted at 6.00 p.m. to permit the presentation of an inaugural speech by the member for East Hills.

## **INFRASTRUCTURE NSW**

### **Motion Accorded Priority**

**Mr CHRIS PATTERSON** (Camden) [3.34 p.m.]: I move:

That this House supports the Government's establishment of Infrastructure NSW to deliver the infrastructure the people of New South Wales need.

I was proud to vote on the Infrastructure NSW Bill when it was introduced recently. The bill is part of our 100 Day Action Plan to start the change called for by the people of New South Wales, and called for loudly and clearly in my electorate and across the whole of the south-west. Under the 100 Day Action Plan we will build infrastructure that will make a difference to our economy and to people's lives through the creation of Infrastructure NSW. For far too long infrastructure provision was not on the agenda or a priority of the former Labor Government. Infrastructure NSW will identify public infrastructure needs, establish priorities, recommend time lines for delivery and advise on project procurement and contractual arrangements.

Infrastructure NSW will advise also on best practice, delivery and funding modes and ensure that government is armed with the necessary information to re-energise and deliver the State's infrastructure program. I should like to mention one of the many Labor infrastructure failures: the central business district to Rozelle metro that was promised in 2008 and axed. Nearly \$500 million was wasted with not even a centimetre of track to show for it. Camden Valley Way, the road that takes a giant proportion of my community's traffic every day, is a goat track. The developer of Gregory Hills estate paid \$29 million to upgrade the intersection fronting that estate so that people entering and leaving the estate have a great road to drive on. That section of Camden Valley Way is only 500 metres in length. Another section of just over 10 kilometres from that point to the Liverpool boundary remains an uneven, unsafe and single-lane goat track.

What has this to do with the Rozelle metro? The nearly \$500 million wasted on that project would have paid for the upgrade of that 10-kilometre stretch of Camden Valley Way that the local people not only deserve but also desperately need. Camden Valley Way services the Camden local government area very poorly. It is not coping with current demand, let alone future demand. This road now is expected to service Gregory Hills with a future 2,100 residential blocks, Oran Park Town with a future 7,000 residential blocks, Harrington Grove with a future 1,500 residential blocks and Elderslie Spring Farm with a future 4,000 residential blocks. Each one of these estates is zoned, approved and building as I speak. I laugh at Bob Carr's now infamous speech about the Camden electorate: "Infrastructure before people". That rhetoric has been used by every Labor Premier since Bob Carr.

The South West Rail Link will be built under the O'Farrell-led Coalition Government, which is committed to a completion date of 2016. Only a month ago I was at Glenfield station with the Minister for Transport, the Hon. Gladys Berejiklian, Premier Barry O'Farrell, the member for Campbelltown, Brian Doyle,

and the member for Wollondilly, Jai Rowell. We saw firsthand the first 100 metres of track laid under this project. Under Labor since 2004 we have had a \$1.4 billion blowout and not one metre of track has been laid. Without a shadow of a doubt the number one issue facing the people of the Camden electorate, with its population earmarked for such growth, is the essential provision of infrastructure. I have every faith that the establishment of Infrastructure NSW will enable the needs of the Camden electorate and the rest of New South Wales to be met, and ensure that the people of my electorate get the much-needed infrastructure they deserve.

This is exactly what Camden and the rest of New South Wales desperately need. For far too long the people of New South Wales had major projects axed under Labor. The former Labor Government axed the South West Rail Link, the North West Rail Link, the Inner West Metro, the Chatswood to Parramatta rail line, the Penrith fast rail, the North West Metro, the Hurstville to Strathfield rail link, the Bondi Beach Rail Link, the high-speed rail link to Newcastle and the Central Coast, the high-speed rail link from Sutherland to Wollongong, the central business district new harbour crossing rail link and the central business district to Rozelle metro. New South Wales finally has a Government that is prepared to do something about the infrastructure backlog left to us by members opposite. New South Wales needs the formation of Infrastructure NSW, and this motion should be accorded priority.

**Ms LINDA BURNEY** (Canterbury) [3.41 p.m.]: I was wondering whether I was at the seal enclosure at the zoo. I am referring to trained seals. I find it remarkable that the Government has moved this motion, given that the Opposition did not oppose Infrastructure NSW. Usually, the Government moves a priority motion because the Opposition disagrees with something, but the Opposition is not opposing Infrastructure NSW.

**Mr Darren Webber:** So you support the chair.

**Ms LINDA BURNEY:** No, I did not say that. I said that we are not opposing Infrastructure NSW.

**The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George):** Order! The member for Wollongong will refrain from shouting across the Chamber and using that type of language. If she has something to say she should seek the call.

**Ms LINDA BURNEY:** I give members opposite a word of advice: it is usual to have a go at the Opposition. However, we support the Infrastructure NSW Bill 2011 and have no problem with it. I simply point out that motions accorded priority are usually about matters with which the Opposition disagrees. We gave our support to the establishment of Infrastructure NSW. Members opposite should make better use of priority motions. Members opposite are using the motion to congratulate themselves on passing a bill that had bipartisan support. I find it a little curious that the Government is debating this matter. Surely, members opposite could have chosen a more important issue to debate. What could be worse—perhaps members opposite might like to think about it—are the WorkChoices laws that the Government put through this House or the broken promises to our Police Force. Those are the sort of matters we should debate, not something on which we agree.

**Mr Andrew Fraser:** Point of order: The member for Canterbury is not addressing the motion. She is talking about police and other issues, which have nothing to do with this motion. I ask you to draw her back to the leave of the motion.

**The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George):** Order! I am sure the member for Canterbury is about to return to the leave of the motion that has been accorded priority. Police were the subject of the other motion sought to be accorded priority, which was defeated.

**Ms LINDA BURNEY:** I have mentioned Infrastructure NSW at least five or six times already, so I am not quite sure why the members for Coffs Harbour is making that assertion. Once again members opposite have dodged the issues, such as why the Government is breaking promises it made to police and why it introduced WorkChoices laws in this State, when moving a motion accorded priority. I assure members that issues such as WorkChoices—

**Mr Daryl Maguire:** Point of order: I am reluctant to take a point of order, but the member for Canterbury should return to the leave of the motion. Clearly, she is referring to matters outside the issues raised by the member for Camden in his introductory remarks.

**The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George):** Order! I uphold the point of order. I remind the member for Canterbury of the words of the motion, which clearly states, "That this House supports the Government's establishment of Infrastructure NSW."

**Ms LINDA BURNEY:** The motion seeks to congratulate the Government on establishing Infrastructure NSW and addressing the infrastructure needs of New South Wales.

**The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George):** Order! I do not see the word "congratulates" in the motion. The motion says "supports".

**Ms LINDA BURNEY:** What has happened so far? The Government has passed a bill. That is not hard when it has a majority in this House. The Government has appointed one of its mates, disgraced former Premier Greiner.

*[Interruption]*

The Independent Commission Against Corruption? Again, that is not exactly a huge achievement. The Government has started filling other board positions with various associates close to the Liberal Party.

**Mr Daryl Maguire:** Point of order: The member for Canterbury is casting aspersions on a person outside this place. Nick Greiner was cleared. The member's accusation is incorrect. The person she is referring to was exonerated in future hearings.

**The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George):** Order! The member for Canterbury will return to the leave of the motion that has been accorded priority.

**Ms LINDA BURNEY:** As I said, the bill has been passed, which is not so difficult in a House with this composition. Beyond the establishment of legislation and appointment of a chair, very little has been achieved. A bill, a board, and who knows what? Maybe a logo, but I have not seen that. This new Government has established a number of boards, committees and commissions, and we will be watching carefully to see their role and the outcomes. But none of that means a single new train, bus, ferry, track or road for the people of New South Wales. Let us just get this in perspective. The Opposition supports the establishment of Infrastructure NSW. We have expressed our deep concern about its politicisation and lack of transparency, but we support the agency itself.

As the Government promised all things to all people while in opposition, we look forward to seeing Infrastructure NSW start to deliver on the Government's promises. We look forward to holding the Government accountable in terms of Infrastructure NSW over the short term. That accountability is a big if; if it is forthcoming, we will welcome that. It remains to be seen. In the meantime it is premature and presumptive for the Government to use this House to congratulate itself for setting up yet another bureaucratic structure. *[Time expired.]*

**Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro) [3.48 p.m.]:** I support the motion moved by the member for Camden. The member for Canterbury continually reminded us that the Opposition supports the bill establishing Infrastructure NSW, yet it did not seem that way from her comments. There is a conflict between what members opposite do and what they believe, and they sound confused. Whether it is a family in Western Sydney stuck in congested traffic trying to get to work or school, a commuter on the Central Coast or in the Illawarra waiting for a train, young people trying to afford a home, a business owner fearful of another blackout, an investor looking for a high-performance jurisdiction, a person trying to get farm produce to the market, an exporter looking at queues of ships waiting their turn to dock, people battling the cost of living, especially the cost of electricity, or simply a person living in regional New South Wales, the need for a new approach to planning, selecting, funding, delivering and evaluating infrastructure has never been more crucial or critical in our State.

New South Wales lacks a dedicated statutory body to oversee infrastructure development. 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 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, just to name a few—are critical to the social and economic wellbeing of the community. The bill delivers on the New South Wales commitment in the 100 Day Action Plan to create Infrastructure NSW. Infrastructure NSW is a statutory corporation and a New South Wales Government agency with dedicated responsibility for infrastructure. It will deliver a 20-year State Infrastructure Strategy and a five-year Infrastructure Plan.

For far too long Labor's administration has been about the next election. The Liberal-Nationals Government is about the next generation, something to which I referred in my inaugural speech. I said that politicians always look to the next election, but a statesman looks to the next generation. I am reminded of 1995 when Bob Carr went to Queanbeyan to announce a ring road to get the traffic out of the central business district. Guess what? In the 2011 election a ring road for Queanbeyan was debated again. It is another failed promise because Labor puts politics in front of the real need to deliver infrastructure in New South Wales. Some argue that New South Wales infrastructure failings were the result of some fiscal fetish over maintaining the State's triple-A credit rating, or some phobia against public borrowing. Instead, they are the result of New South Wales Labor's basic economic reform and governance failures. Get the regulations right to allow infrastructure markets to function properly and private investment will follow.

New South Wales Labor was incapable of taking on its own rotten vested interests and thus plunged this State into crisis. Our plan is to spread Sydney's natural growth more across the State through regional development and active decentralisation and to give local governments more power to promote and decide on the future of their communities along with desperately needed infrastructure. Let us not forget about electricity in relation to infrastructure. Let us not forget the huge electricity price rises under Labor that are testament to the complete breakdown of the former Labor Government's failure to manage New South Wales electricity infrastructure. Premier after Premier, Minister after Minister, State Labor treated the retailers as cash cows and failed to put back the more than \$11 billion in taxes and dividends it reaped into upgrading our infrastructure.

The situation in which we find ourselves is an extreme example of neglect and mismanagement at its very worst from 16 years of Labor governments that were incapable of managing our State. The public of New South Wales was absolutely fed up with Labor's failures and was ready to endorse the vision of a Liberal-Nationals Government, and that is where Infrastructure NSW comes into play. Labor does not want to be reminded about the \$100 million T-card debacle, the \$500 million Rozelle metro fiasco and John Robertson's special \$1.9 billion solar bonus blow-out, which threatens to increase the cost of electricity to New South Wales households. [*Time expired.*]

**Ms NOREEN HAY** (Wollongong) [3.53 p.m.]: It is interesting that this motion to be accorded priority relates to the Infrastructure NSW Bill 2011, which we have been debating for many sitting days. As has been said, the Labor Opposition does not oppose the bill. There might be an argument that perhaps we should oppose the chairman. However, we do not oppose the bill.

[*Interruption*]

**Ms NOREEN HAY:** New members are supposed to sit and learn. Government members should behave themselves. We acknowledge the Government's many promises regarding infrastructure in this State. Of course, we will not attempt to block those plans. However, we will always hold members of the Government to account for their promises. We expect them to stop talking and get on with it. New members who have been in this place for only for five minutes are talking about their achievements. They have not done anything yet: get on and do something. I acknowledge the welcome change that a New South Wales issue has been chosen as the motion to be accorded priority. It is a State issue: well done. Tony Abbott's office must have forgotten to send through the speeches. It is no surprise to me that the member for Murray-Darling should suddenly appear when I am speaking. He is like a shadow. I am getting a bit nervous.

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

**Ms NOREEN HAY:** We have rightly pointed out that the Government has broken several of the promises it made to the people of New South Wales on infrastructure. On 10 March the Premier promised that Infrastructure NSW would have an independent board, and would ensure that the board could and would blow the whistle if the Government failed to meet its commitments. It is laughable to suggest that a board that is entirely at the control and direction of the Premier, chaired by his long-term mentor, the former Liberal Premier, Nick Greiner—shame on you all—could ever meet that promise.

**Mr Andrew Gee:** Table of knowledge.

**Ms NOREEN HAY:** Indeed, Nick Greiner would do well at the table of knowledge after all he did for the Illawarra. The Government promised it would provide direction for Infrastructure NSW, not vice versa. On 27 October 2010 the Premier promised that Infrastructure NSW would put in place plans for rail lines, roads,

ports and other infrastructure, and that the Government of the day would simply go down that list, seek funding for them and tick them off. The promise was that Infrastructure NSW would determine the State's needs, plans and budgets independent of the Government, and that the Government of the day would simply deliver. Now that the election is over, the opposite is true. Infrastructure NSW cannot put a single plan in place. Under the Act only the Premier can do that.

Infrastructure NSW is entirely at the control and direction not of the Government, but the Premier. The Premier promised that Infrastructure NSW would take decision-making away from politicians. In reality, he consolidated decision-making away from Infrastructure NSW, its board, the Treasurer, the Minister for Transport Minister, the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, the Department of Transport, the Roads and Traffic Authority, the Department of Planning and this Parliament and dropped it into his own lap. That is not what the Premier repeatedly promised the people of New South Wales. The Government broke its promise to end political interference in infrastructure decisions. It is true that the legislation introduced by the Government creates an infrastructure agency, but it does not take the politics out of infrastructure decision-making.

Infrastructure NSW is not independent and certainly not above political interference. We need only to read the bill to find out that it is not as transparent as the Premier stated on 26 May. He stated that this bill allows for the creation of an independent agency that will "take the politics out" of infrastructure decision-making and place infrastructure planning and decision-making "in the hands of experts". The bill actually provides for no restraints on the power of the Premier to decide which infrastructure projects in New South Wales should be adopted and what information is made public regarding the 20-year and five-year plans or sectoral plans. The Premier promised an independent decision-making body of experts. In reality Infrastructure NSW has the potential to be the Premier's agency with the Premier making for the Premier and in the interest of the Premier.

**Mr CHRIS PATTERSON** (Camden) [3.58 p.m.], in reply: In summation, I thank all members from both sides of the House for their contributions.

**Ms Linda Burney:** Do you mean it?

**Mr CHRIS PATTERSON:** I sincerely do, but I want to single out the member for Monaro and thank him for his fine contribution, and I do mean that. The member clearly has a love for regional New South Wales and is committed, as are all his colleagues on this side of the House, to ensuring that the provision of infrastructure, which was so sorely neglected by those on the other side, is a priority of the Liberal-Nationals Government. That members of the Opposition attack this Government for attempting to correct the mess they had left in relation to the provision of infrastructure in New South Wales is very rich. The member for Canterbury said that the Opposition does not oppose the bill, but then said that she and her colleagues although not opposing will not necessarily support the bill. What sort of wishy-washy pathetic Opposition is this?

The member for Canterbury said she cannot comprehend that infrastructure, or lack thereof, should be the subject of a priority motion. The provision of infrastructure is the number one priority facing New South Wales. In government, Labor ran from providing infrastructure. Now, in opposition, it is doing the same. I note that the member for Wollongong welcomes infrastructure as a priority issue. This was after the member for Canterbury ridiculed the motion. These are two Opposition speakers with two completely opposing views. Clearly, the Opposition is a rabble. I am going to highlight once again the projects axed under Labor. I did not intend to, but as the member for Canterbury is clearly in denial as to the failings of the former Government, of which she was a member from 2003—

**Ms Linda Burney:** Point of order: My point of order relates to tedious repetition. We have heard it once; please don't do it again. It is tedious and boring.

**The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George):** Order! That is not a point of order.

**Mr CHRIS PATTERSON:** Having lived in this State for the past 16 years and seen nothing done is tedious. I ask the member for Canterbury to grant me an indulgence for two minutes. Under Labor, the South West Rail Link—axed. Under Labor, the North West Rail Link—axed. Under Labor, the West Metro—axed. Under Labor, the Chatswood to Parramatta Rail Link—axed.

**Ms Noreen Hay:** Point of order: My point of order relates to relevance. The member has gone so far off course on what is relevant to the motion that he has neglected to say how the chairman of the proposed new body closed down half—

**The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George):** Order! That is not a point of order.

**Mr CHRIS PATTERSON:** What is relevant to the people of Penrith is that, under Labor, the Penrith fast rail proposal was axed. Under Labor, the North West Metro—

**Government members:** Axed.

**Mr CHRIS PATTERSON:** Under Labor, the Hurstville to Strathfield Rail Link—

**Government Members:** Axed.

**Mr CHRIS PATTERSON:** Under Labor, the Bondi to—

**Ms Linda Burney:** Point of order—

**The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George):** Order! The member for Canterbury rises on a point of order, which I hope is different from the previous point of order.

**Ms Linda Burney:** This is a serious point of order. It relates to Standing Order 130 and a ruling by Speaker Ellis in 1969 that interjections en masse are particularly disorderly. I submit that mass interjections by Government members are disorderly.

**The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George):** Order! The member for Camden has the call.

**Mr CHRIS PATTERSON:** In only my fourth speech, I now know how the member for Liverpool feels. I will leave aside all the projects that were axed; we know them. I conclude by saying that the formation of Infrastructure NSW will go a long way to fixing the current backlog left by the former Government. It offers transparency in the provision of infrastructure and takes away all of the underhanded, dirty dealings of the former Government.

**Motion agreed to.**

## **STATUTE LAW (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) BILL 2011**

### **Agreement in Principle**

**Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

**Mr PAUL LYNCH** (Liverpool) [4.05 p.m.]: I lead for the Opposition on the Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2011. The objects of this bill are:

- (a) to make minor amendments to various Acts and Regulations (Schedule 1), and
- (b) to amend certain other Acts and instruments for the purpose of effecting statute law revision (Schedule 2), and
- (c) to amend various Acts to enable the repeal of legislation by Schedule 4 (including by transferring into them provisions of the legislation to be repealed that are of possible ongoing effect) (Schedule 3), and
- (c) to repeal certain Acts and instruments and provisions of Acts and instruments (Schedule 4), and
- (d) to make other provisions of a consequential or ancillary nature (Schedule 5).

This is a traditional bill. As the Attorney indicated earlier this morning when introducing the legislation, this is an effective and efficient way of introducing what are comparatively minor amendments. It means that a whole series of amendments can be made by way of one miscellaneous bill, rather than having a succession of separate bills coming into the House. It is a sensible and logical way of dealing with what are comparatively minor amendments. This traverses some extraordinary and interesting ground. It deals with, among other things, champerty, barratry and maintenance—terms that were once familiar to lawyers but have now fallen out of use. I notice that the Justices of the Peace regulation has to be amended to take into account the new name of the Department of Attorney General and Justice. That name of course was introduced earlier this year.

It used to be the Department of Justice and Attorney General; it is now the Department of Attorney General and Justice—some \$55,000 later. That is an interesting matter that no doubt will get some further

coverage in the fullness of time. The Opposition does not oppose the bill. As I said earlier, it is an entirely sensible way of dealing with comparatively minor amendments. We got the bill only yesterday, so we are a little concerned about some of the provisions relating to national parks. I understand the shadow Minister will raise that matter with her counterpart, and perhaps that will resolve that matter. But that seems to be the only part of the bill that the Opposition might have a problem with. Apart from that, we are happy to support the bill.

**Mr CHRIS SPENCE** (The Entrance) [4.07 p.m.]: I support the Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2011. In the overview of the bill, the objects are stated as:

- (a) to make minor amendments to various Acts and Regulations (Schedule 1), and
- (b) to amend certain other Acts and instruments for the purpose of effecting statute law revision (Schedule 2), and
- (c) to amend various Acts to enable the repeal of legislation by Schedule 4 (including by transferring into them provisions of the legislation to be repealed that are of possible ongoing effect) (Schedule 3), and
- (c) to repeal certain Acts and instruments and provisions of Acts and instruments (Schedule 4), and
- (d) to make other provisions of a consequential or ancillary nature (Schedule 5).

The bill contains only minor amendments, and those fall into three categories. The first category, those contained in schedule 1 to the bill, deal with changes that are so insignificant and consequential that they are better and more properly dealt with in one bill, rather than in many. The second and third schedules provide for very minor technical changes and corrections to the legislation. The fourth repeals or partly repeals Acts as part of the ongoing repeal program for redundant legislation. And the fifth contains savings and transitional provisions. The third category amendments repeal 98 Acts and a number of instruments and provisions of Acts.

These Acts are redundant. Significantly, a number of those Acts apply to railway construction from last century, where the railway has already been built or the legislation is unable to be used in future railway construction. They do not affect any ongoing operations of current railways. Some of the Acts to be repealed are the Bungendore to Captain's Flat Railway Act 1930, the Coonabarabran to Burren Junction Railway Act 1913, the Newcastle Islands Development Scheme Railway Act 1966, the Sandy Hollow, via Gulgong, to Maryvale Railway Act 1927, the Whittingham to Mount Thorley Railway Act 1975 and the Wyalong towards Condobolin Railway Act 1923.

It would have been good if the previous Government had introduced legislation about railways. The Central Coast was, of course, promised railway improvements by former Premier Bob Carr in 1998. He sent out nice big glossy brochures across the entire Central Coast claiming that the Central Coast and Newcastle would get a fast train. The fast train ain't so fast. In fact, the train to the Central Coast takes longer now than it did in 1960 when the railway was first electrified. It is certainly something we on the Central Coast would like to see happen. During the election campaign the Minister for Transport made a commitment that we will introduce six new express trains on the Central Coast service—three in the morning and three in the afternoon—to help reduce congestion and travel time. I applaud the Minister for Transport for making that commitment to the Central Coast.

Included in the third category of amendments is the repeal of the Sports Drug Testing Act 1995, which has since been superseded by Commonwealth legislation. Also amended are Acts that can no longer commence as they amend Acts, instruments or provisions that have since been repealed. The first category amendments include the Adoption Act 2000. These amendments will allow the Supreme Court, when making an order for the adoption of a child under 18 years old, to accept a report prepared by the principal officer or delegate of any government agency or non-government agency that is appropriately accredited to provide out-of-home care under the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998. The amendment removes a layer of delegation.

Another set of amendments relates to the Associations Incorporation Act 2009. These amendments require an association registered under the Act to lodge its financial reports with the director general. Currently the Act requires this of the public officer of the association and this amendment overcomes some of the impracticality. The Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 is amended to make it clear that certain reports under the Act in relation to a child or young person that are admissible in specified proceedings are also admissible in any appeal. They make it clear that provision for voluntary participation in alternative dispute resolution arranged by the director general under the Act does not apply to dispute resolution conducted by the Children's Registrar of the Children's Court, or ordered by the Children's Court. The amendments also extend a regulation-making power with respect to probity checks and remove obsolete references.

In relation to the Election Funding, Expenditure and Disclosures Act 1981, the amendment ensures that the number of elected members at the time an annual amount becomes payable to political parties with parliamentary representatives includes members elected to fill a casual vacancy in the Legislative Council. Amendments to the Fire Brigades Act 1989 will update references to NSW Fire Brigades and omit redundant provisions. Proposed amendments to the Holiday Parks (Long-term Casual Occupation) Act 2002 will include as a standard term of an occupancy agreement for a holiday park site the requirement that an occupant must not occupy the site for more than 180 days in a 12-month period, and improve some poorly worded provisions relating to that.

In relation to the Police Act, the proposed amendments will make provisions relating to the employment of executive and non-executive administrative officers in the New South Wales Police Force consistent with the equivalent provisions for other public sector employees in the Public Sector Employment and Management Act. These amendments are consequential on recent changes to the Public Sector Employment and Management Act which were supported by the Public Service Association.

Some of the Acts are being removed because they are now redundant. I refer to the Housing Agreement Acts of 1956, 1961, 1966, 1973, 1974, 1978, 1981, and 1985, numbers 35, 39, 40, 57, 90, 149, 129 and 32 respectively. Why on earth it has taken so long to remove those Acts that are completely redundant is beyond me. It makes the mind boggle. We saw legislation introduced by the previous Government to enable it to comply with the Federal Government's affordable housing requirements and as a result two blocks of units for social housing were built in my electorate of The Entrance. We all support social housing and I support social housing and affordable housing in my electorate, but for some time the housing department's agreed policy has been that high-density social housing is not appropriate. It is not in the best interests of the tenants and it is certainly not in the best interests of the community.

Yet two housing blocks were built and opened in recent months in my electorate, one in Norberta Street and the other in Gosford Avenue. Both of them were strongly opposed by the community. A number of people have been brought into the area who are unemployed. The Entrance is one of the areas of highest unemployment on the Central Coast. There is a very poor transport service to employment areas such as Tuggerah, where Westfield is located, and to the train station at Tuggerah, and employment areas in the electorate of my colleague the member for Wyong. There are no jobs and no social services yet there is an attitude of building affordable housing so that the department can tick the box and say that it has done its job and provided housing. It is not warranted in my electorate and it is just compounding the issue.

I would much prefer to see social housing dispersed across my electorate so that it provides the best opportunities for those living in social and affordable housing to gain access to employment, to send their kids to school and get a good education, and to access the best services that are available. The bill amends a number of Acts relating to matters such as churches and workers compensation and removes a number of Acts that are redundant. One is the Lady Edith Carpenter Land Vesting Act 1937. That Act is over 70 years old and I have no idea why it could not have been removed from the statutes earlier than this. It has taken a Liberal-Nationals Coalition Government to come into this place and finally to get something done. I look forward to working with my colleagues on more legislation. We have seen some great legislation from this Government already such as the bills relating to Infrastructure NSW and Destination NSW.

**Mr Dominic Perrottet:** Great bill.

**Mr CHRIS SPENCE:** I acknowledge the interjection of my colleague the member for Castle Hill. The Destination NSW Bill is a great bill. I was looking forward to speaking on that bill today but I will probably speak to the issue in a private member's statement, because the Central Coast is probably the best destination in New South Wales. The member for Kiama referred in his inaugural speech to the fact that everybody holidays in his area, but I challenge anyone to look at the traffic at the end of the F3 on a Friday afternoon heading to the Central Coast to my seat and those of the members for Gosford, Wyong and Terrigal. I have said enough. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr DARREN WEBBER** (Wyong) [4.18 p.m.]: It is a pleasure to speak today for the first time since my inaugural speech and to support the Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2011. It is a bill of some 80 pages of amendments to Acts and regulations from diverse backgrounds and time frames. We are updating, correcting errors, removing out-of-date references and basically bringing everything together and giving it a good dust with the broom. During the recent debate on the Library Amendment Bill the member for Toongabbie



said that it was not really important legislation and the Government was not hitting the ground running. I make the point that as part of our 100 Day Action Plan we have a diverse range of legislation coming forward, not all of which is glossy or high profile, but it is all very important, as is this bill.

Some of the bills that the member for The Entrance went through form part of the collection that we have brought through in our first 100 days, including the Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2011, Infrastructure NSW, the Library Amendment Bill, the move-on laws, scrapping part 3A, mandatory life sentencing for the murder of police officers, appointing Ministers for mental health and healthy lifestyles and, importantly, having a Minister for the Central Coast that actually lives on the Central Coast, my great colleague, Mr Chris Hartcher.

The member for The Entrance stole some of my points—as neighbours, that happens a lot—but he spoke of the length of time we have been waiting and of how old some of the points in the bill are. It made me think, as I was sitting on the front bench, about how long we have been waiting for the resolution of some issues in the Wyong electorate, including the Wyong police station that I mentioned in my inaugural speech, which was first promised in 1999 and at every election since, and also things such as the Warnervale town centre that has been promised for decades and is still a cow paddock.

**Mr Richard Amery:** Point of order: I am following the Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2011 and I fail to see the points dealing with the Central Coast, the member for the Central Coast or the Act in relation to the other legislation that the member referred to. They do not appear to be in the bill before the House. I wonder if he could elaborate so that I can follow the debate.

**The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George):** Order! I thank the member for Mount Druitt for his point of order. As the member for Wyong pointed out, this is his first speech since he made his inaugural speech. I am sure he is coming to the leave of the bill.

**Mr DARREN WEBBER:** The Labor Party has always failed to see the relevance of the Central Coast, so it is of no surprise today. I was referring to the amount of time that people in the Wyong electorate have been waiting for key issues. Some of the points raised in this legislation, as the member for The Entrance mentioned, go back not just to the 1980s and around my birth date but even to decades before, so the broom we are putting through some of the legislation is really important and is very good. It does not necessarily have the high profile of some legislation, but it is part of our 100 Day Action Plan to get this State going again. This is a sound, responsible bill that corrects errors, in stark contrast to the waste, mismanagement and incompetency of the former Government, the caucus of which now sits on the other side. I commend the bill to the House and I am proud to be part of this responsible government of reform and proud to be the first Liberal member for Wyong standing in support of good legislation.

**Mr CHRIS HOLSTEIN (Gosford) [4.22 p.m.]:** The Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2011 is intended to effect minor and non-controversial amendments to various Acts within the Parliament, yet I note we have heard a point of order on it and I am quite surprised. The bill will continue the statute law revision program, which was established in 1984 as a cost-effective and efficient mechanism for the making of such amendments. The bill contains minor amendments, which fall into three categories. The first category, or schedule 1, encompasses only minor policy changes to Acts and statutory instruments that are too small or inconsequential to warrant the introduction of a separate amending bill or the making of a separate amending statutory instrument. These matters may be properly and efficiently dealt with in the Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2011 rather than in a series of separate minor bills or statutory instruments. It should be pointed out that 16 different Acts or regulations fall within the first category.

The second category involves schedules 2 and 3, which contain 65 and 17 different regulations, by-laws, orders, plans or policies respectively. These comprise minor technical changes to legislation. The amendments cover, for example, minor corrections and changes relating to consistency of style and the repeal of spent legislation. The third category, or schedule 4, includes repeals and related amendments as part of the ongoing repeal program for redundant legislation. As previous speakers have pointed out, it is interesting to go back and look at some of the respective Acts and how long they have been in the system. You have to ask: Why is it now that we are removing them?

It was a bit of a competition to find out which one was the oldest Act and I think I may have it: the Circular Quay Lands Act of 1890. It has taken 120-odd years for the repeal of such an Act. Schedule 4 repeals 79 Acts. What has been happening for the last decade? The schedule 1 amendments were touched on by my good colleague the member for The Entrance, but there is one that I would like to touch upon, which relates to the Holiday Parks (Long-term Casual Occupation) Act 2002. This is a very important matter for the Central Coast, because we do have long-term casual occupancy within our holiday parks, and it needs to be addressed.

The proposed minor amendments go a long way to doing that and will: include as a standard term of an occupation agreement for a holiday park site the requirement that the occupant must not occupy the site for more than 180 days in any 12-month period, consistent with the Act's application only to occupation agreements of this type; amend a standard term of such an agreement to require the purchaser to agree that there is no legal reason why an occupant cannot use the holiday park site in accordance with the terms of the agreement, rather than for the term of the agreement, as is currently the case; clarify and consolidate the standard terms of such an occupation agreement that concern the options and method of payment of occupation fees under the agreement; and provide for the proposed amendments to apply to occupation agreements entered into on or after the commencement of the amendments.

Minor amendments are made to the Residential Tenancies Act 2010. Whilst the changes are non-controversial and minor, they involve a total of 177 Acts, regulations, by-laws, orders, plans and policies, they will make government more effective, more efficient and more in tune with what needs to happen within the State of New South Wales.

I raise seven issues concerning the Residential Tenancies Act. The amendments provide consistency with other offences in the Act, extending to landlords' agents certain offences relating to terms of residential tenancy agreements and payment of rent by tenants that, due to a drafting oversight, currently apply only to landlords; exempt the New South Wales Land and Housing Corporation and Aboriginal Housing Office from the requirement to issue rent receipts in accordance with the Act, mirroring an exemption in the repealed Residential Tenancies Act 1987; change a provision that prevents rent being increased under a fixed term residential tenancy agreement unless the rent increase is specified in the agreement so that the provision applies to an agreement for a term of less than two years rather than a term of two years or less, as is currently the case.

The amendments include, where a rent increase is specified in an agreement for a fixed term of less than two years, a requirement to specify the total increased rent rather than the amount of the proposed increase, as is currently the case; make it clear that a warrant for possession of residential premises may be issued as a result of a termination order issued for frequent failure to pay rent owing, even if the tenant has paid all rent owing at that particular time; and provide that an order to terminate the tenancy of a co-tenant is taken to be an order for the possession of the premises in favour of the remaining co-tenants, enabling a warrant for possession of the premises to be issued in their favour.

The amendments also give effect to the transfer to the Act of a provision in the Residential Tenancies Regulation 2010 to make it clear that a tenant under a fixed-term agreement who vacates the premises before expiry of the fixed term can be liable to pay rent for the balance of that fixed term. A very important amendment to the Swimming Pools Act 1992, which is administered by Minister for Local Government, Don Page, involves extension of provisions related to child-resistant barriers around swimming pools. The Act currently requires a swimming pool on the premises of a hotel or motel to be surrounded by a child-resistant barrier that is located immediately around the swimming pool. The amendments will extend that requirement to swimming pools on premises of certain other types of tourist and visitor accommodation. That is an issue of public safety and it is certainly an issue of crucial importance to people who live on the Central Coast.

The requirements for premises such as hotels and motels having a child-resistant barrier around swimming pools should be clearly stated. The implications of legislation not being clearly defined are frightening, particularly for parents who have lost a child in a drowning accident that involved a swimming pool. The Act has been in operation since 1992 but I am amazed that it has not been reviewed and improved to provide proper regulation of public safety requirements for the benefit of people of this State. Several of my colleagues who preceded me in the debate have referred to Acts that have been repealed, and I will mention just a few: the Circular Quay Land Act 1890, the Commonwealth Loans (Investment Enabling) Act 1915, the Conveyancing Act 1919 and the Darling Harbour Wharves Resumption Act 1900.

**Mr Dominic Perrottet:** Read them all.

**Mr CHRIS HOLSTEIN:** I will not list all of them, but I must draw attention to the Gilgandra to Collie Railway Act 1915. I am not sure where Collie is, but I am sure the Act was important in 1915. It has probably been important for the past 96 years, but the current Government is acting like a government and ensuring that Acts and other statutory instruments that are no longer relevant to New South Wales are repealed.

**Mr Chris Spence:** It is in the details.

**Mr CHRIS HOLSTEIN:** The amendments are detailed. They are minor and non-controversial amendments to various Acts. Nevertheless, the amendment or repeal of 177 Acts, bylaws, orders, plans, policies and regulations give a clear indication that the current New South Wales Government is taking action to redress the former Government's failure to act over the past decade or more. I commend the bill to the Parliament.

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES** (Mulgoa) [4.32 p.m.]: I support the Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2011. As members who preceded me in the debates pointed out, this bill provides for changes, slight alterations and amendments to a number of different Acts. Prior to examining the bill in detail I will provide the House with an overview of the legislation. The objects of the bill are:

- (a) to make minor amendments to various Acts and Regulations (Schedule 1), and
- (b) to amend certain other Acts and instruments for the purpose of effecting statute law revision (Schedule 2), and
- (c) to amend various Acts to enable the repeal of legislation by Schedule 4 (including by transferring into them provisions of the legislation to be repealed that are of possible ongoing effect) (Schedule 3), and
- (d) to repeal certain Acts and instruments and provisions of Acts and instruments (Schedule 4), and
- (e) to make other provisions of a consequential or ancillary nature (Schedule 5).

It is interesting that the title of the bill includes the word "miscellaneous" because some legislation identified by the bill is not miscellaneous but, rather, is of a quite serious nature. As the member for Gosford informed the House, some changes are absolutely essential for the State to be returned to its rightful place of being number one. While a great deal could be said about the complete range of changes that will be effected by the bill, I will focus on one during the time allocated for my speech. Amendments to the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 relate to section 29, the protection of persons who make reports or provide certain information. For the purpose of explaining the effect of this amending bill on section 29 (1) (d), I will include in *Hansard* the provisions of section 29, which deals with a very serious matter, and which states:

**29 Protection of persons who make reports or provide certain information**

- (1) If, in relation to a child or young person or a class of children or young persons, a person makes a report in good faith to the Director-General or to a person who has the power or responsibility to protect the child or young person or the class of children or young persons:
  - (a) the making of the report does not constitute a breach of professional etiquette or ethics or a departure from accepted standards of professional conduct, and
  - (b) no liability for defamation is incurred because of the report, and
  - (c) the making of the report does not constitute a ground for civil proceedings for malicious prosecution or for conspiracy, and
  - (d) the report, or evidence of its contents, is not admissible in any proceedings (including any appeal arising from those proceedings), other than the following:
    - (i) care proceedings in the Children's Court,
    - (ii) proceedings in relation to a child or young person under the Family Law Act 1975 of the Commonwealth,
    - (iii) proceedings in relation to a child or young person before the Supreme Court or the Administrative Decisions Tribunal,
    - (iv) proceedings before the Victims Compensation Tribunal or the Guardianship Tribunal,
    - (v) proceedings under the Coroners Act 2009 ...

The Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2011 proposes to change section 29 (1) (d) to state:

the report, or evidence of its contents, is not admissible in any proceedings other than the following proceedings (and appeals arising from the following proceedings):

A person who is listening to this debate may become confused as to the nature of the changes and what the bill is endeavouring to achieve so I will explain in layman's language what the changes will deliver. There are fantastic, wonderful and dedicated police officers within our New South Wales Police Force who perform extraordinary work, carry out extraordinary duties, conduct all types of operations and investigations and come to the defence of victims, people who have been assaulted and people who are being threatened. When I researched the bill my attention was drawn to the fact that the New South Wales Police Force approached the former Government and repeatedly asked for that change to be made.

Effectively, the original legislation states that a report of a child potentially being at risk of harm, particularly in relation to sexual assault, is prohibited from being taken into account in appeals and other

proceedings, except for the original investigation. This Government is taking action to ensure that instead of the report being prohibited from being included, a report of risk of harm will be able to be included in investigations and appeals arising from original proceedings.

Once again this one line clearly demonstrates that the O'Farrell-Stoner Government is committed to doing everything in its power to fix the problems, gaps and omissions in New South Wales. I am proud to be part of a Government that not only has the big picture in mind and is addressing critical issues such as lack of infrastructure, but also is dedicated to correcting the one or two sentences in legislation that could literally turn around a child's life. As a member of this Government representing the Mulgoa electorate I have had occasions to meet wonderful foster parents and the children for whom they care. I have listened to their stories as they share some of the history of the children in their care. It would be inconceivable to say one was not moved to tears or became heavy-hearted because some stories are frightening.

I am proud that the Government is making slight changes that will literally turn around the lives of children. It is critically essential to be able to introduce reports of potentially significant harm into further proceedings about a particular child. We all agree that it is far better to prevent abuse than to try to heal the damage it causes. My previous background involved caring for a small group of people in a small church congregation in the Blue Mountains. One of the most difficult situations was listening as grown women opened up their hearts to tell me that they were victims of child abuse at the hands of their fathers and other male role models. These three women are trying to get on with their lives raising their families, but after many years the pain and damage that abuse caused remains etched on their faces.

I am proud to support and commend a Government that could literally effect a new life for our young children by changing one sentence in one piece of legislation. I should like to refer briefly to section 220 of the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 regarding regulations relating to children's services. The Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2011 will make a slight amendment by including a reference to a person who is a licensee or proposed licensee of a children's service. The explanatory note in item [3] of schedule 1 to the bill states:

Item [3] allows regulations to be made regarding probity checks that may be conducted on a person who is a licensee or proposed licensee of a prescribed children's service under Part 3 of Chapter 12 of the Act. The Act already grants power to make regulations for probity checks in relation to persons involved in the control or management of a licensee or proposed licensee. This amendment will ensure that the regulations may make provision for the probity checks to be conducted in relation to natural persons who provide children's services.

As a parent of a nearly four-year-old daughter who has been attending child-care services since she was 18 months old, I am aware firsthand, as is every parent in this place, of the vulnerability of our young children and babies. It is critically essential that anyone with any engagement with babies and young children is checked and vetted. Children rely on adults, the grown members of their families, to offer them full care and protection. I commend the Government's decision to deliver on its election commitment—as it has on many other election commitments—and move responsibility for preschools to the Education portfolio. Children's services form part of preschool networks and this Government firmly believes that early childhood and child-care services first and foremost are a universal mainstream education service that should be available to all children in our society.

I am pleased that this Government is ensuring that probity checks applying to people who work or have licences to work within children's services will be strengthened, which should be the case. It is a shame this change was not undertaken many years ago. Bringing preschools and children's services into the Education Ministry demonstrates that the Government believes in lifelong learning and that learning for our children and the next generation begins pre-birth. I am excited that the Government is determined to protect the health and personal safety of our children by making this change and recognises the essential value of preschools and children's services in educating current and future generations. Quality child-care education for our young people is essential. The Government is committed to delivering quality early childhood services. I am pleased to support the Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2011 and I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET** (Castle Hill) [4.46 p.m.]: I support the Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2011.

**Mr Chris Spence:** It is prudent.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** As the member for The Entrance said, it is a very prudent and important bill. Our role in government is to ensure not only that our laws are just, but also that they are kept up

to date by engaging in general legislation housekeeping to improve the effectiveness and quality of New South Wales legislation. This bill is intended to effect minor and non-controversial amendments to various New South Wales Acts. This is an important role of the Government. The Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill demonstrates through the large array of legislation requiring amendment that the previous Government failed to do its job. If little things such as typographical and grammatical errors and duplication of numerals are not corrected in legislation, important things will be missed to fix New South Wales.

The bill contains a number of minor amendments that fall into three categories. The first category in schedule 1 to the bill encompasses minor policy changes to Acts and statutory instruments that are too small or inconsequential to warrant the introduction of a separate amending bill, or the making of a separate statutory instrument. The bill contains a number of these minor changes to Acts and instruments ranging across many areas. One such amendment is to the Adoption Act 2000. The proposed amendments will allow the Supreme Court when making an order for the adoption of a child under 18 years of age to accept a report prepared by the principal officer or delegate of any government agency or non-government organisation that is accredited to provide out-of-home care under the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998.

Currently, only the director general or a principal officer of an accredited adoption service provider, or delegate, is directly empowered to prepare such reports, while others must do so under delegation from the director general. This amendment removes that layer of delegation. The Swimming Pools Act 1992, which is important legislation, currently requires a swimming pool on the premises of a hotel or motel to be surrounded by a child-resistant barrier that is located immediately around the swimming pool. The amendment will extend that requirement to swimming pools on the premises of certain other types of tourist and visitor accommodation. Obviously this legislation is important for particular areas such as The Hills district, where there are many young families. Every year we see the tragedy not only in New South Wales but across the country when young children drown in pools.

This amendment will ensure that this important legislation is kept up-to-date and ensure the safety of young children for years to come. It will ensure that that Act remains strong legislation. The proposed amendments to the Associations Incorporation Act 2009 will require an association registered under the Act to lodge its financial reports with the director general. Currently, the Act requires this of the public officer of the association, which is impractical in certain circumstances, such as when the public officer is on leave. The advantage of dealing with all these minor but important amendments in one bill is that we do not have to amend each Act individually. That saves time and expense.

**Mr Matt Kean:** And red tape.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** As the member for Hornsby says, it cuts red tape, which the Government is focused on in this bill. The proposed amendments to the Fire Brigades Act 1989 update references to "NSW Fire Brigades" as a consequence of its change of name to "Fire and Rescue NSW" by a recent administrative changes order, omits a redundant provision that establishes NSW Fire Brigades as a department and omits a redundant provision that provides for the temporary assignment of members of staff of Fire and Rescue NSW and members of permanent fire brigades to the now abolished Police and Emergency Services NSW. I note that the member for Drummoyne is interested in the Water Management Act 2000. The proposed amendments will transfer to the Water Management Act a provision in the Water Management (Water Supply Authorities) Regulation 2004 concerning the exercise of functions by water supply authorities, and a provision of the Water Management (General) Regulation 2004 for consistency with other comparable provisions in the Act.

Further, the amendments confirm that regulations may make provision for the service of documents in a manner other than provided for by the Act. The bill amends the Water Management (General) Regulation 2004 and the Water Management (Water Supply Authorities) Regulation 2004 as a consequence of the proposed amendments referred to in paragraphs (a) and (b). The proposed amendments to the Wild Dog Destruction Act 1921 will allow members of the Wild Dog Destruction Board to be appointed for a term of up to three years, rather than for a fixed term of three years, or in the case of a casual vacancy for the balance of the predecessor's term in office, as is currently the case. That deals with schedule 1 in detail. Schedule 2 to the bill amends certain other Acts and instruments for the purpose of effecting statute law revision. A number of changes need to be made. As I said, the range of errors that need to be fixed and the changes that need to be made is unbelievable.

No doubt bodies have changed their names and the amendments are necessary to follow those changes. However, many of the changes do not relate to name changes and the like but, rather, are typographical errors,

grammatical errors, duplicated numbers and missing words. The errors cross a range of Acts, as well as, for example, the Baulkham Hills Local Environmental Plan 2005. I note that the member for Baulkham Hills is in the Chamber. I know he will be interested in that. I refer also to the Commercial Arbitration Act 2010 and the Gunning Local Environmental Plan 1997, where I note the word "identification" was misspelt. I note that spelling mistakes were raised in question time today. Members opposite cannot seem to get it right; they spelt the word "principal" wrong. When I was at school my mother taught me that the principal of a school is your pal.

**Mr Matt Kean:** I'm getting a lesson right now.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** A lot of mothers across the State would have taught the same lesson. The errors are basic and show a lack of attention to detail. Perhaps it was not an error by a Government member at the time, but I am pointing out the lack of attention to detail.

**Mr Nathan Rees:** Point of order: With due respect to the member for Castle Hill, a statute law revision bill is introduced every year. It is not peculiar to the former Government to make a couple of drafting errors, as members opposite will find out.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** That may be the case and a statute law revision bill may be introduced every year. When such a bill is introduced next year it will be interesting to note the range of errors this Government has made compared to those of the former Labor Government. If such a bill is introduced every year that will be a good thing. I am not sure if such a bill was introduced in 2010. It will be interesting to find out, but I take the point of the member for Toongabbie. What is definitely the case is that a number of the errors are contained in legislation that goes back some years. I will run through a few examples for the member for Toongabbie.

**Mr Matt Kean:** Go to the oldest one. See how far back you can go.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** There is definitely an error that dates back to 1997 and I am fairly sure there is one from 1996. We have the Baulkham Hills Local Environmental Plan 2005. The Commercial Arbitration Act 2010 is fine. We will give Labor that one because it was only last year. The former Government misspelt "identification" in the Gunning Local Environmental Plan 1997. The former Government took more than 13 years to work that out, and this Government is fixing that error for Labor. The Health Practitioner Regulation (New South Wales) Regulation 2010 and the Health Services Act 1997 had grammatical errors. I refer also to the Macquarie University By-law 2005, the Singleton Local Environmental Plan 1996 and the State Environmental Planning Policy (Exempt and Complying Development Codes) 2008.

When I was reading the list earlier I ran out of time. I had only 20 minutes to go through the bill, while the member for Mulgoa was speaking. There are many more errors; I may seek an extension of time to go through them. If a statute law revision bill is introduced next year no doubt our speeches will not necessarily be as long because there will be only perhaps one or two errors to correct; it will not be to the same extent as those contained in this bill. I have dealt with schedules 1 and 2. Schedule 3 relates to slight changes which provide for the Acts or parts of Acts set out in schedule 4 to be repealed. I am proud to say that the Government is repealing many Acts that are outdated. I refer to the inaugural speech of my good friend in the upper House, the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps. Dr Phelps said:

How many Acts of Parliament are there? If we think about it there might be 100, 200, 300, 400, 500 or 600. As at December 2010 there were 1,089 separate Acts of Parliament, 300 of which are just useless.

**Dr Andrew McDonald:** Only by his thinking.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Only by his thinking, perhaps, but it is quite clear that a number of them are useless and that is why this Government is now repealing more than 98, many of which are out of date. A significant number of these repealed Acts relate to the construction of railways that were enacted mainly in the early part of the last century. The railways concerned were constructed. However, a railway line that has not been constructed is the north-west rail line. If only, the north-west rail line had been constructed, people who live in The Hills district could have much greater enjoyment of life. We struggle every single day as a result of the former Government's decision not to implement construction of the north-west railway line despite its numerous promises. I note that the member for Toongabbie is in the Chamber. When he was Premier he cancelled the project. I will invite the member for Toongabbie to the opening of the railway line, if he is still a member of Parliament, to enjoy a great day of celebration for people in The Hills district. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

In conclusion, this important bill ensures that our legislation is kept up to date and is of the best quality. It is clear that the former Government was not focused on attention to detail; this Government is focused. I will take up the challenge of the member for Toongabbie if such a bill comes before the House next year to ascertain how many Acts need amendment and how many Acts were amended from 2011 compared to 2010 when the former Government was in office. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr MATT KEAN** (Hornsby) [5.03 p.m.]: I am pleased to speak on the Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2011. This is an important bill and, despite my ill health I shall talk about the important things being undertaken by the Government. When we were in opposition the very fine shadow Minister for Small Business said that for every new bill we introduce into this House we will repeal two pieces of legislation. This legislation will repeal 100 pieces of legislation; it is about cutting red tape and reducing bureaucracy. We were elected with a mandate to do that and the people of New South Wales expect nothing less from us. I note the significant contributions of other members and I am pleased that so many have taken a very keen interest in this important bill. My good friend the member for Castle Hill wanted to say so much about this bill that he sought an extension of time. I warn the member for Macquarie Fields that if he is not careful I will have more to say about this bill too and will seek an extension of time.

*[Interruption]*

I note the interjection from the member for Toongabbie. I am delighted that he, as a former Premier of this State, is taking such a keen interest in the Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2011. Other members, including the Premier, addressed a number of different provisions of the bill but I will address the amendment relating to the Swimming Pools Act 1992. Any death by drowning in swimming pools is a tragedy. According to the New South Wales Commission for Children and Young People the official figures show that 10 children under the age of five drowned in swimming pools in New South Wales last year alone. It is a problem when measures are not taken to prevent such deaths occurring, which is why I highlight this amendment to the Act. Those 10 deaths all occurred when the child accessed the swimming pool without the knowledge of their parent or carer.

In addition to those deaths were numerous near-drowning incidents. For every death that occurred scores more could have occurred and many more may have been prevented by adequate safety measures in place or the carers getting to the pool in time. Research indicates that for every child drowning there are between three and four hospitalisations as a result of near-drowning incidents. Of those young children hospitalised, approximately 20 per cent were left with debilitating injuries they will suffer for the rest of their lives and parents or carers will have to take care of them. In many cases those incidents were preventable if adequate safety measures had been in place, such as adequate fencing of swimming pools. Many of the injuries are brain-related and incurable. Deaths and injuries to young children are devastating for the affected families and for their wider community of relatives, friends and neighbours.

The member for Drummoyne also wants to focus on the swimming pools legislation but I have the opportunity to speak first. This Government is prepared to take decisive action to strengthen pool safety with the commonsense amendment contained in this bill, which is why I am speaking to this bill. The Act currently requires a swimming pool on the premises of a hotel or motel to be surrounded by a child-resistant barrier such as a fence or device that is located immediately around the swimming pool that will prevent children from entering. The amendments in this bill will extend that requirement to swimming pools on the premises of certain types of tourist and visitor accommodation. That is not currently in the Act; the Act is too restrictive in its application and would allow certain tourist and visitor accommodation to be excluded. The changes and amendments in the Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill will seek to address that issue.

This sensible and practical reform is in line with the other reforms already implemented by the O'Farrell Government. I know that the hotel and motel owners in my electorate of Hornsby will be delighted with these changes. They believe in child protection and improving the safety of children around swimming pools. For that reason I am happy to support this amendment and the entire bill. I note that one of the amendments is to the Electoral Funding, Expenditure and Disclosures Act. Currently, the Act provides that annual payments for administrative expenditure are to be made from an Administration Fund to political parties with parliamentary representatives based on the number of their elected members at the time an annual amount becomes payable. The amendment makes it clear that the number of elected members includes members at that time who were elected at a joint sitting of the Parliament to fill a casual vacancy in the Legislative Council.

I am sure that members of the Opposition who are here tonight would be delighted to know that we are seeking to help them out here. I am not usually in the business of helping out the Labor Party, but I think this

amendment of the Act is a very charitable amendment in that it will help out those in the Labor Party. This Government has been in office for about 74 days; it has not finished its 100-day plan, which we have been talking about. But already three members of the upper House have terminated their services to this Parliament. They had only been in that place for a number of months but have now resigned. They were John Hatzistergos, Tony Kelly, who I believe currently has other matters to deal with, and Eddie Obeid. Who could forget Eddie?

**Mr David Elliott:** I could.

**Mr MATT KEAN:** This House is better for the member for Toongabbie remaining and making a contribution.

**Mr David Elliott:** What about Eddie Obeid?

**Mr MATT KEAN:** I am sure the member for Baulkham Hills is devastated that Eddie Obeid resigned.

**Mr Nathan Rees:** Point of order: It is well established procedure in this place that an attack on another member of Parliament should be by way of substantive motion. I am just not going to worry about that.

**The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George):** I am sure the member for Hornsby will take note of the member's point and keep his remarks relevant to the bill.

**Mr MATT KEAN:** I was saying that the bill does the Labor Party a great favour by ensuring that members of Parliament that fill casual vacancies will receive electoral funding. I note that Walt Secord, Adam Searle and the recycled Steve Whan have filled those vacancies. Steve Whan, the former member for Monaro, was removed from this Parliament with a comprehensive swing against him.

**Dr Andrew McDonald:** This is very naughty.

**The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George):** Order! Does the member for Macquarie Fields rise on a point of order?

**Dr Andrew McDonald:** Yes, Mr Deputy-Speaker, I do rise on a point of order, which is that attacks on members of either Chamber are unparliamentary. The member knows that and is just wasting time. He should return to the leave of the bill.

**The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George):** Order! I am sure the member for Hornsby was about to return to points relevant to the bill.

**Mr MATT KEAN:** I return to the relevant point. It is that the Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2011 makes some very important amendments. It removes almost 100 Acts of this Parliament, cuts red tape and streamlines legislation. This is in line with the Liberals approach of smaller government, a smaller bureaucracy and less red tape. I am proud to commend the bill to the House.

**Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne) [5.13 p.m.]:** I support the Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2011 and commend the member for Hornsby for the information that his support provided on the bill. My contribution to this topic will be quite short because a number of members would like to make valuable contributions. But, in a nutshell, this is a consolidation of minor amendments in one bill. This measure effects amendments to some 16 separate Acts in one bill. The bill will effect minor and non-controversial amendments to various Acts of the New South Wales Parliament. The bill continues the statute law revision program, which was established in 1984 as a cost-effective and efficient mechanism for making such amendments. This Government has demonstrated daily, as it will in the long term, that it is a fiscally responsible Government.

The bill contains many minor amendments, but they could be seen as having drastic effects. So it is important to continually update and review the many different laws of this State. I will confine myself to one element of the bill, and that is the provision to amend the Swimming Pools Act 1992. The member for Hornsby spoke at some length on that matter. The Act currently requires a swimming pool on the premises of a hotel or motel to be surrounded by a child-resistant barrier that is located immediately around the swimming pool. That seems to be common sense, but the amendment will extend that requirement to swimming pools on the premises of certain other types of tourist and visitor accommodation. All in this Parliament should pay special attention to that provision.



It is a cornerstone of our society that we look after our children—child safety is very important. So every member of this House would agree with that amendment. Any amendments that close these small loopholes can save lives. Being a father, I recognise it is our duty as parents to do all we can to protect not only our own children but those of others in this society. This matter is a priority, and this amendment could go a long way to saving lives. If anything, the bill draws our attention to safety around pools. Child-resistant barriers must be kept in good order. I tell many in my electorate, and many others who read *Hansard*, that we should focus on things that we sometimes take for granted. One is that access to swimming pools must be kept securely closed. Local compliance with statutory laws is important. I know that we must comply with many procedures, but children should be supervised at all times, and that is the focus of that Act.

Statistics show that half of the children under the age of five years who drown do so in private swimming pools and spas. We should not take pool safety for granted. All pools should have fencing, with a secure magnetic, self-latching gate. Unfortunately, prior to the introduction of the Act in 1992, it was not compulsory for all pools to have those sorts of security devices. I encourage all parents to update their pool safety measures. Then there are small things, like never leaving the gate open at any time. Check that nothing is left leaning against the gate, because children can be inquisitive and may climb over the fence. We read and hear so many things on radio and television about accidents that could have been prevented. Pay special attention when building a swimming pool.

Members might not think so, but a half-built concrete structure could fill with water in wet weather, and if the surrounding fence has not been erected because the pool is in the course of construction, a child may fall into the water. Pay special attention to that also. The role of local councils in relation to swimming pool fencing is to enforce the Act of 1992 and advise on the safety standards required. Some exceptions can be granted by councils in certain circumstances. If you own a pool, my message is clear: put a number of procedures in place to ensure that any possible accident can be prevented. Have you ever practised what to do in the event of an injury? If you do and, God forbid, something does happen, you will have some procedure in place to tell you how to act. It could result in the saving of a life.

Do you have visible signage about resuscitation? Sometimes trees and shrubs grow and cover this signage. Do you have a regular maintenance plan? Do you have rescue equipment nearby? Is that equipment in easy reach? Simple things like that could save lives. Do you test the water quality to prevent infections and disease, particularly with young children? Also, chemicals should be kept out of the reach of children and stored under the correct conditions. This simple bill draws our attention to the very real risk of disaster if we do not close every little loophole. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN** (Cronulla) [5.19 p.m.]: The Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2011 says a number of things about the O'Farrell Government. It demonstrates this Government's careful attention to detail; it is a Government that will dot the i's and cross the t's. It demonstrates this Government's common sense. It demonstrates this Government's commitment to deregulation and it demonstrates that this is an activist government on the front foot in its first 100 days, not only dealing with the big picture items that we took to the election but also tidying up the loose ends and lack of attention to detail that have accumulated in 16 years of inaction by Labor. The bill has a number of objects. It makes minor amendments to various Act and regulations in schedule 1.

In schedule 2 it amends certain other Acts and instruments to effect what might be called pure statute law revision. In schedule 4 it repeals various pieces of legislation and other instruments, and schedule 5 has provisions of a consequential or ancillary nature. Previous speakers have dealt with a number of the amendments in schedule 1. I will not go through each of them, but I will deal with a few. There are amendments to the Adoption Act, which have already been dealt with. The Associations Incorporation Act will be amended by schedule 1.2 of the bill. At present the public officer of an association registered under the Associations Incorporation Act is required to lodge its financial reports with the director general, which is impractical. It can now be done by the association itself.

The Election Funding, Expenditure and Disclosures Act 1981 is amended by schedule 1.4. At present annual payments for administrative expenditure are made from an administration fund to political parties with parliamentary representatives based on the number of their elected members at the time an annual report becomes available. The amendment makes it clear that the number of elected members includes members at the time who were elected at a joint sitting of members of Parliament to fill a casual vacancy in the Legislative Council, which was always the intention of the legislation.

There are amendments to the Residential Tenancies Act 2010 in schedule 1.9 of the bill. Consistent with other offences in the Act there will be extended to landlords' agents certain offences that relate to the terms

of residential tenancy agreements and payment of rent by tenants that currently apply only to landlords. That is presumably due to a drafting oversight on the previous Government's watch. Secondly, the New South Wales Land and Housing Corporation and the Aboriginal Housing Office will be exempt from the requirement to issue rent receipts in accordance with the Act. That mirrors an exemption in the repealed Residential Tenancies Act 1987. Thirdly, the amendments will change a provision that prevents rent being increased under a fixed-term residential tenancy agreement unless the rent increase is specified in the agreement so that the provision applies to an agreement for a term of less than two years rather than a term of two years or less, which is currently the case.

Fourthly, where a rent increase is specified in an agreement for a fixed term of less than two years there will be a requirement to specify the total increased rent instead of the amount of the proposed increase, which is currently the case. Fifthly, the amendments will make it clear that a warrant for possession of residential premises can be issued as a result of a termination order issued for frequent failure to pay rent owing, even if the tenant has paid all the rent owing at that particular time. Sixthly, the amendments provide that an order to terminate the tenancy of a co-tenant is taken to be an order for the possession of the premises in favour of the remaining co-tenants, which enables a warrant for possession to be issued in their favour. Finally, the bill transfers to the Act a provision in the Residential Tenancies Regulation 2010 which makes it clear that a tenant under a fixed-term agreement who vacates premises before the end of the fixed term can be liable to pay rent for the balance of the fixed term.

Amendments are proposed to the Statutory and Other Offices Remuneration Act, the Swimming Pools Act, the Water Management Act and the Wild Dog Destruction Act. I assure the House that wild dog destruction has absolutely nothing to do with what happened to Labor on 26 March. It is a very simple amendment. At present members of the Wild Dog Destruction Board are appointed for a fixed term of three years but flexibility will be allowed so that the term can be up to three years. I commend the bill because it demonstrates this Government's thoroughness. In our first 100 days, as well as putting big picture legislation to the Parliament we have seen a methodical approach to careful legislation that has weeded out more than 100 otiose bills that have been left on the statute books by our predecessor, removed excessive regulation and taken a common sense approach to simplifying legislation in this State, removing unnecessary duplication and eliminating error. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS** (Menai) [5.26 p.m.]: The Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provision) Bill 2011 continues the statute law revision program that was established in 1984 as a cost-effective and efficient mechanism for making such amendments. The objects of the bill are to make minor amendments to various Acts and regulation—schedule 1; to amend certain other acts and instruments for the purpose of effecting statute law revision—schedule 2; to amend various acts to enable the repeal of legislation by schedule 4, including by transferring into them provisions of the legislation to be repealed that are of possible ongoing effect—schedule 3; to repeal certain Acts and instruments and provisions of Acts and instruments—schedule 4; and to make other provisions of a consequential or ancillary nature—schedule 5.

Schedule 1 makes minor amendments to various Acts and these are of a minor and non-controversial nature. The Minister responsible for the legislation to be amended considers it to be too inconsequential to warrant the introduction of a separate amending bill, so schedule 1 contains amendments to 13 Acts and three regulations. Members of the Menai Chamber of Commerce in my electorate were happy when they were told a Coalition Government would instigate a policy of taking away two regulations for each one introduced, making it easier to comply and focus on their small business. Small business is the backbone of the Menai electorate and I was pleased to hear of this commitment and to see it carried out.

The Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998, No. 157, is amended by this schedule. Item [1] of schedule 1.3 makes it clear that a report relating to a child or young person that is admissible in proceedings specified in section 29 (1) (d) of the Act is also admissible in any appeal proceedings arising from those proceedings. Item [2] revises a provision that states that participation in alternative dispute resolution services arranged by the director general under the Act is voluntary, to make it clear that the provision does not apply to dispute resolution conducted by the Children's Registrar of the Children's Court, or ordered by the Children's Court under the Act. The amendment also removes an obsolete reference to preliminary court conferences.

Item [3] allows regulation to be made regarding probity checks that may be conducted on a person who is a licensee or proposed licensee of a prescribed children's service under part 3 of chapter 12 of the Act. The Act already grants power to make regulations for probity checks in relation to persons involved in the control or

management of a licensee or proposed licensee. This amendment will ensure that the regulation may make provision for probity checks to be conducted in relation to natural persons who provide children's services. The above amendments refer to changes to the protection of persons who make reports or provide certain information and make further amendments to the system of alternative dispute resolution within the Act. The Swimming Pools Act 1992 currently requires a swimming pool on the premises of a hotel or motel to be surrounded by a child-resistant barrier that is located immediately around the swimming pool.

The amendments will extend that requirement to swimming pools on the premises of certain other types of tourist and visitor accommodation, ensuring that they are safe but clearing up some of the technicalities involved so that it can be complied with. Taking away confusion should help to avoid disaster. The proposed amendments to the Adoption Act will enable the Supreme Court, when making an order for the adoption of a child under 18 years of age, to accept a report prepared by the principal officer or delegate of any government agency or non-government organisation that is accredited to provide out-of-home care under the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998. Currently, only the director general or a principal officer of an accredited adoption service provider or delegate is directly empowered to prepare such reports, while others must do so under the delegation of the director general. The amendment removes this layer of delegation.

Schedule 2 amends certain Acts and instruments for the purpose of effecting statute law revision. The amendments to each Act and instrument are explained in detail in the explanatory note relating to the Act or instrument concerned set out in schedule 2. Schedule 3 contains amendments that enable or are consequential on the repeal of Acts and instruments by schedule 4. The amendments include the transfer to various Acts of the provisions of Acts and instruments repealed by section 4 of schedule 4. Section 30A of the Interpretation Act 1987 ensures that the transfer of a provision of an Act to another Act does not affect the operation or meaning of the provision. Schedule 4 repeals a number of Acts and instruments and provisions of Acts and instruments. This schedule repeals redundant Acts and instruments and redundant provisions of Acts, including the Sports Drug Testing Act 1995, which has been superseded by Commonwealth legislation and is repealed at the request of the portfolio concerned.

Schedule 5 contains general savings, transitional and other provisions. The various amendments are explained in detail in the explanatory notes set out beneath the amendments to each Act and statutory instrument concerned, or at the end of the schedule concerned. Statute law (miscellaneous provisions) bills are traditionally presented to the House at the close of each session and are a legislative mechanism used to make minor amendment to various Acts and regulations. There are many amendments here. I believe it takes a Liberal Government to clear them up and take out typographical errors so that people and businesses can comply. I support the legislation and commend it to the House.

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

### **ASSENT TO BILLS**

Assent to the following bills reported:

Appropriation (Supply and Budget Variations) Bill 2011  
Court Security Amendment Bill 2011  
Credit (Commonwealth Powers) Amendment (Maximum Annual Percentage Rate) Bill 2011  
Gene Technology (GM Crop Moratorium) Amendment (Postponement of Expiry) Bill 2011  
Evidence Amendment (Journalist Privilege) Bill 2011  
Payroll Tax Rebate Scheme (Jobs Action Plan) Bill 2011

**The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George):** Order! It being before 5.45 p.m. the House will now proceed with Notices of Motions (General Notices).

### **BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

#### **Notices of Motions**

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

### **MOTOR NEURONE DISEASE WORLD AWARENESS DAY**

#### **Matter of Public Importance**

**Dr ANDREW McDONALD** (Macquarie Fields) [5.37 p.m.]: Today is Motor Neurone Disease Global Awareness Day. This day is to generate awareness about motor neurone disease and to encourage the

community to join the fight and spread the word about the disease. Although there is yet no cure for motor neurone disease, research has shown that things can be done to help people with motor neurone disease to live better for longer. Motor neurone disease is a disease of the nerve cells or neurones that control the muscles. These muscles allow us to move around, speak, breathe and swallow—so-called skeletal muscles. In motor neurone disease, these neurones fail to work normally and, with no nerves to activate them, the muscles gradually weaken and waste away, and death ensues.

The effects of motor neurone disease, the initial symptoms, how quickly they progress and survival time after diagnosis vary significantly from person to person. The early symptoms are often mild. The patterns of weakness also vary from person to person. Initial symptoms may include stumbling due to weakness of the legs, difficulty holding objects due to weakness of the hands, and slurring of speech and swallowing difficulties due to weakness of the tongue and throat muscles. Some people recognise that their emotional responses change and emotional responses, such as laughing and crying more easily than previously, may be associated with the initial muscle weakness of motor neurone disease. Cramps and muscle twitching, or so-called fasciculation, are also common symptoms. Normal people get fasciculation, but in motor neurone disease it is much more frequent.

Many other conditions can mimic motor neurone disease at the early stage. Diagnosis may be difficult and requires expert neurological opinion as well as a series of detailed investigations by a neurologist. For some people the diagnosis can be made fairly quickly but for others the diagnosis is quite difficult and it may be necessary to review a person for some time before a diagnosis can be made. That can be very distressing for the person involved as well as for their families, who often can tell that something is wrong before a firm diagnosis is made. There is difficulty with diagnosis related to several other neurological conditions resembling motor neurone disease, especially in its early stages, and they need to be carefully excluded by a variety of tests, the most common of which are nerve conduction studies and electromyography, both of which may assist with diagnosis as well as prognosis.

Life expectancy for patients suffering motor neurone disease usually is between one and five years following diagnosis, but some patients may live longer depending on the type of motor neurone disease they have. The Motor Neurone Disease Association of New South Wales is in contact with approximately 95 per cent of people who have the disease in this State. It has 416 patients on its books and their average remaining lifespan is 27 months. Most cases of motor neurone disease occur spontaneously and are said to be sporadic. Ongoing research is being carried out throughout the world to ascertain the cause of the disease. Approximately 10 per cent of cases are familial. Currently researchers are examining the genetics of motor neurone disease. There is no evidence that motor neurone disease is infectious.

There is no simple or single manner of managing physical disabilities caused by motor neurone disease. Every family's way of coping emotionally and physically with the disease will be very different from that of others. Until recently it was thought that the memory and intellect are unaffected by motor neurone disease. However, frontotemporal cognitive change, which is a type of dementia, is thought to be present in one in five sufferers. Although bowels and bladders are not affected by the disease, nutrition is affected and constipation may be a problem. However, sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch usually are not affected. The disease occurs at similar rates in most countries throughout the world. Approximately 1,400 people in Australia have been diagnosed with motor neurone disease. Each member of Parliament will have at least one motor neurone disease sufferer in their electorate.

Slightly more men than women are diagnosed with motor neurone disease. Unfortunately, the most common age diagnosis is the category between 50 and 60 years, which means that people with motor neurone disease suffer a significant reduction in their expected lifespan. Motor neurone disease may be diagnosed in adults at any age and may take several forms. It may affect a single limb or aspect of motor function, or may be generalised with evidence of wasting and weaknesses in many muscles. Fasciculation or twitching of muscles under the skin may be visible. People may suffer weakness due to the effect on lower motor neurones or stiffness due to the effect on upper motor neurones, but later a combination of both weakness and stiffness is to be expected. There is no cure for motor neurone disease, but some interventions can assist people to live better with motor neurone disease and for longer.

Sufferers of the disease may be vulnerable to advertised cures on the internet or television that promise the world, but the reality is that the only effective medication for the disease is riluzole or Rilutek. The medication prolongs median survival by approximately two to three months, but it is impossible to predict the benefit that an individual patient may gain from riluzole. Much can be done that will have a positive effect on

quality of life for a person who has been diagnosed with motor neurone disease. Usually a coordinated approach involves a multidisciplinary team of doctors, occupational therapists, physiotherapists and dieticians. Palliative care is also very important. Non-invasive ventilation that is administered by a respiratory physician can improve a sufferer's quality of life for some time.

Motor neurone disease is a test for all governments. Many sufferers and their families will need to negotiate a maze of Federal and State government and non-government agencies. Stronger Together funding has been vitally important. The member who will follow me in this debate will refer to government involvement in managing motor neurone disease. It is vital that we know more about motor neurone disease. It is therefore vital that every member of Parliament is aware of motor neurone disease and the effect it has on their constituents.

**Ms GABRIELLE UPTON** (Vaucluse—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.44 p.m.]: My participating in this discussion of motor neurone disease will focus on the importance of noting that today, 21 June 2011, is Motor Neurone Disease Global Awareness Day. As my colleague the member for Macquarie Fields mentioned, motor neurone disease is the name given to a group of diseases in which the nerve cells that control muscles enabling us to walk around, speak, swallow and breathe fail to work normally. When nerves no longer activate muscles the muscles gradually weaken and waste. Motor neurone disease is a devastating ailment. In the United States of America it is referred to as Lou Gehrig's disease. The disease was named after an American major league baseball first baseman. The disease was first described by Jean-Martin Charcot in 1869. There is still no known cause or cure for this devastating disease and, as stated earlier, treatment options are very limited.

Motor neurone disease affects approximately 1,400 people in Australia and thousands more elsewhere. On average, every day in Australia at least one person dies from motor neurone disease and another is diagnosed. Recent data on the incidence of mortality demonstrate an increase in the number of deaths from motor neurone disease in Australia during the past decade. Our ageing population and interventions to improve life expectancy in motor neurone disease sufferers will be likely to result in a steady increase in the number of people living with motor neurone disease in Australia. The patterns of weakness and rate of progression vary from person to person. Although some people can live for a long time with motor neurone disease, the average life expectancy is two to three years from the date of diagnosis. Today we celebrate a global day of recognition of motor neurone disease. We recognise that this is a disease that affects people in every country of the globe—in our suburbs, in our streets, in our cities and in our nations.

On 19 June this year people with motor neurone disease, their loved ones, carers and supporters gathered for the aptly named third Walk to D'Feet Motor Neurone Disease on the shores of Lake Burley Griffin in Canberra. It must have been a wonderful sight on a beautiful winter's day in crisp air to see people gathering for a worthy cause. NSW Health provides generalist neurological services to meet the needs of all people with progressive neurological disorders rather than services that are focused on specific diagnostic groups. Through the NSW Health Non-Government Organisations Grant Program funding is provided to the Motor Neurone Disease Association of New South Wales. This financial year \$388,200 was allocated to the association to assist in the provision of support, information, equipment loans and research for those with the disease and their families.

Health services are provided at hospitals, community health centres, healthcare provider's private rooms, or sometimes in a patient's home. There are also several motor neurone disease specific clinics and programs of care in New South Wales. Specialised clinics provide an integrated approach to the management and clinical care of the person who is suffering from motor neurone disease. Multidisciplinary clinics give the patient access to a range of health professionals who provide a coordinated response to care. Team members are many and varied and may include neurologists, rehabilitation specialists, palliative care specialists, respiratory specialists, physiotherapists, dieticians, social workers, occupational therapists, speech pathologists and clinical nurse coordinators. Bringing the right care to motor neurone patients requires a very complex coordination effort. Motor neurone disease clinics and services in New South Wales include a facility that is located near my electorate at the Prince of Wales Hospital and others that are located at St Joseph's Hospital, the Macquarie University Hospital Clinic's Neurology Centre, and Calvary Health Care.

Until a cure or an effective treatment for motor neurone disease is discovered care and research must go hand in hand. I am passionate about medical research. While clinical and medical support for sufferers is very important, we must support research into finding long-term cures for motor neurone disease. I served as the deputy-chancellor of a university that carries out a lot of medical research and as a board member of Neuroscience Research Australia, which is a medical research institute that investigates the brain and the nervous system. I know that very important work in this neurological space is being carried out in many medical research institutes in Sydney in particular and throughout New South Wales.

Unlike the previous Government, the present Government is delivering on its 100 day plan by announcing the opening of the State's first office of medical research with a \$129 million boost to funding to support innovative research, treatments and technologies aimed at improving patient care. This money will be delivered over four years and represents a \$20 million boost to give researchers more funding and certainty. Researchers are dedicated to their life's work: their livelihood and research lifestyle depend on the vagaries of securing Federal and State government funding. New South Wales is home to some of the best researchers. These funding announcements prove how seriously the Government considers the future of medical research in this State. Medical research no longer is the poor cousin of the New South Wales Government. The Government also has appointed Mr Peter Wills, AC, to work with research institutes, universities, hospitals and industry groups to develop a 10-year health and medical research strategic plan. Work on that plan will commence shortly.

We honour a number of people in our society who are afflicted with motor neurone disease, such as Scott Gale, the Balmain rugby league legend who has passed away. This morning I met Dr Paul Brock, AM, who visited the Department of Education and Communities with Minister Piccoli. Dr Brock is vice patron of the Motor Neurone Disease Association and a sufferer of the disease. He has been a respected educator for four decades, has 120 publications to his name and has many titles, including Adjunct Professor in the Faculty of Education of Social Work, University of Sydney; an Honorary Research Fellow at the University of New England; and an Honorary Associate at the Faculty of Medicine, University of Sydney. In 2006 the Minister for Education and Training awarded Dr Brock a meritorious service award. Today we celebrate Motor Neurone Disease Global Awareness Day not only for the sufferers and their carers but also for the significant research funding commitment of the Liberal Government for further research and understanding of the causes of this devastating disease.

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK** (Bankstown) [5.51 p.m.]: I support the discussion of this matter of public importance. Today is Motor Neurone Disease Global Awareness Day. Every year since 1997 on 21 June we acknowledge this day as recognising motor neurone disease as a disease that affects people in every country. Each year a range of activities are undertaken to express hope that the current 21 June will be another turning point in the search for a cause, treatment and cure of this tragic disease. As the member for Macquarie Fields and the member for Vaucluse described, motor neurone disease refers to several related diseases affecting motor neurones that directly impact the control of muscle movement and progressively affect muscles. In the vast majority of cases the patient has no family history of the disease and the causes are not well understood. Typically, patients are diagnosed between the ages of 50 and 70 years and have a standard life expectancy of three to five years.

Sadly, patients experience gradual loss of control of their bodies: the ability to walk, speak and eventually to eat. There is no known cure and limited treatment is available. Motor neurone disease affects approximately 1,400 people in Australia and, of course, thousands more when their carers, families and friends are included. On average, each day one person will pass away from the disease as another, sadly, is diagnosed. MND Australia is the national peak body for motor neurone disease care and research. Its network comprises six State associations, representing all States and Territories, and its research arm is the MND Research Institute of Australia. MND Australia works to advance, promote and influence local and national efforts to support sufferers and their families, and to search for better treatments, a cause and a cure.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge specifically and commend the work of MND New South Wales, a not-for-profit charitable organisation that provides support to motor neurone disease sufferers and their families. The patron of MND New South Wales is the Governor, Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir, AC. I commend and acknowledge the Governor's efforts in supporting the association and her hard work on behalf of many other charitable organisations. I acknowledge the chief executive officer, Graham Opie, with whom I had the pleasure of speaking earlier when preparing my speech notes. MND New South Wales provides information, support and education about motor neurone disease for people living with the disease, their families and friends. In addition, it provides support and financial advice, planning, carer support and community care. Other services include access to regional advisers, the Info Line, support groups, education and information sessions, and information resources.

Regional advisers act as a conduit between sufferers, agencies and support services to over 400 clients across New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory. MND New South Wales also provides free-of-charge equipment and is mindful of the need to provide young people and children with support in coping with the horrific diagnosis of a parent or close relative through the Talking to Young People Support

Program. MND New South Wales has received recurrent funding from the Department of Health and in recent years additional support from the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care through the Stronger Together funding plan established by the previous Labor Government.

"Stronger Together: A new direction for disability services in NSW" established as a 10-year plan from 2006 to 2016 was designed to provide greater assistance and long-term practical solutions for people with a disability and their families, incorporating major reforms and service expansions. The first five-year phase involved a record investment of \$1.3 billion. On 3 December 2010 the New South Wales Labor Government announced a further \$2 billion investment in disability services over the second five years of Stronger Together. In addition, MND New South Wales attempts to raise up to \$1.5 million each year through third party fundraising initiatives with the support of the broader community. It held its Walk to D'Feet Motor Neurone Disease fundraising event in Canberra on 19 June, with another similar event to be held on 6 November at Olympic Park.

I commend the work of MND New South Wales and the Motor Neurone Disease Research Institute of Australia. I commend the discussion of this matter of public importance and, like all members in this Chamber, support the work of staff and association volunteers for their efforts in supporting sufferers of motor neurone disease and their families, and in raising much-needed funds towards treatment and a search for a cure.

**Dr ANDREW McDONALD** (Macquarie Fields) [5.56 p.m.], in reply: I thank all members who have contributed to the debate. For people diagnosed today with motor neurone disease the reality is that it remains a devastating diagnosis. Government has a duty of care to do what it can for such a dreadful disease. The member for Clarence mentioned that two of his friends, Worthington Sutton and Ray Armstrong, died of motor neurone disease. Motor neurone disease is a test for all governments as sufferers and their families will need to negotiate a maze of Federal, State and local government agencies as well as non-government agencies for assistance. That is why MND New South Wales is such a vital organisation. I pay tribute to Graham Opie, with whom I was able to speak on the telephone today. He was very knowledgeable, calm and reassuring. Clearly, he is used to people ringing his organisation at times of crisis. I commend to all members to be aware that if they meet a constituent with motor neurone disease the resources of MND New South Wales are vital to the care of that person.

Graeme told me that the Stronger Together money has been vital for patients with motor neurone disease. I am pleased that the Government has committed to continue that funding because attendant care and high-needs pool enhancement packages have been vital for the care of motor neurone disease sufferers. If ever a condition needed a national disability insurance scheme it is motor neurone disease. Only one in eight patients with any disability has any compensable means to get funding. That is why we need to move as quickly as possible towards establishing a national disability insurance scheme. MND Associations liaise with the clinics at Prince of Wales Hospital, St Joseph's Hospital, Auburn, and Macquarie Hospital and with other organisations such as MS New South Wales and Parkinson's NSW because sometimes equipment and access to services are comparable to those for people with similar neurological conditions. The Motor Neurone Disease Association of New South Wales provides \$1.5 million worth of equipment free of charge to people with motor neurone disease in New South Wales, and will work with EnableNSW with regard to equipment.

As previous speakers said, multidisciplinary care is vital for people who have been diagnosed with motor neurone disease. A physiotherapist can help the many people with motor neurone disease who have difficulty moving around. Some have a tendency to fall, sometimes without warning, and fatigue is often a problem. Occupational therapists and physiotherapists can provide advice about mobility and access in the home. Speech therapy is vital because speech and swallowing difficulties are often distressing to patients with motor neurone disease. That is why a full multidisciplinary team, such as those funded by the New South Wales Government, is vital to maintaining quality of life and addressing the effects of motor neurone disease. Today is an important day because motor neurone disease does not have a high public profile. The condition is devastating. Many people diagnosed with motor neurone disease are only in late middle age, and the person with the disease and the family lose many years of happiness.

Finally, I am pleased that the New South Wales Government is considering funding further research into motor neurone disease—we know so little about the condition. We do not know the cause and we do not have any effective treatment other than the drug I referred to earlier, riluzole, which, in some patients, extends survival by only a matter of months. People with this disease need access to more government services and funding for research into the future. I thank members who contributed to the debate. We must raise awareness of

motor neurone disease. I am sure every member of Parliament has at least one constituent who suffers from motor neurone disease. They need help, and we need to increase awareness of this disease. I am pleased that this disease has been discussed as a matter of public importance.

**Discussion concluded.**

**Pursuant to resolution business interrupted for the presentation of an inaugural speech.**

### **INAUGURAL SPEECHES**

**Mr GLENN BROOKES** (East Hills) [6.02 p.m.] (Inaugural Speech): I am an ordinary man from an ordinary background, and I stand here today in this grand Chamber, in this historic Chamber, as a nervous man and a man humbled by the place in which I find myself. I am a man humbled by the faith and trust that so many people have placed in me. The electorate of East Hills was created 58 years ago and I am proud to be the first Liberal member to hold the seat since its creation in 1953. I have been given a great responsibility, and I assure the people of East Hills that I will not let them down. I assure them that I will not take their votes for granted.

I have lived my whole life in East Hills. I was born there. I attended primary school and secondary school in East Hills. I have travelled all over the world, but my youth in East Hills has never been far from me. I still live there now with my lovely wife, Kharen, and my two sons, Zach and Josh. I pride myself on knowing my area, knowing the people who live there and knowing the problems they face each day. As a young boy I grew up with my mother, father, brother and sisters in a housing commission home in Matthews Avenue. We had a big yard that my dad dug up to put in a vegetable patch and a chicken coop. We were not a wealthy family. We ate the food we grew. What we did not need I would load into a wheelbarrow each afternoon after school and sell to the neighbours so I could earn a few extra bob. I learnt the value of money at a very young age. I learnt the meaning of hard work and the meaning of good money management—those lessons that Labor has never learnt.

It was tough growing up in East Hills. But as tough as those years were, I would not trade them for anything because those years taught me a lot about life—lessons that I still rely on, lessons that I still hold true to this day. I owe who I am today to those times, and I am proud of my working-class roots. I will never forget or turn my back on the electorate where I grew up. I bring to this Parliament the work ethic that I have had since I was a little boy, that little boy who sold vegetables from a wheelbarrow to earn a few extra bob. The same work ethic was handed down to me by my mother and father. Dad was a corporal in the army and he made sure that he taught me to be strong and to work hard, because life is hard.

I have passed that same work ethic on to my two sons. One has now entered the workforce as an enthusiastic apprentice, while the other has a passion for soccer and is pursuing that dream. Great days are ahead of both of them. With all of that said, I must confess that I am not a shining example of the New South Wales education system. I am sorry to say that, but school was simply not for me. I spent more time helping the greenkeeper than I spent in the classroom. I got my first job when I was 12 years old, working for a local butcher for a few hours every afternoon after school and every Saturday. And when I was 14 years old I left school altogether.

But while school was not for me, that did not mean I could not be educated. I have learnt many skills on the job, useful skills that prepared me for things to come, skills that I was able to use when, in 1983, I started my first business. All I had back then was a second-hand ute, a borrowed trailer and \$900 in my back pocket. It was not much but it was enough, and over the following years I worked hard and continued to learn new skills. I am proud to say that the business I started back then is now an extremely successful organisation that today directly employs 30 people at Revesby and operates in practically every State in Australia, providing work to numerous contractors.

But as successful as my business is, the one disadvantage of my failed schooling was the fact that I could neither read nor write. I managed to get by, but for me that simply was not good enough. I knew that if I was going to take my business to the next level, if I was going to be able to understand everything about running my company, if I was going to ensure that I could never be taken advantage of or have the wool pulled over my eyes, I would have to learn to read and write. In 1992, with the help of a retired teacher, I learnt to read and write. I may not be a shining example of the school system, but I like to think of myself as an example of what can be achieved when you put your mind to it.



I am a big believer in education, and our youth deserve the very best. But a lot of kids out there, like me, will never perform well at school. They should not be forgotten by our Government. They may not be good with books, they may not be good academically but, given the chance, they can succeed if they have access to work training and skills. Ten years after having learnt to read and write, I was in a local service station working on one of my motorcycles. I vividly remember that day. A bloke I knew from the area walked in and we struck up a conversation. We spoke about many things, about where our lives were heading, what we were doing and what we could be doing for our community.

That conversation struck a chord with me and soon after I joined the Liberal Party because I wanted to get involved, I wanted to make a difference, I wanted to stand up for those who could not stand up for themselves. That was the beginning of my membership of the Liberal Party. Together with others in the branch I wanted to get a Liberal elected onto our local council, and today I am proud to say that we now have four Liberals on Bankstown City Council. But that was not the end; we wanted to break the hold of the Australian Labor Party on the area and get a Liberal elected as the State member for East Hills. That is what we set out to do 10 years ago. People thought we were mad, but we had a vision, and we set out to make it a reality. I was asked to stand as the Liberal candidate for East Hills in 2003 and again in 2007. Twice we lost but we were not defeated. To cut a long story short, with the support of many volunteers, friends and family, on 26 March 2011 we achieved our goal and for the first time in history, the electorate of East Hills became true-blue Liberal. What a great day that was for East Hills. What a great day that was for the Liberal Party.

The East Hills electorate is a sleeping giant, a largely forgotten comer of the western suburbs that has so much to offer. Surrounded by waterways and nestled on the banks on the Georges River, we have our own airport, hospital, university, TAFE college, private schools, 21 public schools, many, many kilometres of parks, industrial estates, excellent shopping villages and loads of untapped potential. Not many people know this, but believe it or not, East Hills was once a holiday destination. There were fishing cottages along the shores of the river. East Hills was a place where people wanted to go to relax and enjoy what the area had to offer. But Labor betrayed East Hills. It was allowed to slowly die under Labor years of waste and mismanagement. But the potential is still there, and with Barry O'Farrell as not only the Premier of New South Wales but as the Minister for Western Sydney, I know that East Hills will once again revive and prosper.

I feel it a great honour and privilege to be the first Liberal member ever to sit here in the Parliament of the people of New South Wales for the people of East Hills. But I can tell you this: I will not be the last. I am going to use my time in this Parliament to speak out for the people of East Hills. I am going to push for them to have the services that for so long have been denied to them. I am going to push for them to have the job opportunities that for so long have passed them by. I would not be here tonight as the first ever Liberal member for East Hills if not for the loyalty and support of so many good people. I am talking about my family, my friends and the many volunteers who stood with me. I appreciate each and every one of them.

To my mum and dad I simply say thanks. You know what is in my heart and I do not need to say anything else. To my mother-in-law and father-in-law, Jimmy and Trinny, who in the past have travelled down from Iluka to help, but this time they could not make the journey, my thoughts are with you. Thank you. To Bob Silver, Linda Wighton, Rob Dreis, Andy Bull, Sean Maher, my brother, Stinky, and all the other guys at Sydney Signs and Australian Sign Trade, I thank you for your support. To Jim Daniel and Naji Najjar, I do not know where you two get your energy and I appreciate all your help. To Alex Felici, thank you for the hours you spent getting people for my street stalls and for polling day. To Nat Smith, you are a credit to your father, mate, and to the Liberal Party. You gave me your help and advice and I thank you. To Glen Waud, you introduced me to the Liberal Party 10 years ago and you were part of the original plan that sees me standing here today, thank you. *[Extension of time agreed to.]*

To Stephen Julian, Michael, Tadros, Wade Mackinerny, Joan Powel, Peter and Jenny Kovacs, Andrew Walther, Steven Iacono, Kerry Jeffs, Rhonda Mealey, Michel and Luna Heloui, Arturo Alibrandi and all the guys from the Bull Sharks, Henry Kha and Janine Orban, thank you. You all doorknocked with me, stood on train stations and worked on street stalls. The Liberal Party has no greater friends and I am indebted to you all for your support. I extend my thanks to Ron Delezio. Ron helped me on our street stalls and drove me around all day from one polling booth to the next. To Kylie Bull, Brett Dryden, Hughsey, Mark and Vanessa Beck, Steve and Janine, Greg and Vanessa, Barts, Ned and the boys, you were all a vital part of my success. To Big Russ, your help with the campaign bus was really important. To Wayne Brown, when I needed you, you were there. Chris, Peter, Joey, Alex and Johnny, I say thanks. To Ren, thanks for coming down from Queensland and helping my wife to keep everyone fed and watered on election day.

To Senator Concetta Fierravanti-Wells and Peter Polous, thank you for your support. To all those people who volunteered their time and worked on a booth on election day, thank you. I hope you realise my victory is also your victory. To Chris Rath and the young Liberals, thank you. To Craig Kelly, Federal member for Hughes and Professor Frank Zumbo, thank you for taking time to help my campaign. A special thanks to Rebecca Haack and her husband, Ben, who served his nation as a soldier in Iraq and gave me his time during my campaign. To Mark Neeham, Chris Stone, Richard Shields and everyone else at the Liberal Party head office, thank you. To Penny George, our campaign battle ground director, thank you for all of your help and guidance. To Alan Jones, the most popular person on Australian radio, thank you for your kind words and support. I suppose I should also thank my campaign manager and now my chief adviser, Geoffrey Grasso. Geoff worked tirelessly and kept the wheels turning. He kept us all on track, thank you.

To my parliamentary colleagues, especially Chris Hartcher, Mike Gallacher, David Clarke, Marie Ficarra, Matthew Mason-Cox and Charlie Lynn, you came out to East Hills week after week and you gave me so much of your time, thank you. To our new Minister for Transport, Gladys Berejiklian, you launched my campaign and you came out to be with me many times after that. Thank you for all your help. To Mike Baird and Greg Smith, thanks. I know that your help had a positive impact on the outcome. To Adrian Piccoli, Anthony Roberts, Andrew Stoner, Brad Hazzard, Don Page and Kevin Humphries, thank you for coming out to East Hills. I really do appreciate your efforts. A special thank you goes to Frank Oliveri for his support not only of me but of all the south-west and the Liberal Party of New South Wales. Frank, thank you. To Paul Azzo, many thanks for your help. To Bernie Finn, MLC, of the Victorian Parliament, thank you for coming to Sydney to help me on election day. That was greatly appreciated. To Liam Barry, who is here with us today, and to all the guys from Victoria, thanks for coming up to Sydney as well. To anyone I may have forgotten, thank you.

And to my beloved wife, who has stood by me all these years, thank you, Kharen, for always being there for me and allowing us to make this journey together. You mean the world to me. To my two teenage boys, I say just this: you may drive me nuts every now and again, but I am proud of you both. You are growing into two fine young men and I could not have asked for better sons. Finally, to the people of the East Hills electorate, I again thank you for entrusting me to serve you as your local member of Parliament. My time in the Parliament will be devoted to you.

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

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### WIND FARM APPLICATIONS AND PLANNING REFORM

**Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON** (Burrinjuck—Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Small Business) [6.25 p.m.]: The electorate of Burrinjuck and the surrounding area have perhaps the largest concentration of industrial wind-operated power stations, commonly known as wind farms, in New South Wales. Operational or under construction industrial wind-operated power stations in this area are located at Crookwell, Bungendore, Woodlawn, and the Cullerin Range. Those that have been approved under part 3A, but are still awaiting construction, are located at Taralga, Gullen Range and Conroys Gap, just to the west of Yass. Project applications that have been lodged under part 3A but not yet approved include those at Adjungbilly, Flyers Creek, just to the east of Mandurama, Rye Park, Bango, Rugby, Birrema, Golspie, Collector, Yass and the Crookwell III industrial wind-operated power station.

Three of the earliest industrial wind-operated power stations to receive planning approval under part 3A were at Taralga, Gullen Range and Conroys Gap, but construction has still not begun. This is probably due to concerns about the availability of Federal Government subsidies, which is the only way these power stations can be economically viable. The Conroys Gap proposal has just had its approval period extended, again, for the second time. This highlights the problem of part 3A, which calls all of these applications "State significant", yet they are dependent on a Federal subsidy that may or may not be available. Wind turbines of themselves cannot compete against electricity generated from other sources. They have significant disadvantages in that they cannot be used to generate base load electricity, and the furphy of generating electricity offsets is just that, a furphy. Electricity cannot be stored and if it is not used it is wasted.

Part 3A of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act was introduced by the previous Government to deliberately remove from local communities any say in planning approvals in their area. I am pleased that this new Government is in the process of killing off part 3A. The Government has introduced new legislation to ensure that any future applications for industrial wind-operated power stations will have to comply with local planning controls, and local communities will have a genuine opportunity to provide comment on

new proposals. The Government must deal appropriately with industrial wind-operated power station applications that were submitted under Labor's part 3A legislation, so in the short term there are a number of proposals that will be assessed under the old framework. This applies to any applications that had received Director General's Requirements prior to the Liberal-Nationals Government taking office.

All other applications will now come under the new State significant development provisions that have been introduced by the new Government. These applications will have to be permissible within the zoning they are proposed in and comply with any local environmental planning controls. The Government is also finalising specific guidelines for the assessment of wind farm applications to ensure that any new applications are dealt with consistently and appropriately. Many of the residents in my electorate are facing significant stress and in some cases distress because of the lack of information available about when these industrial wind-operated power stations will actually be constructed. Some are even facing the prospect of having to sell their land, land upon which they had built their dream homes and in which they have invested significantly more money than they would ever be able to recoup in a forced sale.

I know of one couple near Taralga, both in their 80s, who were told six years ago that they would have to sell their property to the industrial wind-operated power station developer because their house would be unliveable as a result of the proximity of the turbines. Six years later they are still in limbo; they still do not know whether they will be forced out of their home and both of them have been diagnosed with severe chronic depression as a result. But no-one can give them any certainty about the future. There are about 118 properties that will border the proposed Gullen Range industrial wind-operated power station and they are all facing significant uncertainty about what will happen in the future. The Land and Environment Court has stated that some of the properties bordering the Gullen Range industrial wind-operated power station will no longer be habitable and should be purchased by the developer.

I ask: Why should this happen? Why should a company move into an area, be given approval to make a neighbouring property uninhabitable and effectively force people off their land? This is the legacy of part 3A in the area around the Burrinjuck electorate. I note that the New South Wales Government has initiated an independent review of the Barangaroo development on Sydney's foreshores. While the New South Wales Government will not consider any retrospectivity for applications that have already been made under part 3A, an independent review of the environmental impact statements for some of the industrial wind-operated power stations approved under part 3A would provide much greater certainty for the residents. I shall shortly be bringing some of my constituents to a meeting with the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure. Now that part 3A is dead we must investigate every opportunity to repair the damage done to regional communities by the previous State Labor Government.

### TRIBUTE TO TREVOR DAVIES

**Ms CARMEL TEBBUTT** (Marrickville) [6.30 p.m.]: Today I make a private member's statement about the sad passing of a valued member of my community, Trevor Davies. Trevor was a man who lived for those around him, as a passionate advocate for his local community in the Redfern-Waterloo area and a long-time secretary of the Darlington Branch of the Labor Party, as a founder and news editor of the *South Sydney Herald*, and as an active and generous elder of his church, the South Sydney Uniting Church. Trevor was a friend to many, a true inner-city character, and those who knew him admired his commitment to social justice and his integrity in remaining true to his ideals and values. Trevor passed away following a heart attack on Tuesday 14 June 2011 at the age of 55. Trevor is a great example of how individuals can make a difference in the lives of those around them. Trevor was a community activist who genuinely put into practice his belief in the importance of compassion and justice for all people in our society.

For example, when concerns were raised locally regarding policies and plans for the Redfern-Waterloo area, Trevor made sure the community had a voice. He was one of the founding members of the REDWatch community group, which monitors plans for the local area, makes recommendations and advocates for outcomes that benefit the community. The group remains a strong, progressive presence reviewing projects taking place in Redfern-Waterloo, and its ongoing efforts are a testament to people like Trevor, who care for their community and take action to pursue outcomes that aim to benefit the community as a whole. Trevor's commitment to local debate and engagement was also demonstrated through his very successful Politics in the Pub, which ran for many years. I can remember debating Peter Debnam many years ago at one of Trevor's Politics in the Pub debates. Trevor was always committed to putting both sides of an argument and he had some very interesting speakers.

Trevor could only be described as a passionate man; he did everything with gusto and good intentions. He fought for what he believed in and was involved in many campaigns and protests over the years, whether it was to save housing in The Block at Redfern or to fight against homophobia, racism and poverty more broadly. He was devoted to these causes in the same way that he was devoted to the independence of the media, his politics and his church. Trevor was a strong advocate for greater internal democracy within the Australian Labor Party. Trevor did perhaps some of his best work in his support for and work with the local Aboriginal community in Redfern and Waterloo. He was a strong supporter of the Pemulwuy Project of the Aboriginal Housing Company and it was through Trevor that I first became aware of the fantastic work of The Settlement in Darlington, which provides support for children and young people in the Darlington area.

I will always remember Trevor for his endless energy for campaigning, his quick-talking presence for which political opponents were no match, and as someone who proudly wore his politics pinned to his sleeve. Whenever I met him in the electorate in Darlington I could be certain to find him engaged with people on the street, at a cafe, or at a street stall, always talking, always opinionated, and always looking to the next project or the next article he would write. Trevor's network of contacts and his knowledge about what was happening were legendary. Trevor's monthly column "Have You Heard: The Fast News", always had its focus on issues facing his community and there was often a bit of local or political history thrown in. In his last column he wrote of the battles in local Labor branches in years gone by to save the Erskineville housing estate.

Trevor did not write the stories or get involved with these movements just to have an argument. He did it because he believed that local people with local knowledge have a lot to offer, and that people in positions where decisions are made should always be prepared to listen and respond to what people have to say. The people of Darlington and Redfern will notice the huge gap that has been left by Trevor's passing. I hope that his memory will inspire people to get actively involved in their local community and to stand up for the things they believe in. I am very fortunate to represent an electorate with a proud tradition of activism and of communities coming together to fight for their beliefs. I hope to see that continue in Trevor's memory, and I am sure it will.

Trevor has been described as irreplaceable, a local legend, a grassroots activist, a forthright publisher, an unfailing friend of Labor, a man of strong faith and a caring friend. I remember him as an unswerving supporter and a passionate advocate for the Darlington community in my electorate. I feel privileged to have known Trevor. Our many discussions and debates on issues both local and broad were stimulating and thought provoking. While we did not always agree, Trevor always made me think carefully about my position on issues, see things from another perspective and often revisit my approach. I pass on my sincere condolences and sympathy to all those who are mourning his loss. The communities I represent and indeed New South Wales have been very fortunate to have benefited from the passion, dedication and hard work of Trevor Davies. He will be missed by many.

#### **CAMDEN SHOW 125TH ANNIVERSARY**

**Mr CHRIS PATTERSON** (Camden) [6.35 p.m.]: Today I acknowledge the wonderful efforts of both the Camden Show Society, led by its President, David Head, and a wonderful team of volunteers in delivering the 125th Camden Show. This event was an outstanding success. I also honour Hillary Scott, from The Oaks who was the first Camden Showgirl to win the Royal Easter Showgirl title in almost 50 years. The first Camden Show was held from Wednesday 17 March to Friday 19 March 1886—three years before Camden Council was formed—and is Camden's oldest organisation. In 1886 the ground was prepared with the completion of the Agricultural Horticultural and Industrial Hall to house exhibits.

Later, in 1902, milking bails and a fodder room were erected and in the same year Camden Cycle Club was permitted to build a cycle track around the showground oval. The Camden Show was officially opened in 1903 by His Excellency Sir Harry Rawson, Governor of New South Wales. On the schedule for the show that year were sheep, cattle, dairy, pigs, dogs, poultry, grain, vegetables, jams, needlework, flowers, wines, saddlery and machinery. In 1915, due to the outbreak of World War I and with many committee men off to war, including President A. J. Onslow-Thompson who was killed at Gallipoli, a determined few made sure the show went ahead as usual. It is fitting that the show is held each year at what is now named Onslow Oval.

This year we celebrated the 125th anniversary of Camden Show. Her Excellency the Governor-General, Ms Quentin Bryce, officially opened the show. Her Excellency said in her opening speech that she and her husband, Michael, enjoy agricultural shows and hospitality very much; that they are so quintessentially Australian. The show is still held today at the same location as it was in 1886—at the end of Argyle Street, Camden's main street. Originally the entire showground was bequeathed to the Camden Show Society by the Macarthur family and in 1924 the trusteeship of neighbouring Onslow Park was transferred from a private trust to Camden Council.

The show committee consists of 55 members, nine of whom I would like to single out today—the President, David Head, and executive committee members Matt Collins, Greg Wall, Tony Biffen, John Macarthur-Stanham, Hugh Southwell, Simon Hennings, Brett Hayter and Lyndy Cornwell. Lyndy, the current secretary of the Camden Show Society, has worked tirelessly for the show and is an asset to the society and the Camden community. The committee members see each annual show as a community event primarily to showcase and promote agricultural, horticultural, commercial and industrial resources in the Macarthur region through competition, exhibition and entertainment.

The society believes it provides enjoyment and entertainment to all members of the community. It is the biggest single event in Camden, attracting up to 38,000 patrons over the two days it is open. After 125 years the Camden Show is still a country show. The Camden Show is a not-for-profit organisation, run almost entirely by volunteers with the help of many organisations. The show ensures Camden's agricultural past is not forgotten whilst celebrating the strengths of today's rural history. David Head, the Camden Show Society President, should be commended for his hard work, organisation, dedication and the successful leadership he provides to the committee. Camden Show goes from strength to strength and there is no sign of it disappearing.

The entire community embraces the aim of show, which is to show the wider community the wonderful livestock and produce still grown in our area. It could not have been planned better. Hillary Scott, whom I mentioned earlier, won this year's Camden Showgirl title and then went on to win Royal Agricultural Showgirl at the Sydney Royal Easter Show. At 23 years of age, Hilary is a wonderful ambassador for young women involved in country life and has put her university studies to one side to enable her to travel to other country shows and promote what is good about these shows in modern times. Congratulations, Hilary, Camden is proud of you.

### **MENAI OUTDOOR GYM**

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS** (Menai) [6.40 p.m.]: One of the first official functions I attended as the member for Menai was at Grand Flaneur beach, at the beautiful Chipping Norton Lakes. I joined Liverpool city mayor Wendy Waller for the official opening of an innovative outdoor gym. The gym was installed by Fit-for-Parks to curb the disturbing trend of obesity and increased sedentary behaviour in the community. Fit-for-Parks has been developed to provide communities with a means to access improved health and fitness while socialising with others in safe, well-planned environments.

I want to share an alarming statistic with members: In 2007-08 the proportion of Australian adults who were overweight or obese had grown to 61 per cent, up from 56 per cent in 1995. This clearly indicates the growing need for affordable and accessible fitness options for people of all ages. Liverpool City Council is the first council to install one of these new outdoor gyms in Australia and is leading the way for other councils that are following suit. The Menai electorate stands half in the Liverpool local government area and half in Sutherland. I first saw this equipment on display at a local government conference and I know that the council I serve on, Sutherland Shire Council, is also looking to build one of these parks. The facility is an impressive asset to the community. Unlike most public playgrounds, this group of equipment is designed for adults of all ages and all levels of fitness. During the official opening, I was able to try out a few pieces of equipment, and I can confirm that it gives you a real work out.

Built on the banks of the Grand Flaneur beach, the gym has nine pieces of real fitness equipment, all with special joints with no pinch points, so that small fingers cannot accidentally get caught or hurt. There are exercise bikes, bars for chin-ups and sit-ups, a cross trainer, shoulder press and a rowing machine, all built on a soft fall surface. Each piece is designed to suit an exercise beginner, but can be adjusted to suit different fitness levels just by changing the placement of the user's hands or feet. The ability to change the level of difficulty means this facility can suit more users than just a one-size-fits-all set-up. With an ageing population, this is a fabulously easy way for people to keep fit as they get older.

What I like about this equipment is that it is free to use—anyone can use it, no matter their age, fitness level or level of income. It also helps that it has been constructed to withstand the challenges of outdoor exposure in an idyllic location overlooking the lakes—something you do not get at an ordinary gym. With rising costs of living, luxuries like gym membership are often unaffordable, but with a great local facility like this one there is no barrier to getting active—no need to pay gym fees and no need to pay for professional personal trainers because the use of each piece of equipment is clearly explained with easy to follow instructions.

The thought put into the location of this particular gym—adjacent to a children's playground—means that the park is also a handy option for parents with young children. I have been told that a local mothers group

will also be taking advantage of the new outdoor gym. Children can play while their parents get fit. The kids' dinky track runs around and connects both areas for small bikes and scooters. The equipment also gives teenagers another option when looking for something to do when other play equipment is targeted at a much younger audience. The Chipping Norton lakes is an ideal and beautiful location, out in the fresh air, right by the lake—a perfect place to exercise and a good use of this site.

I am proud that my electorate is the first to officially open one of these facilities, and I know there will be more. This topic is also of interest as I am currently three weeks into the Go Red for Women 10-week challenge. Organised by the Heart Foundation, the Go Red for Women campaign aims to keep us healthy by raising awareness of heart disease among women. In fact, heart disease is now the number one killer of Australian women. One of the ways we can reduce the onset of heart disease—a completely avoidable condition—is to get active. The challenge outlined several goals to choose from. I have chosen to be active every day and, as a local member, I know how difficult it is to juggle work and exercise commitments.

I have also chosen to help raise awareness of this challenge and have been facebooking and tweeting my progress. It helps to keep me accountable, but I also hope it encourages others. Every little bit helps, and knowing that I can visit my local park, enjoy the great outdoors and do a workout at the same time is a definite incentive. I believe that we need more facilities like this one at Chipping Norton to make exercise and healthy activity easier, more affordable and more accessible to our communities.

### UNITINGCARE BURNSIDE CENTENARY

**Dr GEOFF LEE** (Parramatta) [6.45 p.m.]: It gives me great pleasure to speak about the UnitingCare Burnside centenary event. On Friday 17 June it was my privilege to attend the UnitingCare Burnside celebration of its centenary, an event hosted by her Excellency Governor Marie Bashir at Government House. The event marks the 100th anniversary of the opening of the first Burnside Presbyterian orphan home, Blairgowrie, at North Parramatta, an integral part of the social fabric of Parramatta and the whole of New South Wales, and it has grown from there.

Parliamentary colleagues attending the celebration included the Minister for Disability Services, representing the Premier; the Treasurer and the members representing the electorates of Auburn, Baulkham Hills, Canterbury and Penrith. Federal member of Parliament Philip Ruddock attended, as did Senator Marise Payne. Attendees heard from the Reverend Harry Herbert and the UnitingCare Children, Young People and Families Acting Director, Claerwen Little. Claerwen was standing in for Jane Woodruff, who is seriously ill. Many members would know Jane through her tireless work for Burnside.

The most moving part of the evening was hearing the story of Jayden, a 17-year-old who has been in care since he was two and who uses rap music to express himself. After a brief interview, we were privileged to watch Jayden's first music video entitled "Life Goes On". It was a song he wrote about being in care. Jayden's video can be seen on Burnside's new campaign website: [www.becausechildrenmatter.org.au](http://www.becausechildrenmatter.org.au). I commend you to see for yourself his exciting and creative work. Burnside is running the Because Children Matter 10-week campaign to coincide with its centenary. The campaign will be told through the moving stories of Burnside's service users, staff and volunteers. Jayden's story was the first story of the campaign. As is the way with campaigns today, Burnside will share these stories through the website and social media.

For 100 years Burnside has provided services for the most disadvantaged children, young people and families, services that are informed by evidence, which aim to break the cycle of disadvantage. There are many remarkable stories of resilience throughout Burnside's history. Jayden's story, which we heard at Government House, is just one. Many more are told in the book *Because Children Matter*, which was officially launched by the Governor. *Because Children Matter* chronicles Burnside's history. Again, I commend members to contact Burnside to obtain a copy of the book.

From humble beginnings when Blairgowrie opened in 1911, Burnside has become one of the biggest providers of services for vulnerable children, young people and families. Burnside delivers more than 60 programs across New South Wales in disadvantaged communities in south-western and Western Sydney, the Central Coast and the mid North Coast and the far west. Its service includes early intervention and prevention, family support, intensive child protection and care for children in foster and residential care. Last year more than 8,000 people across New South Wales benefited from Burnside's services—a remarkable effort by anyone's measure. I congratulate Burnside on its centenary and the launch of its commemorative book *Because Children Matter*. I encourage all members to visit the website [www.becausechildrenmatter.org.au](http://www.becausechildrenmatter.org.au) or follow Burnside on Twitter and join its Facebook page.

### BLUE MOUNTAINS ORCHESTRA

**Mrs ROZA SAGE** (Blue Mountains) [6.50 p.m.]: Last weekend I had the pleasure of attending the latest winter concert of the Blue Mountains orchestra. This is a community group that I have been personally associated with, playing percussion and, for a brief period, French horn and also as a guest artist when singing with the local choral group, the Warrimoo Chorale. In fact over the years my whole family has been associated with the orchestra, with my children playing violin or flute, my youngest child still playing cello, and my husband having played oboe. Let me give the House an idea of why this particular community group in the Blue Mountains has become such a musical institution in my electorate.

The Blue Mountains Orchestra was started in 1970 by Kathleen Stokes—a music teacher who saw a need for young musicians who were learning to play an instrument to give meaning and worth to their endeavours. Some members may have had the experience of learning a musical instrument as a child with no opportunity to showcase what they have learnt. Too often children will have music lessons at the insistence of parents and feel they are doing it for no reason. Kathleen Stokes had the foresight to start a group for these children, and that evolved over the years to become the Blue Mountains Orchestra. Kathleen Stokes conducted the orchestra for several years, but the baton was handed over to several musical directors until 1985 when Sue Hodge, who also is a local music teacher in Valley Heights, assumed control. Sue has conducted the orchestra until this day.

The Blue Mountains Orchestra is an amateur orchestra that accepts all comers, young and old, of all levels of skill without a requirement for auditions. All they need is the love of playing and the enthusiasm to commit to weekly rehearsals. As can be seen in the instance of the Sage family, the orchestra has become a family affair for many local families. The orchestra rehearses each week in the school hall at Springwood Public School and has done so ever since I have been associated with it. There is no pressure on young players to perform, with parts written specifically for them at a level from basic beginner to advanced. Many of the advanced musicians take charge of new players to patiently guide as well as teach them the discipline needed to play with a group of people in an orchestra setting.

Young players learn the valuable skills of counting time, playing in harmony, playing the correct notes and of course enjoying the thrill of the wonderful sound they can produce. I speak of young players, but there is no ageism on the part of the orchestra. Members range in age from six to those in the seventh decade of their life. Many mature age people take to learning a musical instrument to fulfil a long-time yearning to play a musical instrument. It is such a joy to see people across a range of ages and abilities having such a good time together while playing the music they love. All the rehearsals culminate in two concerts during the year. At every concert guest artists are invited to give variety to the program. In keeping with the whole ethos of encouraging amateur performers, many guest artists are local school groups, local dance schools, local choral groups, local vocalists and local solo artists of many types.

Over the years the orchestra has had local Indigenous artists play as guests. One in particular composed a piece for the orchestra to play. In the latest concert, for example, the guest artists were the "Un-bell-ievable" Handbell Choir from Blue Mountains Grammar School. The Salvation Army Springwood Lighthouse Band played several jazz pieces, we had some very talented young vocalists, Cassandra Colless, Bronte O'Neill, Rebecca Matheson, as well as the Ex Gracia Choral group. Some of the pieces played by the orchestra were the theme from the *Pirates of the Caribbean* and George Gershwin's haunting *Rhapsody in Blue* with piano accompaniment by Christine Bartlett, who has played with the orchestra for many years—since she was 14 years old.

Over the years the orchestra has nurtured many musicians who have taken up professional careers. They include David Pereira, who has developed an international career playing cello, Pam Routley, who plays clarinet, and Cathy Routley, who plays the violin. There are others who have been inspired to continue their musical endeavours at the conservatorium—lately Tim Dickinson, playing viola and Jacob Abela, playing oboe. So we can see that the Blue Mountains Orchestra has greatly enriched the musical community of the Blue Mountains and also the community who supports it. At this year's concert I was delighted to see a large audience that clearly enjoyed the musical performances. Earlier in the life of the orchestra when I played, audiences were very sparse, but the orchestra has gone from strength to strength. The Blue Mountains community has embraced its treasure. The orchestra is going from strength to strength in ability and performance, enriching all the lives that it has touched.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 6.55 p.m. until  
Wednesday 22 June 2011 at 10.00 a.m.**

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