

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Wednesday 22 June 2011

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

The Speaker read the Prayer and acknowledgement of country.

ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT AMENDMENT (PART 3A REPEAL) BILL 2011

Message received from the Legislative Council returning the bill with amendments.

Consideration of Legislative Council's amendments set down as an order of the day for a later hour.

GOVERNOR'S SPEECH: ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Fifth Day's Debate

Debate resumed from 11 May 2011.

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne) [10.00 a.m.]: I speak in response to the Speech of Her Excellency the Governor, Professor Marie Bashir, AC, on the opening of the Fifty-fifth Parliament of New South Wales. It was a joyous day and occasion that many will remember for a long time. Her Excellency spoke of many wonderful things and in particular of the new Government. She spoke of the great spirit of optimism and a historic opportunity for change. She spoke also about responsibility, commitment, duty, goals and expectations that change brings. Her Excellency's Speech on Tuesday 3 May outlined many of the new Government's goals in its Five Point Plan and 100 Day Action Plan. Many of the plans encapsulated in the 100 Day Action Plan are well underway already.

Let us examine what has been delivered to date. Infrastructure NSW, an independent body combining public and private sector expenditure to remove the politics from infrastructure decision-making, has been established. Tick. The homebuyers' tax has been repealed. Tick. We have addressed new laws to tackle graffiti offenders with fairer measures to bring graffiti offenders to account and to bring community expectation in line with sentencing for offences.

[Interruption]

If members opposite want to agree with what I am putting, I welcome their support. The establishment of an integrated transport authority is also underway. Another tick. This is fantastic news. We have also introduced measures to further regulate lobbyists. What the Coalition Government is doing is in stark contrast with what the previous Government did—which was nothing. Her Excellency articulated beautifully reforms that bring change and issues that will affect our communities, such as cost-of-living pressures. Already action has been taken in the first 100 days of the new Government to get the State's finances under control to eliminate unnecessary waste and to enable the New South Wales economy to be fiscally managed.

Other issues mentioned by Her Excellency in her Speech included the importance of protecting our environment. A solar summit will be held shortly with industry representatives and energy experts to consider practical and realistic ways to capitalise on solar energy in this State. Another big tick for a project that is well underway. Her Excellency spoke of the importance of rebuilding the economy, generating jobs, investment and revenue, initiatives to enable taxes to be reduced, and more infrastructure needs. Another big tick for the O'Farrell-Stoner Government. When Minister Souris introduced the Destination NSW Bill 2011 he spoke of the endless possibilities for growth in tourism markets, particularly with regard to cruises. An expert body has been established to facilitate the doubling of New South Wales tourism opportunities by 2020.

Construction of the North West Rail Link and the South West Rail Link, which were mentioned in the Governor's Speech, is well underway. The Liberal-Nationals Government is doing everything in its power to deliver services to the people of New South Wales. Her Excellency spoke of economic growth in regional New

South Wales and of improving services to our citizens. Specific reference was made to our intention to establish local health district boards to give greater control to our medical professionals to implement better hospital and health care plans, to open new beds and to provide additional nurses. In the past few weeks I have visited Concord hospital, which is situated in my electorate, a number of times. The staff at that hospital do great work. Just as it is at most hospitals, the staff are stretched to the limit, but they do their best in difficult circumstances. I will do my best to support Concord hospital in every way.

Additional emphasis has been placed on mental health services with the establishment of a new Mental Health Commission. Community safety has also been talked about—and that is relevant to every member's electorate—and how legislation will be introduced to tackle obnoxious alcohol-fuelled behaviour and to strengthen police powers. Again, we have looked at legislation within the first 100 days that will address that. The trust, the high standards of conduct and the professionalism of members was also spoken about. They are essential elements in rebuilding the trust between elected representatives and the communities they serve.

Other areas spoken about were the value of local government in our democracy and understanding the value of local people having the power to make decisions that affect their communities. We also understand the significant challenges faced by councils in maintaining and upgrading their assets, particularly the footpaths, the roads, the parks and sporting facilities. We acknowledge the cost of running elections and by-elections; hence, another bill has been presented to the Parliament in the first 100 days that will give councils the opportunity to run their own elections if they believe they can save money by doing so.

The people of New South Wales increasingly expressed dissatisfaction at the former Government removing their ability to have a say in how their local areas are affected by growth and development. To address that issue the Government introduced legislation to abolish the controversial part 3A of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act and established transitional arrangements. Another big tick. I know that in my electorate that was received very well. I congratulate the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure on his work and efforts to date, particularly on the abolition of part 3A.

Under the previous Government a marina was proposed for the old site of the former Mortlake gasworks at Breakfast Point on Kendall Bay. The whole area was contaminated by toxins and at the time the Environment Protection Authority ordered that some 256,000 square metres of riverbed under Kendall Bay be remediated. That order was ignored. The Environment Protection Authority then ordered that some 9,300 square metres be remediated—a far cry from the original 256,000 square metres. That decision was made in order to remove the obligation of the developer to clean up the whole area, and I was very disappointed by that decision.

Many residents have expressed to me their concern that construction of a marina in that area would pose many health risks in both the immediate and long term, and they are worried about dredging and building works associated with the construction. Prior to the last State election I had the pleasure of addressing the Planning Assessment Commission to express my total dissatisfaction with the application. The grounds for my argument included inappropriate size, planned operation and the compromised foreshore access. The proposed marina would compromise public access to the foreshore around Kendall Bay.

A key aspect of the design of the Breakfast Point precinct was that residences and buildings would be significantly set back from the foreshore, and that would allow a substantial amount of public open space along the foreshore with council-owned pedestrian tracks and cycleways for residents and locals. The area was an old industrial site and it was zoned for units. Unfortunately, all the residents within that development have to bear the burden and cost of maintenance of an area that the whole community can now use. The residents and lobby groups worked tirelessly to highlight the very negative impact this proposal would have on the entire community and it gave me great pleasure to see the development application rejected by the Planning and Assessment Commission.

That is a complete contrast to the style of planning and decision-making we saw under the previous Labor administration. We saw the perception—forget the reality—that a development could be approved when total power was in the hands of one Minister, the Minister for Planning. The rejection of the marina development highlights the success of the abolition of part 3A and how an arms-length approach from the Minister works. Having power taken away from the Minister worked for the community, and I congratulate the residents group: John Clarke, Friends of Cabarita, and all the hardworking residents who worked tirelessly to see the application rejected.

I have a copy of a letter written by the Labor candidate for Drummoyne before the State election, the mayor and councillor, Angelo Tsirekas. Although the letterhead reads "Candidate for Drummoyne", the letter contains little evidence that he is a Labor candidate. He also supported the rejection of the proposal for a marina at Kendall Bay. In his letter he made the mistake of saying:

Tony Kelly assured me that: "No marina should proceed until ... [the clean-up has] been fully addressed and appropriate remediation undertaken."

I emphasise the words "no marina should proceed until". He has done a backflip on that comment, which we welcome, because it is the right decision. He was in favour of a marina—maybe not to that scale—but now he is not in favour of any marina. My former Labor opposition made the monumental mistake of saying to the local community of Drummoyne that he was not a local. In his letter he wrote:

I need your support on March 26 to keep a local representing the interests of our local area and to stop what is the privatisation of our bay.

I note that the mayor of Canada Bay, Councillor Angelo Tsirekas, has lived in the area for only 20 years—a far cry from the 35 years that I have lived there—and he suffered a monumental loss because the community switched off. I say to the mayor, "You can put all the spin on it that you like and spend all the money that you like—ratepayers money—promoting yourself, as in this letter, but people see what you do." He has made the same monumental mistake again. They never learn. Why do councils not just concentrate on the basics of the local infrastructure that people care about—the roads, the rates, the rubbish? I speak to many of the local residents who live along Lyons Road, Drummoyne and Burwood Road, Concord. The footpaths in that area are all broken: they have been destroyed by tree damage and they have not yet been upgraded. Councils like to involve themselves in State and Federal issues where they have very little jurisdiction.

Referring to the need for another school in the area, the front page of the *Inner West Courier* this week carried the headline, "Rhodes worthy". I totally agree with that, but the Mayor of Canada Bay failed to disclose that they had options for medium density in the Drummoyne electorate where schools already exist. But that was too difficult. Now there is development up to 25 storeys in Rhodes and the council is crying to State and Federal members that schools are bursting at the seams and they need another school. I have identified to the local council where the next school should be. But again the local council has not worried about its comprehensive local environment plan identifying where a school should be built. I am happy to do the heavy lifting for the local council and I am happy to do the heavy lifting for the Federal Government. I can be the member for every level of government if the electorate wants me to. I am here for the people of Drummoyne and I am working hard for them.

Mr RICHARD AMERY (Mount Druitt) [10.15 a.m.]: I congratulate the Governor on her Speech and on officiating at the official opening of the Fifty-fifth Parliament, on Tuesday 3 May 2011. I also congratulate her on her role as Governor. On every occasion that Her Excellency has attended my electorate she has been warmly received. She has made a substantial contribution. Her words have always been heartfelt and taken seriously; certainly, there is nothing ceremonial about them. Every community group in my electorate that has had the privilege of greeting the Governor has come away impressed. One thing I have noted about the Governor both recently and during my ministerial years is her great ability to remember the names of people she has met on visits to my electorate. With no notes in front of her, she is able to recount visits, the names of people she spoke with and the issues raised at those meetings. She is a great asset to the State. I congratulate her on officiating at the official opening.

While I congratulate the Governor, however, I cannot say that I agree with everything she said in her Speech. I realise that the Speech is presented to the Governor by the Government to outline its program for the coming term, to talk about some of the commitments the Government gave during the election campaign and, of course, to boast about what it intends to achieve. I recall feeling embarrassed for Her Excellency the Governor when she read the words "\$5.3 billion deficit". Indeed, I am sure Her Excellency hesitated before reading the word "deficit". I felt sorry for her because she had been given that spin by the Government, and it has been promoted by the Premier and the Treasurer on many occasions in this House since.

Such political misinformation should not have been included in what is an official and, we would like to think, almost non-political speech by Her Excellency the Governor. Although there were other references in the Speech with which I do not agree, that reference in particular stood out for me and I was embarrassed for the Governor that she had to deliver such spin on behalf of the Government. At the opening of previous parliaments Governors have delivered addresses prepared by the government of the day, so this is not new, but on this occasion I believe that the role of Governor was abused by the Government's asking her to read its spin.

Over the years address-in-reply debates have been an opportunity for members to raise issues relating to their electorates and the like. I was entertained, as I always am, by the new member for Drummoyne, who talked about problems with his local council and how he would resolve them because he was working with the council as the local State member. His comments in that regard seemed to contradict a passage in the Governor's Speech under the side heading "Valuing Local Government", which states:

The Government values the contribution of local government to our democracy and understands the value of local people having the power to make decisions that affect their community.

I thought that the member for Drummoyne would be keen, in his first contribution to debate on the Address-in-Reply to the Governor's Speech, to give his local council a tickle. Of course, councils need a tickle from time to time. But that part of his contribution amused me, especially having regard to the fact that during its first few weeks in office the Government has been crowing about giving more responsibility and recognition to, and taking more seriously the role of, local government. I am sure that the member will find, as many of us do, that he will have challenges and conflicts with local government.

Mr John Sidoti: Have you been in local government?

Mr RICHARD AMERY: Absolutely not. I often brag about the fact that I was untainted by local government when I came into this House.

Mr John Sidoti: I can tell—you have no experience at all.

Mr RICHARD AMERY: I have no experience in local government but I have a lot of experience with local government. In her Speech the Governor referred to "rebuilding New South Wales", a matter highlighted by the member for Drummoyne. The mayor of one of the overseas cities that has tragically been hit by a natural disaster, or people in a former Eastern Bloc country that is recovering from years of communist rule, could understand why a government leader would make a speech about "rebuilding" whatever it may, whether it be after a disaster or after an economic downturn over many years. The Governor's Speech, which was written by the Government, referred to rebuilding New South Wales. The Governor said:

Rebuilding our New South Wales economy is the first among our five-point plan priorities. By rebuilding our economy, we will generate the jobs, investment and revenues to enable taxes to be reduced, more infrastructure built, and more and better public services provided to our growing and ageing population.

I felt embarrassed for the Governor when she then said:

A report will be made to honourable members this week on the implications of the \$5.3 billion deficit.

That reference is appalling. Whoever wrote that speech for the Governor should be ashamed. I simply put this on the record: On 26 March the Coalition, which won a landslide victory, inherited an economy that had been in surplus for the entire term of the former Labor Government. In contrast, in 1995 Labor inherited an economy that had been in deficit for six out of seven years of Coalition rule. Labor had a consistent run of operating surpluses during its 16 years in office. It does not matter how one interprets these figures—I am aware that different people use different formulas to calculate these figures—however, I am concerned that anyone reading in isolation the reference in the Governor's Speech to a \$5.3 billion deficit might conclude that the budget of the State Government was \$5.3 billion in deficit. Of course, that would be a false conclusion and it has been proved to be false. It has been shot down not only by internal reviews that have been set up by the Government but also, more importantly—

[Interruption]

Members opposite will not like what I am about to say. An independent assessment of the New South Wales economy that has been conducted since the new Government was elected reaffirmed this State's triple-A rating. Given that assessment, I ask Government members the following question: How can international rating agencies that have access to the books and accounts of New South Wales reaffirm our triple-A rating if the State deficit is \$5.3 billion? How could that be? Do members know why New South Wales received a triple-A rating? The reason is that there is no quadruple-A rating. In other words, the top shelf rating that international rating agencies can give New South Wales—and that is triple-A—has been achieved time and again because of the operations of the former Government and its 16 years of good economic management of the State.

Mr Nathan Rees: Some \$10 billion of debt was repaid.

Mr RICHARD AMERY: As the former Premier says, \$10 billion of debt has been repaid. I know that members opposite do not like independent assessments, and we know the Coalition's policy on industrial relations, but I point out that an independent assessor, not based in this country, has examined the State's finances and reaffirmed our triple-A rating. I apologise to the Governor that she had to read the speech that was prepared by the Government. I am embarrassed for her that she had to read out a lie that was in that speech. Another interesting topic in Her Excellency's Speech that is worthy of comment and that has been debated time and time again was "Our Public Sector". What a lovely reference. The Governor said:

One of the most significant bills to be considered by honourable members will be legislation to create the Public Service Commission.

Another organisation; how nice. I realise that new governments create new tribunals, commissions and agencies, and amalgamate departments to form single agencies—such as Destination NSW. That is what new governments do, regardless of their politics. Those things happen. But what has this new Government done with the New South Wales public sector? Firstly, it has treated public sector employees as second-class citizens. Those things happen. What has the new Government done to the New South Wales public sector? The first thing it did was treat public servants as second-class citizens. People employed in the private sector can make a pay or work conditions claim and if their employer rejects it they can take their dispute to the Industrial Relations Commission or a tribunal to have the matter adjudicated by an independent umpire.

I will not repeat what has been said over the past couple of weeks in the debate on the Industrial Relations Amendment (Public Sector Conditions of Employment) Bill. However, I draw members' attention to the heading "Our public sector" in the Governor's Speech. What a lovely, warm and supportive term. What was the first thing the Government did to our public sector? It stripped public servants of the right to take a dispute about their pay and conditions to the Industrial Relations Commission. That has not happened in this State since before motor cars were a common sight. That was this Government's first priority. So much for that nice, warm, fuzzy feeling about our public sector.

Members have raised many other issues in this debate on the Address-in-Reply to the Governor's Speech, including the Government's approach to protecting our environment. That will be interesting, particularly given that so many members of The Nationals are on the Government benches. I find that a contradiction in terms. We will test the Government's attitude on the environment very shortly. Members also referred at length to the Government's new planning laws. I listened to the contribution made by the Minister for Planning and I have read the Governor's Speech.

Mention has also been made of part 3A and all the sinister things that resulted from its enactment. What has the Government done to remedy that? Removing the spin and rhetoric we heard in the lead-up to the election, in effect it has simply rebadged the planning laws. We will still have State significant projects and the Minister for Planning will still approve major projects and so on. The issue is not the planning laws themselves but how they are applied. Members opposite talk about local government at length. However, that sector will not be surprised to see that the State Government will, and of course should, make decisions about significant planning proposals and applications that affect the economy and the wellbeing of the State.

I have placed many questions about my electorate on notice. Having read the Governor's Speech, and keeping in mind the issues raised during the election campaign, I am pleased that the contracts signed by the Labor Government and the tenders entered into before the election will be honoured. That means the Mount Druitt rail commuter car park will be completed. The Minister for Transport has confirmed that work has commenced. However, I am concerned about a project that the former Government announced prior to the election; that is, the expansion of the Mount Druitt Hospital dental service. That project, which was in the former Government's forward estimates, involves not only the extension of the building but also an expansion of the services provided.

Public dental services are always contentious and the demand for them always outstrips our ability to provide them. Of course, dental health is vital to general health. I put a question on notice about the expansion of the service and received one of those answers that Ministers provide from time to time; that is, that all capital works projects are now under review. When we return from the winter recess we will be debating the State Budget. Many newly elected members—the class of 2011 as referred to by the Governor—will be wondering whether the Government will provide all the things they have been crowing about for the past couple of months.

The debate on the State budget will be the only opportunity members will have to address broad-ranging issues over the next few months. I will be listening keenly to hear what will be provided in my electorate. I will be particularly interested in announcements from the Minister for Health about the dental program and from the Minister for Transport about the Metrobus project already announced to provide a service from Mount Druitt through Plumpton to Castle Hill. I hope that those projects will be delivered by the new Government after the many financial reviews that have been announced. I congratulate the Governor on her role in the opening of Parliament and apologise to her for some of the things she was required to say in her speech.

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Parliamentary Secretary) [10.30 a.m.]: It is a pleasure to speak in response to Her Excellency the Governor's address at the opening of Parliament. While I do not agree with much that the member for Mount Druitt said, I do agree that the Governor is in every sense a wonderful Australian Governor. She brings quiet dignity and real decency to the role and she has genuine humanity and compassion for people. She is an absolutely wonderful person to have in that position. I thank her and

Sir Nicholas for visiting my electorate of Pittwater on the weekend to attend the Avalon Tattoo, where she performed her vice-regal duties magnificently. I am sure all members respect her and thank her for her amazing service to the people of New South Wales. I agree with the Governor that this Parliament has begun with a great spirit of optimism and with a historic opportunity for change and renewal. However, I was horrified that the member for Mount Druitt suggested that the Governor was repeating falsehoods and lies in her speech.

Mr Nathan Rees: As furnished by your lot.

Mr ROB STOKES: In fact, it was as furnished by the Lambert report, which details the condition of the State's finances. I encourage the member for Toongabbie to read it. I do not believe that it is appropriate to accuse a governor of lying and it is certainly not appropriate to do that in debate on the Address-in-Reply. On a more positive note, the people of this State voted for change and renewal on 26 March and the O'Farrell-Stoner Government is determined to deliver that through reforms, policies, programs and objectives all aimed at making New South Wales number one again and restoring confidence in Parliament, the organs of the State, the economy and the operations of government. Many members have already spoken about the Government's Five Point Action Plan outlined by in the Governor's Speech and I will not repeat those contributions.

The first point in the plan refers to the Government's commitment to rebuild the economy. The member for Mount Druitt seems to think that that refers to rebuilding buildings. He spoke about the natural disaster in New Zealand, which suggests that he misunderstands. The Government is talking about rebuilding this State's economy, which has been stagnant for many years. The point is metaphorical, which no doubt the member for Toongabbie understands. We will rebuild the economy. Of course, construction is a very important part of that rebuilding exercise, but we are talking about an economic rebuilding process not a literal rebuilding process.

The second of the points in the Five Point Action Plan relates to restoring quality services in the health, transport, education and community safety sectors. This Government will ensure that resources are redirected where they are needed to support the people providing those services. I am trying to avoid a meaningless metaphor, but I am talking about the people at the coalface or the front line. I cannot think of a better way to put it. We must ensure that the people engaged in service delivery have the resources they need to deliver the services they are called upon to deliver.

The third point relates to renovating infrastructure. About 10 years ago nobody paid much attention to that word but it has now become very important. "Infra" means "under", and we use the word "infrastructure" to refer to the things that underpin of our lives; that is, the services we depend upon to get to work and back home, to ensure that we are made well when we are sick and to protect us in times of need. The member for Mount Druitt referred to a commuter car park in his electorate. I am happy that the new Government will deliver that facility for the long-suffering residents of Mount Druitt.

That is terrific and I applaud the new Government for delivering that wonderful infrastructure project. The fourth of the Five Point Action Plan relates to restoring accountability to government by giving people a genuine say on issues that affect them. I agree with the member for Mount Druitt, who spoke about the need for separation between State and local governments. However, I do not think it was right to attack the enthusiasm of the member for Drummoyne for wanting to take on roles where there is a gap if the Federal or local government is not acting. It is terrific that a young, talented new member wants to jump in and fill those gaps to ensure that, where necessary, the buck will stop with him and he will get things done. That is a powerful illustration of the renewal on this side of politics, and it should be encouraged not attacked.

The final point of the Five Point Action Plan is very important and relates to protecting our local environments and returning planning powers to the community so that people can help to shape their neighbourhoods to reflect their aspirations and the needs of their family, local town, suburb or street. The local nature of what can be done or the tangible way in which planning powers can express local needs and aspirations is a very important part of re-empowering local communities. Some of the bigger environmental issues that our entire society and globally are facing can be very disempowering to local people. In many ways it is difficult for State governments to intervene other than in a supportive role in relation to national objectives.

But we can do some very real things in a local sense and we need to ensure that we do those things that are directly within our power, and empower people to, for example, preserve that bit of bush at the end of their street or look after their local beach or little bit of biodiversity that is preserved in a local piece of parkland, or something like that. It can be a local expression of global currents, and that is what the whole Agenda 21 idea

discussed at Rio de Janeiro was all about. Indeed, the O'Farrell Liberal-Nationals Government has hit the ground running. Already it is already well into its 100 Day Action Plan, which sets out a very clear and practical path to deliver key elements of its goals and objectives to ensure that people can see real change right from the start.

Legislation has been flowing through this place since the recommencement of Parliament, and the process is continuing. One of the key things this Government is charged with is addressing the cost of living. No community throughout this State is immune from the rising costs of living. In many ways the rising of the cost of living is due to factors beyond the control of any one State government. Nevertheless, we are charged with the important responsibility of ensuring that those increases to costs of living are kept as low as possible. While we do not have a magic wand, we do have drive, commitment and practical plans to cut waste, break through inertia and explore new opportunities to deliver genuine relief for individuals and families.

That is why a special commission of inquiry into the partial electricity privatisation undertaken in the dying days of the former Government has been announced, to see whether there is a way in which some of the waste involved in that terrible transaction can be undone and the rise in electricity prices can be moderated. That is why this Government has taken the strong decision against the Gillard Government's carbon tax. I am annoyed when we talk about carbon because we are really talking about greenhouse gases, not carbon. In any event, the way in which the carbon tax has been developed and applied will dramatically increase the cost of living for families. That tax is absolutely misconceived in the way it has been developed and that is why it is appropriate that this Government takes a strong line against that tax.

We also need to address cost of living implications of waste through, for example, the Solar Bonus Scheme, the way in which that scheme was put together, and more importantly, the way in which the former Government failed to turn off the tap when it became very clear that the scheme was blowing out and creating absolute waste. It did nothing to stop the haemorrhaging of funds once it became clear that there was enormous waste involved in the program, which is absolutely scandalous. We have been left with a real mess to clean up in relation to that issue. That is why I am particularly excited to have a role in developing a renewable energy policy for New South Wales as part of our general energy policy which is what this State desperately needs as part of our commitment to contributing to the national target of a 20 per cent renewables component to our overall energy consumption by 2020.

I note for the benefit of the House that the second Solar Summit, the Solar and Renewable Energy Summit, is to be held in Newcastle in conjunction with the University of Newcastle on 1 July. An example of the waste that the former Government inflicted upon us became very clear to me when the State Government, together with the Federal Government, announced the solar flagships program, the photovoltaic solar farm at Moree, a proposal that involves government public moneys from the Climate Change Fund of \$120 million, which will contribute to the development of a 150 megawatt solar farm. It occurred to me that the Solar Bonus Scheme in New South Wales has cost the taxpayers upwards of \$1.5 billion for a 300 megawatt scheme. That shows that if State moneys, public funds, are properly and effectively applied we can get a huge benefit but if they are misdirected and misapplied it is very easy to waste them.

Unfortunately, that is what the former Government did for 16 years and that is one of the important things the people of New South Wales have charged the incoming government with doing, that is, clean up the mess, stop the wasteful haemorrhaging of money and introduce rational, sensible and frugal policies that will actually produce real public benefits for minimal public cost. I am also very excited about the new planning system for New South Wales, whether it be in rural, regional or suburban areas throughout the State. The planning system created by the former Government left a sour taste in the mouths of people and dangerously low levels of public confidence in the way planning decisions are made.

There was a real feeling in the community that planning decisions were heavily tinged with venality and deceit. The whole system was clouded by the fog of a perception of corruption. It is absolutely the case that residents, communities and local councils should have the ability to voice their opinions on how their local areas are affected by growth and development. The message that was made clear to me by my community was that they hated the fact that it seemed that there was one rule for the ordinary punter, the ordinary person in the street, and another for powerful vested corporate interests that had made hefty donations to the Australian Labor Party at Sussex Street; the idea that there was a two-speed planning system based on political patronage, not on merit.

We absolutely believe that investors and developers need certainty, structure and clarity in order to make confident decisions to justify outlaying funds, employing staff and expanding. We also recognise that not

all property owners are the same; they all have different interests. That is why we need a planning system that applies to everybody and provides a certain, transparent process so people can make decisions about investments, knowing what the process is going to be. The problem with the part 3A process was that it created an uncertain process and yet a fairly certain outcome.

A planning system should actually do the opposite: it should provide certainty of process but an outcome which, although it perhaps could be predicted, was not certain before the process began. That is why there were so many perceptions that the former Government had created a planning system that was open to corruption. That is also why I am very excited about the abolition of part 3A, which went through the Legislative Council yesterday and was reported to the Legislative Assembly today. We have a big job to do in cleaning up New South Wales but the Governor's Speech clearly pointed to the ways in which we are going to do it. It is exciting that that process has already begun.

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) [10.45 a.m.]: It is my pleasure to support the Governor's address. I pay tribute to Professor Marie Bashir, the Governor of New South Wales, who has occupied the post for a number of years now with great distinction. She is widely respected throughout the community for her interest in and passion for New South Wales, for her support for a wide variety of causes across the regions and cities of New South Wales as well as her interest in rural people and their activities. I can speak from my experience as a Hawkesbury councillor. During our 2010 celebrations of the bicentenary of Lachlan Macquarie becoming Governor—he was Governor Marie Bashir's predecessor by many years—Governor Bashir visited the Hawkesbury celebrations on a number of occasions and made a deep impression on people through her intelligence, her vast background knowledge of Lachlan Macquarie and the Hawkesbury region and her interest in people's activities in the modern-day Hawkesbury. Her visits were much appreciated.

I will mention a little bit about Governor Lachlan Macquarie in that context. He had such a big impact on New South Wales, not only in the electorate I represent, Riverstone, which includes part of the Hawkesbury region, but right across the State. Many reminders of his big impact can be seen in geographical names across the State, because he built so many of the foundations of the State we now know. Lachlan Macquarie did not just cause to come into being some of the great public buildings, great arterial roads and discoveries throughout New South Wales; it was his decision to give people a second chance, to give former convicts an opportunity to demonstrate they could contribute to the community, which made such a big impact. Many of those physical reminders were designed by the former convict architect Francis Greenway. Many other people also benefited from that enlightened policy.

I would like to mention today Governor Macquarie's immediate predecessor as Governor of New South Wales. My electorate of Riverstone includes the suburb of Bligh Park, named after Governor William Bligh, Macquarie's immediate predecessor. I suspect, partly due to Hollywood's contribution, Governor William Bligh has had a poor rap over the years. Governor Bligh was a very popular man in the Hawkesbury area. He had done much in his years as Governor to gain the respect of local settlers. In the months leading up to Bligh's arrival the Hawkesbury River had experienced two disastrous floods, in February and March 1806. The consequences of these floods affected the whole colony because at that time very little grain was grown in any part of New South Wales other than the Hawkesbury district.

Bligh made every attempt to alleviate the distress of the Hawkesbury settlers. He toured the whole of the occupied area and inquired into the circumstances of each individual settler, a course of action that gave him first-hand acquaintance not only with the people but also with their troubles. Showing he was interested in and cared about them made him highly regarded among the settlers. He had government cattle slaughtered and given to the needy of the Hawkesbury and promised to purchase for government supplies all the surplus wheat from their next crop at 10 shillings a bushel to ensure they had a steady stream of income. Bligh employed some 20 or 30 men on his farm at the area that later became known as Pitt Town and fed them at the expense of the Crown.

As we all know, Governor Bligh's fortunes turned for the worse and he was arrested by the military in what was known as the Rum Rebellion. When he was arrested the Hawkesbury settlers supported him and wrote their account of what they considered to be the causes of the rebellion. They felt the officers had been merchants, traders and dealers and had employed convicts as their agents, which amounted to giving them a dangerous influence. After his displacement by the military Bligh delayed his departure to England by spending a lot of time at his Hawkesbury farm, knowing he would be safe surrounded by the local settlers who were his friends and allies. So it is no surprise that many years later when Hawkesbury council had the opportunity to develop a new suburb it chose the name Bligh to commemorate his contribution to the district and his close affinity with the settlers there. It is my great privilege to now reside in the suburb of Bligh Park and represent the electorate of Riverstone, which had that suburb included in the latest boundary change.

Turning to the Governor's speech, it is a great privilege to note the mandate that was given to this new Government, the O'Farrell-Stoner Government, on 26 March this year. I agree wholeheartedly with the Governor that we have been given a mandate to secure the future of the State through honest service, wise judgement and sound decision-making as fundamentals; and to go further and to rebuild, revitalise and re-energise the great institutional economic and human resources of this great State of New South Wales. We have been given a significant challenge to undertake by the people of New South Wales. I speak as one member of the team who relishes that challenge and looks forward to the opportunity to repay the trust the people placed in us.

Some of the particular challenges the Governor referred to in her speech as bearing down on us are the cost of living and, most notably, the cost of electricity, which is causing stress to many people, as she noted. We have taken a number of steps already to address this challenge and there will be many more, but I must concur with the member for Pittwater. He referred to the proposed Federal Government carbon tax, which can only exacerbate the problem facing the people of New South Wales and only make worse the hardship that the people in the State will endure if for no positive reason, for no concrete achievement, we simply increase their hardship and their cost of living. I have not been convinced by anybody's arguments so far that imposing a carbon tax on the people of Australia and particularly on the people of New South Wales will make any difference at all to the problem of climate change. If it is not going to achieve any practical benefit why should we do that to our people? I am not convinced of that.

Over the last 16 years the people of New South Wales have faced increasing concerns about the credibility and transparency of the planning system in New South Wales. I am delighted to be able to note, along with other speakers, the passage of legislation already to start to address those concerns. The repeal of part 3A of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act was a definite step forward and, contrary to claims made by some members of the Opposition, this is not simply a rebadging or renaming exercise but certainly a redefining of what constitutes genuine State significant development to the exclusion of many of the things that have been allowed under that heading in the last 16 years.

Many developments that have been allowed to bypass local council jurisdiction in recent years will no longer be able to do so. They will quite properly be considered by the elected representatives of local communities, and I consider that to be a very good thing. Other significant changes will come in the total rewriting of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act over the next 18 months or so, which will give the whole community an opportunity through widespread consultation to have a say in how the Act should operate in future.

Among the other concerns noted by the Governor was a genuine concern about the lack of infrastructure in so many different areas. It was a resounding theme of the mandate that was given by the people of New South Wales that local communities were despairing about the backlog of needed infrastructure in their areas. Many things which seemed obvious and essential to local communities had failed to be delivered over many years. Nothing could exemplify that more than the North West Rail Link, which is of great importance to the electors of Riverstone. It had been promised and unpromised, and promised and unpromised again over the years and nothing had been done to deliver it.

It is wonderful to know that the new Government already, in its first 2½ months, has made more progress on delivering the North West Rail Link than had been made in the previous 16 years. We look forward to that progress continuing so that we can say honestly to our communities that we are delivering on the commitment we made in that respect. There are right across the State many other examples of infrastructure backlog that need to be addressed, and addressed urgently. Also important to my electorate is the Windsor Bridge over the Hawkesbury River. That bridge is 131 years old, if my memory serves me correctly. It has provided 131 years of good service to the people of New South Wales and Windsor in particular. But, as any of us would know, a bridge of that age clearly is nearing the end of its useful life.

A report by the Roads and Traffic Authority some four or five years ago indicated that that is so. Since then, a commitment has been made—originally by the previous Government—to replace that bridge. Unfortunately, that commitment was not acted on, so the challenge now falls to this new Government to ensure the safety of this bridge and the continued access across the river of people from my electorate and those adjoining. It is disturbing that the Roads and Traffic Authority recently felt the need to impose a speed limit of 40 kilometres an hour for heavy vehicles crossing that bridge due to emerging further concerns about its safety. So that is an issue on which I will be pressing for quick action, so that that particular piece of infrastructure is available to serve the people of the community for another 130 years.

I come from a background in local government. I am very pleased that the O'Farrell-Stoner Government takes seriously its relationship with local government, and wishes to empower local communities wherever possible to make decisions about matters that affect them. To address this challenge, as the Governor announced in her Speech, firstly there will be a council-by-council audit of the infrastructure projects needed in each community to ensure that councils can continue to deliver the services that meet the needs of their people, and that an interest rate subsidy scheme will be set up to enable local councils to address the backlog of infrastructure in their areas. This very positive development will serve the needs of people in local areas right across New South Wales well in years to come.

Similarly, the Government has established local health districts. This has already occurred within the first 100 days of this Government. This will return a say to local communities about how their health services are delivered. This is a consistent theme of the O'Farrell-Stoner Government's philosophy to return decision-making and a real say to local communities, wherever that is possible and appropriate, in a way that allows local people to shape their future. I am pleased to say that, since this has already been undertaken in the Government's first 100 days, these local health districts are being formed already to allow people to have that say.

The Governor referred in her Speech to the Stronger Together 10-year disability service plan. This was commenced under the previous Labor Government, and I give credit to that Government for initiating it. I believe it is a positive plan. We are committed to implementing that plan over a second five-year stage. People who are experiencing difficulties in life through disability deserve the support of the rest of the community. They deserve services that are no less than anybody else enjoys, and access to life in a way that the rest of us expect. So, where I can give credit to the previous Government for doing that I will. This new Government is committed to continuing and enhancing those services for people with disabilities.

I am pleased to highlight as well the commitment that the Government made for 900 additional teachers across New South Wales to target literacy and numeracy at an early age. This important commitment will ensure that all students have the best opportunity in life given to them, because if people fall through the cracks early in their schooling years it is often very difficult for them to catch up later. By targeting literacy and numeracy in early schooling we give all kids the opportunity to achieve their potential, something which our education system has always been committed to, and I am most happy to support that.

There are many other commitments that have been made by this new Government. Clearly, I will run out of time to speak about them. But one I will highlight before I finish is the introduction of the opportunity to have debated in this place petitions that are signed by 10,000 electors of a local community. This is consistent with the O'Farrell-Stoner Government's theme of returning to local people the opportunity to have their say. I am pleased that we have created this opportunity for members of the New South Wales community who wish to highlight concerns in a way that allows us to consider them. [*Time expired.*]

Debate adjourned on motion by Ms Gabrielle Upton and set down as an order of the day for a later hour.

LIQUOR AMENDMENT (3 STRIKES) BILL 2011

Bill introduced on motion by Mr George Souris.

Agreement in Principle

Mr GEORGE SOURIS (Upper Hunter—Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Hospitality and Racing, and Minister for the Arts) [11.06 a.m.]: I move:

That this bill be now agreed to in principle.

Alcohol-related violence and antisocial behaviour are of significant concern for the community and the Liberal-Nationals Government intends to do something about the problem. That is why we are implementing a series of election commitments to tackle irresponsible alcohol service and consumption which result in neighbourhood disturbance, offensive behaviour, vandalism assaults and other violent incidents. The Government's election commitments include measures which reinforce the need for individual responsibility on the part of drinkers—such as expanded move-on powers for police which were recently passed by this Parliament. Other commitments which emphasise personal responsibility include a new intoxicated and disorderly offence and the trial of sobering up centres.

The Government is also taking action to apply tough sanctions to rogue licensees and 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 licensees and venues is a "three strikes and you're out" policy. There are more than 14,000 licensed premises in New South Wales. The vast majority of these are not problem venues and are not associated with serious breaches of the liquor laws. Regulatory and enforcement agencies provide guidance and assistance to licensed venues to help them manage and reduce their risk of alcohol-related harm through a range of initiatives. Examples of resources available to industry include a range of safety and management plans and best practice guidelines. These resources complement the work of liquor regulators who provide direct assistance to licensees as well as our targeted enforcement programs and general law enforcement.

The aim of the Government's three strikes policy is for its deterrent effect to complement these regulatory and enforcement programs, thereby leading to improved compliance with the law, safer licensed premises and reduced levels of alcohol-related harm—including alcohol-related violence and antisocial behaviour. It is therefore appropriate that the three strikes system targets licensed venues that are repeatedly associated with serious offences under the Liquor Act. The bill establishes a three strikes system under which strikes can be incurred where repeated non-compliance with these offence provisions is reported.

The prescribed offences include: permitting intoxication or violent conduct on licensed premises, selling or supplying alcohol to an intoxicated person or to a minor, allowing alcohol to be sold or supplied to a minor, permitting the sale, possession or use of illicit drugs on licensed premises and breaching key liquor licence conditions, including a condition imposed under the new three strikes system. These offences contribute to alcohol-related violence and antisocial behaviour and to other problems associated with the irresponsible service of alcohol and careless venue operations. They underline the fact that licensees and venue staff have responsibilities to take action to prevent harmful conduct, including violent conduct such as alcohol-related assaults.

The bill provides that a first strike is automatically incurred where there are three prescribed offences within a 12-month period. Alternatively the director general has discretion to decide that a first strike should be incurred after only one alleged offence because of the seriousness of that offence or because of the seriousness of any harm that may have resulted from or been associated with the commission of that offence. The bill provides that a second strike is automatically incurred where there are two additional alleged offences in the 12 months since the first strike and those offences are the same type of offences as those which led to the first strike.

The director general also has discretion to decide that a second strike should be incurred where two additional offences are not the same type having regard to the circumstances of the alleged offences. As is the case with a first strike, the director general can also decide that a second strike should be incurred after only one additional alleged offence because of the seriousness of that offence or because of the seriousness of any harm that may have resulted from or been associated with the commission of that offence. Allowing the director general to impose a first or second strike following one alleged offence is appropriate because there are circumstances where licensees or staff could have taken action to help prevent the incident which led to a serious offence occurring.

Examples of serious offences are expected to include: permitting an assault that results in severe injuries, serving large numbers of intoxicated persons during a function, providing a large amount of alcohol to a minor, allowing significant numbers of people to possess or use illicit drugs during an evening on licensed premises and breaching a number of key licence conditions at the same time. The bill provides that a third strike can be incurred after only one additional offence within 12 months of a second strike being incurred. Importantly, a third strike is always discretionary and can only be incurred where sufficient alleged offences have led to findings of guilt.

The discretionary nature of a third strike reflects the very serious consequences that follow. Firstly, the bill provides that a third strike results in cancellation of the liquor licence, except in the case of a registered club. It also results in permanent disqualification of the licensee or approved manager from holding a liquor licence or being an approved manager of licensed premises, except in specified circumstances, and it results in a 12-month prohibition on an application being granted for a liquor licence for the same premises where the applicant or a close associate of the applicant was the business owner or was a close associate of the business owner under the cancelled licence at the time of the offence. For registered clubs the bill provides that the imposition of a third strike results in permanent disqualification of the secretary from being a club secretary or an approved manager of a licensed premises.

A separate penalty regime for a third strike incurred by a registered club recognises the severe impact that cancellation of a club's liquor licence and a prohibition on a licence for a club's premises can have on club members who ultimately own the club's property. The bill also allows for non-permanent disqualifications following a third strike where the licensee, club secretary or approved manager has not been responsible for all of the incidents which led to strikes being incurred. In this circumstance the director general has discretion to decide that a lesser period of disqualification should apply. However, it will be a condition of any subsequent licence issued for the same premises that a person who is disqualified must not be employed or engaged as an agent of the licensee or manager of those premises.

Under the bill strikes can be incurred where a relevant offence is alleged to have been committed. First and second strikes will not automatically be removed if a penalty notice for an offence is not paid or there is ultimately not a finding of guilt by a court, although the director general has discretion to do so. This recognises that while an alleged offence may not ultimately be proven beyond reasonable doubt, the need for compliance action to be taken in the first place can point to more fundamental problems with the management or operation of licensed premises that should not have arisen. A key message from this legislation is that well-run licensed venues that implement effective measures to prevent violence, intoxication, underage drinking and the use of illicit drugs will minimise the risk of strikes being incurred. The Government appreciates that venues can change their ways by taking positive action to reduce harm and eliminate irresponsible alcohol service.

Therefore, in recognition of sustained improvements in venue operations the bill provides that one strike will be removed where there are no relevant alleged offences relating to a liquor licence for 12 months. To ensure due process in any circumstances where the imposition of a strike is discretionary the director general must provide a licensee or manager with at least a 21-day opportunity to make submissions. Where a third strike is proposed the director general must also provide the business owner and the owner of the premises to which the licence relates, along with any former licensee or manager who may be adversely impacted by the decision, with an opportunity to make submissions. The director general must take any submissions made into account. Any information provided by a licensee or manager can only be used by the director general to make a determination under the three strikes system. It may not be used in any prosecution of the licensee or manager for the underlying offence.

The bill also provides for escalating penalties in the form of licence conditions and restrictions that can be imposed on liquor licences that have incurred strikes. Conditions following a first strike can include a requirement for a plan of management or an incident register, a prohibition on the use of glass and breakable plastic containers and the engagement of dedicated staff to promote responsible service of alcohol. If a condition requiring a plan of management is imposed, it is expected that the plan will refer to the measures that the licensee must take to reduce the potential for a repeat of the circumstances which led to the alleged offence which preceded the imposition of the strike.

Conditions and restrictions following a second strike can be extended to include matters such as additional security measures, drink restrictions targeting high strength and rapid consumption drinks, lockouts where patrons cannot be admitted after a certain hour, a requirement to cease serving alcohol prior to venue closure, a prohibition on the conduct of types of entertainment, restrictions on who may be appointed as manager of the premises, reduced trading hours, and prohibiting the sale or supply of liquor under the licence for up to six months. The bill provides that the director general can vary or revoke conditions imposed on licensed venues which have incurred a strike. The bill also defines various matters that the director general must take into account when determining whether a strike should be incurred or a licence condition should be imposed under the three strikes legislation.

These matters include: whether the premises were captured under the violent venues scheme in schedule 4 of the Liquor Act when the alleged offences occurred; whether any of the charges that gave rise to strikes have been withdrawn or dismissed; the size and patron capacity of the licensed premises and how this may impact on the ability of the licensee or manager to prevent the occurrence of offences; the history and nature of the commission of relevant offences at the licensed premises; the history and nature of violent incidents that have occurred in connection with the licensed premises; whether other action would be preferable to imposing a condition or deciding that a strike should be incurred; and whether the licensee manager or business owner has changed over the relevant time period.

This will assist the director general in understanding the environment in which the venue is operating, particularly the challenges that may arise for larger venues in effectively managing higher numbers of patrons compared with smaller venues. It will help to establish the effectiveness of measures that have already been

taken by management to reduce alcohol-related violence inside and in the immediate vicinity of the licensed premises. The director general must also take into account any advice from the New South Wales Office of Liquor, Gaming and Racing, the New South Wales Police Force and the New South Wales Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research when making decisions relating to strikes or licence conditions. It is expected that this advice may relate to issues such as trends in local crime statistics and the results of research into effective responses to alcohol-related crime. Advice from other expert stakeholders may also be considered.

The bill provides for the director general to revisit conditions imposed on a liquor licence given that there may be circumstances where a condition requires finetuning following operational experience. A licensee could also seek to have conditions varied or revoked. Alterations to conditions can only be determined following due process—that is, notification to the licensee and consideration of any submissions made. This condition-imposing provision is a new power for the director general. It will not affect other existing powers of the director general to impose conditions on liquor licences, such as under section 54 of the Liquor Act or via a precinct liquor accord.

Finally, the bill provides for reviews by the Administrative Decisions Tribunal of any discretionary decision made by the director general under the three strikes legislation. An application for a review by the Administrative Decisions Tribunal must be made within 21 days of the director general's decision. Review applications can be made by the licensee or manager and also by the business or premises owner in the case of a third strike. A review application will not stay the director general's decision unless the Administrative Decisions Tribunal grants a stay.

This bill clearly demonstrates that the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government will implement tough measures to tackle alcohol-related violence and antisocial behaviour, irresponsible service and consumption of alcohol and poor management of licensed premises. These are issues that rightly concern many in the community and this Government is taking real action in response to those concerns. The three strikes system introduced in the bill will act as a strong deterrent to the small minority of liquor licensees and licensed venues that do the wrong thing. It is an extra and necessary layer of protection for the public. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned on motion by Ms Carmel Tebbutt and set down as an order of the day for a future day.

STATUTE LAW (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) BILL 2011

Agreement in Principle

Debate resumed from 21 June 2011.

Mr GREG SMITH (Epping—Attorney General, and Minister for Justice) [11.22 a.m.], in reply: I thank honourable members for their comments during debate on the bill. Some concerns have been raised about schedule 3.8 to the bill and I understand why they may have arisen. Unfortunately, we did not clearly label schedule 3.8 with the words, "Transferred Provisions", as we did with the other transferred provisions in the schedule. Schedule 4 to the bill 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. 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 schedule 4. Schedule 3.8 inserts a new part 6 into schedule 2 of the National Parks and Wildlife Act with the heading, "Revocations under the National Parks and Wildlife (Adjustment of Areas) Act 2001".

The provisions set out in schedule 3.8 on page 47 of the bill are provisions being transferred into the National Parks and Wildlife Act from the National Parks and Wildlife (Adjustment of Areas) Act 2001. This is being done so that the 2001 adjustment of areas Act can be repealed. The repeal of that Act is effected in schedule 4 on page 69 of the bill. Clause 15 of schedule 3.8 declares that the re-enacted provisions are transferred provisions for the purposes of section 30A of the Interpretation Act. This means that the transferred provisions are to have the same meaning after being transferred that they had before being transferred. The provisions that are being transferred by schedule 3.8 refer to revocations of certain reservations of national parks and wildlife land and vesting of that land in the Minister that occurred in 2001. The transfer of those provisions to the principal National Parks and Wildlife Act does not result in any change to the current reservations. 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.

SUMMARY OFFENCES AMENDMENT (INTOXICATED AND DISORDERLY CONDUCT) BILL 2011

Bill introduced on motion by Mr Greg Smith.

Agreement in Principle

Mr GREG SMITH (Epping—Attorney General, and Minister for Justice) [11.27 a.m.]: I move:

That this bill be now agreed to in principle.

The Government is pleased to introduce the Summary Offences Amendment (Intoxicated and Disorderly Conduct) Bill 2011. The first stage of the Government's election commitment to address alcohol-related violence and antisocial behaviour by extending police move-on powers to intoxicated individuals is now available to police as a low-cost and effective enforcement tool. This bill represents the implementation of the second stage of the Making Our Streets Safe Again policy. It provides that intoxicated individuals who engage in disorderly conduct in any public place after being given a move on direction will be committing an offence. We have said that people are entitled to enjoy a night out without fear of having their evening ruined by drunken and violent hooligans.

This bill maintains the commitments we made in the lead-up to the election earlier this year. Police in New South Wales conducted Operation Unite on the weekend of 14 and 15 May 2011. In their crackdown on alcohol-fuelled crime and antisocial behaviour, police arrested 563 people and charged them with a total of 830 offences. It is clear that more needs to be done to make the streets of New South Wales safe again. Sadly, there are individuals who are determined to drink to excess or party hard on their drug of choice and then choose not to obey reasonable directions given by police to go home before trouble starts. This policy is not about targeting the homeless, the mentally ill, the Aboriginal community or the disadvantaged in our society. It is to manage the excessive intoxicated behaviour seen in entertainment districts on weekends.

People are entitled to have fun, but not to the detriment of other people's night out. Those people are the reason that police need additional enforcement tools in the form of the new intoxicated and disorderly conduct offence. This State bears the cost of that type of behaviour every day through a burden on the health system. Every weekend emergency departments across New South Wales see the impact of intoxicated and disorderly behaviour, and the cost of dealing with the resultant injuries represents a burden to the State for which taxpayers should not have to pay.

Let me make it clear that this bill provides police with further tools to give a measured but escalating response to intoxicated and disorderly conduct. As a result of measures introduced to Parliament by this Government, the police may now issue move on directions to individuals and will be able to prosecute, should the offending behaviour continue in any public place. If a person is given a move on direction for intoxicated and disorderly conduct, they will be committing an offence if they resume or continue in that disorderly conduct while intoxicated and within six hours of the move on direction being given. The events will not be limited to the area that is subject to the move on direction but will apply to any public place in which disorderly conduct takes place.

I now turn to the details of the bill. In schedule 1 item [2] to the bill new section 9 (1), which will be inserted into the Summary Offences Act, provides that a person who is given a move on direction for intoxicated and disorderly conduct in a public place and, at any time within six hours after the move on direction is given, is intoxicated and disorderly in the same or another public place has committed an offence. The maximum penalty applicable to the new offence is six penalty units, which is equivalent to \$660. There is no definition of "disorderly" in the bill.

The intention of the Government is to impose sanctions against behaviour that contravenes community standards to the extent that it warrants the intervention of the criminal law. Disorderly behaviour can vary according to time, place and the context in which it is conducted. Behaviour that may not disturb or annoy others in one instance could amount to a criminal offence in another. For example, an intoxicated individual who is yelling loudly and persistently to the extent that it annoys others, and who does not cease his or her behaviour when asked to move on by police, could be committing an offence of intoxicated and disorderly conduct. It will be for police to determine the appropriate response according to the context in which the behaviour occurs.

New section 9 (2) provides that a move on direction is a direction given to a person by a police officer under section 198 of the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act 2002. The bill also amends section 198 of that Act to allow a move on direction to be given for intoxicated and disorderly behaviour. I will deal with that amendment shortly. The bill provides that the maximum period for which a person can be directed not to return to a public place is six hours. New section 9 (3) states that in proceedings for an offence against that section, it is necessary to prove that a person was given a move on direction within six hours before a person is found to be intoxicated and disorderly in a public place.

However, it makes it clear that it is not necessary to prove that the person contravened the move on direction by being so intoxicated and disorderly in a public place that is the subject of the move on direction at the time concerned. In other words, it will not be necessary to prove either, first, that the person was subsequently intoxicated and disorderly in the same place as the place from where the person was directed to leave or, secondly, that the initial move on direction was for a maximum of six hours. This means that police will have the tools to respond in any public place within six hours of an intoxicated and disorderly move on direction having been made. An example is police identifying an intoxicated person who is behaving in a disorderly manner at Circular Quay.

The person is given an intoxicated and disorderly move on direction. The person might comply with the direction and walk to Town Hall. However, if they are still intoxicated and disorderly or resume such behaviour in that new place within six hours, they will be liable to prosecution. Similarly, if a person is given a move on direction for a period of an hour and returns to the same spot and is again intoxicated and disorderly two hours later, that person will be guilty of an offence. Police are sick of repeatedly dealing with drunks on city streets. Giving a person one opportunity to behave should be enough. Currently, if an intoxicated person does not comply with the move on direction, they can be charged with failing to comply with the direction under section 199 of the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act 2002. A person can still be charged with failing to comply.

However, new section 9 (4) provides that a person cannot be proceeded against or convicted for both an offence under new section 9 that will be inserted into the Summary Offences Act and under section 199 of the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act 2002 in relation to the same conduct. This allows police to make decisions in the field about how to respond appropriately when confronted with that behaviour. New section 9 (5) provides a defence to prosecution for the new offence if the defendant satisfies the court that the defendant had reasonable excuse for conducting himself or herself in the manner alleged.

It may be that the person's behaviour is the result of an unanticipated side effect of legally prescribed drugs. In such circumstances a person should be able to defend themselves against the possibility of prosecution. To ensure consistency with section 198 of the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act 2002, the definition of "intoxicated" contained in that section is replicated in new section 9 (6). For the purpose of new section 9, a person is intoxicated if:

- (a) the person's speech, balance, co-ordination or behaviour is noticeably affected, and
- (b) it is reasonable in the circumstances to believe that the affected speech, balance, co-ordination or behaviour is the result of the consumption of alcohol or any drug.

Police will be able to respond by issuing a criminal infringement notice, which we have referred to as an on-the-spot fine. The notice will carry a \$200 fine that can be paid by the individual without the need to go to court. Of course, if that person believes that he or she is not guilty and wishes to contest the matter, they will always have the right to take the matter to court and defend it. On the one hand, by paying the fine as prescribed in the penalty notice, that person does not need to get further caught up in the criminal justice system. On the other hand, if the disorderly conduct is of sufficient seriousness that police believe the matter cannot adequately be dealt with by a penalty notice, the police can issue a court attendance notice.

Police will develop comprehensive standard operating procedures to guide them in whether to deal with matters by an on-the-spot fine or court attendance notice and will retain discretion to deal with situations involving intoxicated individuals as they see fit. To facilitate the operation of move on directions for the new offence, section 198 of the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act 2002 will be amended to ensure that police will be able to issue a move-on direction to intoxicated people conducting themselves in a disorderly manner. Section 198 currently covers behaviour that is likely to cause injury to any other person or persons, damage to property, or otherwise give rise to a risk to public safety.

Directions given by police officers under the section for disorderly conduct must be reasonable in the circumstances for the purpose of preventing the continuance of the disorderly behaviour. New section 201 (2D) will be inserted into in the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act 2002 to provide that if a police officer issues a move-on direction order under section 198 on the grounds that a person is intoxicated and disorderly in a public place, the police officer must provide the person who is the subject of the direction with a warning that it is an offence to be intoxicated and disorderly in that or any other public place at any time within six hours after the direction is given. This way, those who become subject to the offence, will be given clear warning that their behaviour must change or face serious sanction.

Police retain their ability to use part 16 of the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act to detain an intoxicated person behaving in a disorderly manner for their own protection and release them into the care of a responsible person if willing and available. In its current form, this power is not available if the behaviour constitutes the commission of an offence. To preserve the power of detention, section 206 (2A) will be amended to allow a police officer to detain an intoxicated person even if the behaviour constitutes an offence under new section 9 of the Summary Offences Act if the detention is not for the purpose of taking proceedings for an offence. In other words, if police detain an intoxicated individual according to their powers in part 16, they detain them for the purpose of making sure they are safe and not for the purpose of charging them with the offence.

These amendments reflect that when police are charged with keeping the streets of New South Wales safe, they will face a myriad of different circumstances. This bill gives police the maximum flexibility to allow the nature and gravity of the behaviour to guide and determine the appropriate process for dealing with intoxicated and disorderly behaviour. In addition to the safeguards built into this legislation, new section 36 (1) of the Summary Offences Act provides that as soon as practicable after the end of 12 months from the date of commencement of the new offence the Ombudsman must prepare a report on the operation of section 9 and the issue of penalty notices in relation to it. This will ensure that the powers are being used appropriately and consistently with the Government's commitment to address problem social drinking and not the homeless and disadvantaged in our society.

To facilitate the preparation of the report, section 36 (2) provides that the Commissioner of Police is to ensure that that Ombudsman is provided with information about any prosecutions brought under section 9 and the issue of penalty notices in respect of offences against section 9. Section 36 (3) provides that the Ombudsman may at any time require the Commissioner of Police or any public authority to provide any information or further information the Ombudsman requires for the purposes of preparing the report. The report must be given to the Attorney General and the Commissioner of Police, and the Attorney General must lay or cause to be laid the report before both Houses of Parliament.

This bill represents the next step towards making the streets of New South Wales safe again. Police will be able to make sure that intoxicated persons are told in no uncertain terms that their behaviour is unacceptable and that they are to move on before trouble starts. In giving those move-on directions to intoxicated individuals police are making it clear that there will be sanctions for continuing with disorderly, antisocial behaviour. This bill gives a clear signal to the people of New South Wales that this Government remains committed to ensuring that intoxicated and disorderly behaviour on our streets will not be tolerated. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned on motion by Ms Carmel Tebbutt and set down as an order of the day for a future day.

GOVERNOR'S SPEECH: ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Fifth Day's Debate

Debate resumed from an earlier hour.

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse—Parliamentary Secretary) [11.44 a.m.]: It is with a great deal of pride and pleasure that I speak on the Address-in-Reply to the Governor's Speech. Parliament was opened

officially in the first week of May by Her Excellency the Governor, Professor Marie Bashir, AC. I was inspired by her words of wisdom. Professor Bashir is the first woman to be appointed as Governor of New South Wales. She took up her office on 1 March 2001. She is of Lebanese descent and was born in Narrandera in the Riverina district of New South Wales. She commenced her education at Narrandera Public School followed by Sydney Girls High School. Professor Bashir gained her bachelor degrees in medicine and surgery in 1956 from the University of Sydney.

Professor Bashir taught at Sydney and New South Wales universities, and developed her career through working in children's services, psychiatry, the important area of mental health services, and indigenous health programs. I have particular respect and admiration for her work in the education and medical research sectors through my former role as Deputy Chancellor of the University of New South Wales and a former member of the medical research board Neuroscience Research Australia, which investigated the science of the brain and mental illness. Now, through my new role as the Parliamentary Secretary for skills in tertiary education, I bring some experience to the work of the new Government in education skills in the tertiary education sector.

Professor Bashir's widespread involvement and interests include juvenile justice, research on adolescent depression, health issues in developing countries, education for health professionals, the new research area of telemedicine and new technologies for health service delivery. Along with her main professional medical association roles, at the time of her appointment as Governor she was a member of societies as diverse as Amnesty International, the National Trust, the New South Wales Camellia Research Society and the Tandanya National Aboriginal Cultural Centre, as well as being patron of the Sydney Symphony and Opera Australia. Professor Bashir is patron of so many organisations across New South Wales and Australia. We commend her efforts in those roles.

Professor Bashir was appointed an officer of the Order of Australia in 1988 for her services to child and adolescent health, and was invested by Her Majesty the Queen with the insignia of a Commander of the Royal Victorian Order in 2006. For anyone who has not met and observed Professor Bashir in her demanding role, she is a woman of great warmth and generosity. She commands respect way beyond New South Wales and international communities. I strongly believe that all members of Parliament in this Chamber became members for the right reasons, that is, to serve the people of New South Wales and, particularly for those in this Chamber, the people of our electorates.

A high level of trust has been placed in us as elected members. It is my honour to represent the Vacluse electorate, which, if the traffic is moving smoothly, is only about 15 to 20 minutes east of this House. The Vacluse electorate is diverse in its geography with harbours, beaches, parks, and historical homes that recall the colonial history of New South Wales, including our own William Charles Wentworth, a formative colonialist in his advocacy for rights and contemporary constitution for this State. Vacluse also has contemporary and leading architectural structures designed by international and domestic architects. Of course, the people of Vacluse are diverse. More than 30 per cent of the people in the electorate were born overseas, a large proportion relative to other New South Wales electorates.

Those people came to Australia seeking a better future and a diverse community in which to live. They have great expectations of a rewarding life for themselves and their families. Vacluse also has the largest Jewish community in New South Wales. It is a diverse group of people with a diverse history and reasons for choosing to live in the Vacluse electorate. In a recent private member's statement I made comment on the important work of the peak secular body of that community, the New South Wales Jewish Board of Deputies, and the Chabad community through the Yeshiva College Bondi, to the broader Jewish community in New South Wales.

I will work hard every day to honour the high level of trust my electorate placed in me at the election. We received a generous swing of about 15 per cent, and I will continue to honour the electorate's trust as long as I serve in this place. In responding to the Governor's Speech, I will address some of the important areas she spoke about. Although many other areas were mentioned, there are four in particular I am passionate about: the environment, planning, the economy and education. The Government has a busy and packed agenda to address them. In her speech the Governor mentioned the importance of the environment to the quality of air, food, water and the natural environment. No doubt we share her views in that regard. Her Excellency referred to the importance of the link between protecting the environment and the strength of our economy—a link that is often forgotten.

As I mentioned earlier, the diversity of the geography in the electorate of Vacluse is a key issue for my community, from the preservation and protection of the national park at South Head and the Sydney

Harbour Foreshore, which traverses most of the electorate, to the many large parks across the Vacluse electorate. Cooper Park, Nielson Park, Lyne Park and Christensen Park are beautiful areas of Sydney that would make other members jealous. All these areas are well used by the locals for recreation and children's sporting activities. They need proper care and attention—care that only a government that is tuned to the needs of our people, the environment and the economic impact of those things can deliver.

In my inaugural speech I mentioned the iconic tourist area of Bondi Beach as an area of underinvestment—indeed, sheer neglect—by the Labor Government over the past 16 years. Vacluse and the Federal electorate of Wentworth being represented by Liberal members may have something to do with the lack of investment, but my Federal counterpart, Malcolm Turnbull, and I are determined to make Bondi Beach the iconic destination that it should be not only for New South Wales and our nation but, indeed, internationally. Using our enterprise as Liberals, we can work to upgrade those facilities and ensure that we get the balance right for local residents and the significant number of visitors—more than two million visitors a year, both domestic and international—to Bondi Beach to make this a special part of New South Wales, Australia and, indeed, the international tourist landscape.

In my inaugural speech I also noted the incredible marine environment that exists at the northern end of Bondi Beach. The northern end, called Ben Buckler, is a beautiful natural aquatic environment. As I said, it is only 15 or 20 minutes drive on a good day from where I stand here. It could become an important area for children and students to learn more about the unique natural environment in which we live in Sydney. Some time ago I visited the Marine Discovery Centre, which does the important work of reaching out to schools and students, and deserves to be well supported for educating our local community, the Sydney community and children in particular about the unique aquatic environment in the area. I am committed to protecting that natural aquatic environment and that is one thing I will address during my term in Parliament.

Secondly, Her Excellency the Governor, Marie Bashir, mentioned planning as a focus of the new Government. The people of New South Wales have increasingly expressed dissatisfaction with the Government removing, as they see it, their ability to have a say in how their local areas are affected by growth and development. I applaud the Government for announcing a review of our planning laws and that a new approach will be taken for part 3A in the planning legislation. This particularly affects areas in Vacluse, which has a number of projects in review; now there is greater certainty about the planning laws and the part 3A process for them. Certainty and transparency are important values that will be reflected in the legislative program of our new Government.

People and business tend to favour projects in other areas of Australia, outside New South Wales and potentially overseas when they see that either planning laws are draconian or the process is not transparent and accountable. The need for secret deals to be done with the Government to get a project over the line finished when the Liberal-Nationals Government was elected on 26 March. The previous planning Minister was seemingly able to ride roughshod over the views of local people and their communities, but that approach was soundly rejected by the people on 26 March. Local residents should be able to input their views about developments, and they must be assured that their views will be considered seriously. It is about returning to local communities the power to decide what their suburbs should look like. And this new Government is doing just that.

Her Excellency the Governor, Marie Bashir, also mentioned the economy in her speech to Parliament. By rebuilding our economy, we will generate the jobs, investment and revenue to enable taxes to be reduced, more infrastructure to be built and more and better public services to be provided to our growing and, indeed, ageing population in New South Wales—services in the education sector, the health sector and the transport sector, and new infrastructure that we badly need. The O'Farrell-Stoner Government is committed to rebuilding the New South Wales economy, particularly in terms of job generation. In that regard, I note that our Jobs Action Plan, which was approved, will create up to 10,000 new jobs in New South Wales. New jobs created as of 1 July this year will get a payroll tax rebate of \$4,000.

Through my previous roles outside the Parliament in business and in policy here and overseas, I have often seen how bad the economy was under the former Government. Business needs to be freed up from red tape and to do what it does best: take risks and drive economic growth through investment and job creation. Our laws have led companies to shift their investment in jobs outside New South Wales, and that shows in our near-to-bottom ranking for economic performance amongst all the States and Territories in Australia. That is shameful because New South Wales, more than any other State, is blessed with abundant financial, human and intellectual capital. Our Government is undertaking a considered program to simplify our laws and processes.

Given my former role as legal counsel at the Institute of Company Directors, it was gratifying for me to see the reform of our director liability laws. A director of a community centre, small business or school will no longer be automatically liable for what has happened in an organisation if they have done nothing wrong. That is just common sense. We must work hard as a Government to restore business confidence in dealing with government. Businesses have been burnt through their dealings with the former Government not honouring its obligations. In my view business is crying out for accountability, transparency and openness from government, and we will deliver that.

Finally, the Governor mentioned education. Both the Governor and I are passionate about education. My focus on tertiary education and skills, and in particular my recent appointment as Parliamentary Secretary to those sectors, has allowed me to focus, in a relatively short time, on the opportunity that lies before us in Government. Knowledge empowers us, minimises our differences and maximises our prospects of understanding one another, and is not diminished by age or by use. Our tertiary and vocational education sectors need to be better supported. A key part of the equality of opportunity I firmly believe in is making them both accessible and flexible to both mature-age students and young students across New South Wales.

We must also encourage those two sectors to work closely together. I have begun that work with the Minister for Education to ensure that we deliver a less fragmented TAFE and higher education sector. Not only do education and training help each of us to reach our potential; indeed, it enables us to grow the New South Wales economy and build our export markets. I also believe that research must be better supported. After all, imagination based on knowledge can lead to the discovery of a better future. It is with a great deal of pride and pleasure that I have spoken in the address-in-reply to the Governor's Speech. Her speech reminds all members of the important work the new Government has to do to honour the trust of the New South Wales public that was firmly placed in our hands on 26 March. I commend my address to the House.

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

GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING 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) [12.01 p.m.]:
I move:

That this bill be now agreed to in principle.

The Government is pleased to introduce the Government Advertising Bill 2011 to restore integrity to taxpayer-funded government advertising. Governments in New South Wales have long used advertising campaigns to deliver important messages to the community. Such advertising campaigns should always be designed to benefit the community—for instance, to encourage people to be healthier, to be safer on our roads, to protect our environment or to take part in civic activities. The people of New South Wales should be able to expect that each dollar spent on a campaign is spent for their benefit, and not for the benefit of politicians or political parties. There have been examples in the past of political advertising designed to make people feel good about the government of the day, sometimes featuring Ministers spruiking the achievements of their administration.

I have raised this issue a number of times in this place and sought to improve standards through legislation, including the Government Publicity Control Bill 2007. However, the former Labor Government of the day opposed that legislation—the former Labor Government that was elected to office in 1995 with a commitment to control taxpayer-funded politically motivated government advertising, but once elected for 16 years refused to take any action to stop the sorts of rorts we saw in the lead-up to the last election campaign. The tendency to politicise government advertising has coincided with a rise in the amount of public money spent on it. The Auditor-General estimates that in the decade from 1999 to 2009 total annual expenditure on government advertising ranged from approximately \$80 million to approximately \$120 million. In round figures, this puts the bill for government advertising at \$1 billion per decade. There is no prize for guessing in which year the advertising would always spike in terms of expenditure.

This Government will ensure that advertising spending is managed responsibly to ensure that it is for a proper public purpose—and this bill is a key way of achieving that. This bill delivers the Government's

commitment, contained in the 100 Day Action Plan, to introduce legislation to eliminate taxpayer-funded political advertising. It stops Ministers and government agencies spending funds on advertising unless the campaign complies with the new laws. The bill restores the integrity of advertising by the New South Wales Government by: prohibiting party-political material in government advertising; prohibiting advertising campaigns designed to benefit a political party; protecting the independence of heads of government agencies authorising advertising campaigns, ensuring they are free from interference by a Minister; providing a role for the Auditor-General to scrutinise government advertising campaigns; and making governing political parties liable to pay back the costs of advertising campaigns that breach these laws.

I now turn to the features of the bill. A wide range of government agencies need to comply with the provisions of this bill. They are set out in part 1, and include public service departments, statutory bodies representing the Crown, the New South Wales Police Force, the teaching services and the New South Wales Health services. Others bodies may be prescribed by regulation. State-owned corporations, however, are not engaged in the types of businesses and activities that lend themselves to politicised advertising—and so those corporations are not subject to arrangements in the bill. The Government will nevertheless continue to monitor the advertising practices of State-owned corporations with a view to regulating them in future if there is a need.

A key concept in the bill is the government advertising campaign, which is set out in part 1. It provides that a government advertising campaign is the public dissemination of information about matters of government or public importance, and the information is distributed under a commercial advertising agreement and paid for by or on behalf of a government agency. In practice, these are the types of advertisements that are seen and heard every day on commercial radio or television, on commercial news or entertainment websites and in newspapers. A government agency purchases time or space on a commercial advertising platform alongside other advertisers. Part 2 of the bill provides that the Premier, as Minister responsible, may augment and detail the practices for government advertising through guidelines.

The foundations of the guidelines to operate under the bill are in the existing New South Wales Government Advertising Guidelines published as Premier's Memorandum 2010-08. Those guidelines have been revised a number of times in recent years in response to shortcomings identified by the Auditor-General. While those revisions have improved the integrity standards in principle, they have not been supported by compliance machinery. This bill rectifies this shortcoming by providing the incentives for compliance. Governing political parties will need to be on guard to ensure that the provisions of the bill are not breached, at the risk of having to pay back the cost of an advertising campaign that is prohibited under the new laws. Clause 6 of the bill sets out those prohibitions concerning advertising campaigns. The first prohibition is that a government advertising campaign must not be designed to directly or indirectly influence support for a political party.

Because the design of any advertising campaign involves subjective opinions, the bill provides for the circumstances in which a campaign is taken to comply with these provisions may be set out in the regulations. The second prohibition for a government advertising campaign is that it must not contain the name or give prominence to the voice or image of a Minister, a member of Parliament or a nominated candidate for election to the Parliament. Third, the name of any political party, its logo or slogan may not be in a government advertising campaign. There are times, of course, when such material must be communicated to the public of New South Wales by agencies involved in the conduct of elections, principally the Electoral Commission and the Electoral Funding Authority. Government advertising campaigns containing service announcements required for the purpose of a State election are not subject to the prohibitions in this clause, for obvious reasons.

The formal, apolitical process for developing each and every government advertising campaign will be established under this bill. The heads of government agencies will be responsible for independently managing and vouching for the integrity of the campaign. Importantly, they will not be subject to Ministerial control concerning any government advertising campaign. Clause 7 requires that the head of a government agency must ensure that a cost-benefit analysis is carried out for a proposed government advertising campaign likely to exceed \$1 million, and a peer review is required if any proposed campaign is likely to exceed \$50,000. The agency head must certify these steps have occurred prior to the government advertising campaign going to air, into print, or going-live on the internet. In exceptional circumstances, such as a civil emergency or sudden health epidemic, the peer review or cost-benefit analysis may be undertaken and certified after the commencement of the campaign.

The Government recently took action to improve the integrity of parliamentary processes by introducing legislation that effectively means any future government will only be able to prorogue Parliament before a general State election from Australia Day. For consistency, clause 10 provides that most types of

government advertising campaigns must not be carried out after the same date, that is, Australia Day before a general election. A limited number of non-contentious categories of advertisements are allowed, such as public health or safety matters, job advertisement and government tenders. As a further measure of independence of the machinery put in place by this bill, the Auditor-General will play a crucial role in monitoring government advertising campaigns and sounding the alert when the provisions in this bill are breached. The Auditor-General has been consulted in the design of these provisions.

Clause 14 specifically provides that the Auditor-General will carry out an annual performance audit of the activities of one or more government agencies in relation to their advertising campaigns. The Auditor-General will be required to determine whether an agency has carried out the campaign economically, efficiently and in compliance with the provisions in the bill and the advertising guidelines. When providing a performance audit report the Auditor-General may determine that the content or other elements of a government advertising campaign constitute a breach of the prohibited conduct provisions, that is, designing a campaign to favour a political party, including politicians in a campaign, or including party political slogans or references. An adverse finding by the Auditor-General will include the cost of the advertising campaign.

Now to the enforcement provisions of the bill, provisions that at last give teeth to the ethical regulation of government advertising in New South Wales. If a government advertising campaign breaches the requirements of clause 6, the prohibitions on political advertising, the cost of the campaign is payable by the governing political party from the time the campaign commenced. The cost of the campaign may be recovered as a debt due to the Crown. The evidence supporting the Crown's claim may include a report or finding of the Auditor-General. Clause 13 provides that a governing party may apply to the Supreme Court to review its liability to pay the whole or part of the impugned campaign. In essence, the enforcement provisions of this bill provide for a rigorous and transparent process. Political parties have access to the courts to dispute their liability to pay back advertising campaign costs but if a government breaches these guidelines the governing political party will pay.

To conclude, the Government recognises the benefits of advertising as a tool to inform the people of New South Wales about important issues that affect the community, and that may affect them personally. Done properly, it is a cost-effective way of raising awareness and improving behaviour in areas of public safety, health and the engagement with other public services. It is unacceptable, however, when government advertising crosses the line into partisan politics, and public money is used to promote a party of government or its Ministers. The integrity measures in this bill mean governing political parties must take their hands off the levers that control the content of government advertising campaigns or face paying back the costs to the taxpayer.

Have no doubt about it: this is historic legislation. It has been promised for almost two decades—promised principally by those opposite prior to 1995. It was promised by us in office, and the former member for Eastwood, Andrew Tink, and I attempted to implement it. It has got nowhere. This is historic legislation. It ought to be noted by those in the media—including my friend John Stanley, who said it would never happen—that we are putting in place limits to ensure that no longer can we see what Federal and State Labor governments do time and again, which is use taxpayer funds to promote government advertising for one purpose: their re-election.

Debate adjourned on motion by Mrs Barbara Perry and set down as an order of the day for a future day.

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

Agreement in Principle

Debate resumed from 21 June 2011.

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON (Blacktown—Leader of the Opposition) [12.12 p.m.]: I lead for the Opposition on the Parliamentary, Local Council and Public Sector Executives Remuneration Legislation Amendment Bill 2011. Let me say at the outset that the Opposition does not oppose the bill in principle. We, of course, reserve the right to scrutinise the bill and to propose amendments. As the Premier said when he introduced the bill:

What is good for the public service is good for us.

He almost had it right with that statement. The only catch was that he was referring to his worse than WorkChoices laws as being somehow good for the public servants of this State. This is a presumption that we reject entirely. So, for the Premier's benefit, let me rephrase that: What is bad for the public service should be bad enough for those who have inflicted it on the public service. That is the reason Labor does not oppose the bill. If we cannot stop our public servants from having their wages capped below inflation, if we cannot prevent them from having a loss of income in real terms, then we should at least be prepared to stand with them in having similar restrictions placed on us. But, of course, in saying that we must acknowledge that those of us in this House are in a very different situation from those thousands of public servants whose pay and conditions this Parliament has just condemned.

While the Premier and others opposite stroll into the House and piously put their hands on their double-breasted suits and say, "We are taking a pay cut too. It's all fair," the reality is vastly different. We do not have the same cost of living pressures that nurses, teachers and social workers earning half or a third of the salaries that those of us in here are on are facing right now. So please, Madam Acting-Speaker, let us ask those opposite to keep the po-faced, self-sacrificing hubris in check, especially when the fact is that the Premier has already awarded luxurious pay rises to those opposite. While he tells the people of New South Wales about the rigid financial discipline he is placing on his team, he is less forthright about the bonus pay that he has just handed out to all his new members courtesy of the biggest parliamentary positions gravy train in the history of New South Wales.

I correct myself slightly, because I do not want to be accused of misleading the House. I should not have said "all" his new members, just the vast majority of them. That brings me to offer my additional sympathies to the member for Granville, the member for Parramatta, the member for Smithfield, the member for Newcastle, who I see is in the Chamber, the member for Oatley, the member for Mulgoa, the member for Campbelltown, who is in the Chamber, and the member for Rockdale, who is not here—the runts of the litter, those who the Premier declared incapable of further duties.

Mr Bryan Doyle: It's the opal of the south-west.

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: I acknowledge the interjection of the member for Campbelltown. Obviously the Premier does not agree that there is an opal in Campbelltown; he thinks it is something else, and it cannot be polished.

Mr Bryan Doyle: Point of order: I object to the Leader of the Opposition casting aspersions on the people of Campbelltown.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): Order! That is not a point of order.

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: I am prepared to clarify that. It was not an aspersion on the people of Campbelltown; I was making a comment about the member for Campbelltown. Not only have they missed out on the gravy train; the Premier is now locking the Gravoxx back in the pantry. It is enough to put them all on stress leave, I dare say. That may be why the member for Campbelltown is feeling a little precious. However, there is one aspect of the bill that we do oppose, and that is the reason that the Premier has brought it on. We know that this bill is not really about fiscal discipline; it is all about spin. It is about a Premier feeling the heat of thousands of public sector workers who are outraged at his attack on their conditions. It is about a Premier who is starting to feel the heat from voters of New South Wales who are saying, "Hey, he didn't tell us about this." It is about a Premier starting to see the mess he is getting into, and trying to find a way to create a distraction and spin his way out of it.

The one thing this Premier has been very good at is creating distractions from what is really going on. And so we have this token effort in trying to portray that we are all in the same boat together, that the Premier somehow understands the pain that our public servants will go through under his new laws. That is pure spin. It is a new excess of spin too. Most politicians stick to spinning via press conferences and media releases, but that is not enough for this Premier. He will create a whole Act of Parliament, with all the time and expense involved in that, all in the name of spinning the news cycle. That is a gross misuse of this House, and that is what the Opposition objects to. Beyond that, we make no in-principle objection to the bill. The Government has already made its bed with its industrial relations laws. This token effort will not get the Government or the Premier out of it. Now we will all watch them lie in it.

Ms LINDA BURNEY (Canterbury) [12.18 p.m.]: I speak to the Parliamentary, Local Council and Public Sector Executive Remuneration Legislation Amendment Bill 2011. The overview of the bill clearly states:

The object of this Bill is to amend the *Parliamentary Remuneration Act 1989*, the *Local Government Act 1993*, the *Statutory and Other Offices Remuneration Act 1975* and the *Health Services Act 1997* to apply the same government public sector wages cap that binds the Industrial Relations Commission to the determination of the remuneration for Ministers and other members of Parliament, local councillors, statutory officers, public sector executives and hospital visiting medical officers.

I want to focus on one word used in the overview, and that is the word "cap", because the Premier refuted that this was a cap at all, even though the word appears in the overview of the bill. I wanted to make that point. As the Leader of the Opposition said, the Opposition does not in principle oppose the bill but we want to record in *Hansard* that we reserve the right to scrutinise the bill and to propose amendments in the other place.

What is bad for the public service should be bad enough for those who have inflicted it on the public service. That reflects our attitude to some of the issues with this bill. The Leader of the Opposition outlined how, with great fanfare, the Premier talked about cutting costs in the public sector. He has in fact rewarded 64 of his 88 Liberal and Nationals members of Parliament with new titles and, in most cases, cash bonuses to go with them. That led me to have a good look at the list of parliamentary secretaries. I have to say I cannot imagine how busy the Hon. Charlie Lynn will be with veterans affairs, which is of course a worthy thing. However, there is no department and no real agenda, although veterans affairs are very important.

Melinda Pavey, MLC has been made Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Health. Why is she not parliamentary secretary for health? There does not appear to be one. That is very interesting. I cannot imagine how busy Paul Toole will be as Parliamentary Secretary for Asia-Pacific Trade. That is an interesting appointment as well. That is the point I wanted to make. I do not deny that these positions deal with very worthwhile issues but it seems strange to create those parliamentary secretary positions—I know a bit about this having been a parliamentary secretary—because usually parliamentary secretaries are appointed to help extremely busy Ministers with large portfolios such as health, education, and justice. That does not appear to be the case with these appointments.

Mr Troy Grant: Natural resources not important?

Ms LINDA BURNEY: I did not say that. Labor will not oppose this bill but we must acknowledge that those of us in this House are in a very different situation from that of those thousands of public servants whose pay and conditions this Parliament has just condemned. We do not have the same cost of living pressures in the sense that our salaries in many cases are much higher than those of nurses, teachers and social workers. In fact, some of them would be earning only half or a third of our salaries. I wanted to make that point as well.

The outrageous cash splash with the appointments of 64 of the Premier's 88 Liberal-Nationals members goes against everything he promised prior to the election. More than seven out of ten Liberal and Nationals members of Parliament will earn tens of thousands of dollars on top of their backbench salary and taxpayers will be forced to foot the bill. I point this out because of the Premier's statements: I would not be making a point of this had it not been something the Premier made great play of in the lead-up to the election and since the election. It seems to me the Premier has talked the talk but not walked the walk in relation to his own statements. That is the point I am making to the House.

Mr Troy Grant: He is striding.

Ms LINDA BURNEY: I know. I see him in the gym on occasions dressed in shorts and shoes. A week ago the Government passed legislation to cap the wage increases paid to nurses, teachers and firefighters to 2.5 per cent. We all know that: there has been much discussion in this House about that issue. Of course, it brought 12,000 people to Macquarie Street just a few days ago. Meanwhile, almost every Liberal and Nationals member has been given a whopping wage increase. Fair enough, the Government has a very large majority in this House, there is no doubt about that. But the issue I am raising in relation to the Parliamentary, Local Council and Public Sector Executives Remuneration Legislation Amendment Bill 2011 is that the Premier's actions are quite hypocritical. It is the role of the Opposition to point these things out. If the Premier says one thing before the election and does something else after the election that constitutes a broken promise.

Members on the other side will come to understand this in a very real way over the next four years. Members opposite can say it does not really matter; this is what happens in this place. But it does matter,

especially to those 400,000 people who work in the public service in New South Wales. These are the very people who keep this State going and who implement the decisions this place makes. If members opposite can join the dots they will understand that this is a very real issue in the community.

Mr Troy Grant: Did you tell your last Premier that?

Ms LINDA BURNEY: As I said to the member for Dubbo last week, members opposite can bang on as much as they like but I have been here a lot longer than them and their interjections mean absolutely nothing. I turn now to the broken promises and the scaled-back pay for parliamentary positions. As the Premier knows, that scale-back has not happened. Salaries have increased. The Government cannot deny the facts. It cannot deny that this is the reality no matter how much they would like to.

Mr David Elliott: You can't deny that you left us broke, Linda.

Ms LINDA BURNEY: That just shows how much the member knows about reading the budget papers. I cannot wait for the budget to be introduced in September. Members opposite will be smiling on the other side of their faces on budget day. We had eight successive terms of good economic outcomes and maintained a triple-A rating. Members opposite can make such comments as often as they like but it does not make it true; it just makes the noses on members opposite grow longer and longer. I assume they know the story of Pinocchio. I will leave that thought for members opposite to contemplate.

As I said, Mr O'Farrell has broken this promise. He did not scale back the number of parliamentary positions; he increased them. Do members know why he increased them? To keep a number of factions happy. Members opposite know that is the truth. That is why we see interesting positions being created, such as Melinda Pavey being appointed Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Health. She should have been made parliamentary secretary to the Minister for Health. There is one aspect of the bill that we do oppose and that is the reason the Premier has brought it on. We know the bill is not really about fiscal discipline. This is actually about spin. That is another thing I recall the Premier saying would not happen under his Government. It is a wonder Government members are not all giddy from spinning so much.

Spin is one thing we do oppose, and the public is pretty sick of it. The Premier, feeling the heat of thousands of public sector workers outraged at the attack on their conditions, has brought in this bill. There was no discussion about this beforehand; it has happened very quickly. The question is: Why has it happened so quickly? The answer is that heat is being applied to backbenchers and the Premier by public sector workers who are very upset with them. Some members opposite will understand that in four years time. This is about the Premier seeing the mess he is getting into and trying to find a way to create a distraction and spin his way out of it. That also is not lost on the public or the media and it certainly will not be lost on a number of members opposite, particularly in seats such as Swansea and a few others.

In summary, we will not oppose the bill although we reserve the right to scrutinise it and propose amendments. We believe that this bill is not necessarily good policy. It is about the Premier understanding that he has made a huge mistake in terms of his wages policy. It is also about trying to ameliorate some of that mistake. May I finish by saying that government is a huge responsibility—I know the Premier understands that—and decisions that are made in this place affect every single person in this State. Every single person in this State will look at this and see the cynicism in it and will see the spin. They will not be fooled by this legislation. This is a token effort to try to say that we are all in the same boat, and to say that we are in the same boat in terms of pay and conditions as shift workers and nurses—

Mr David Elliott: What did you call them?

Ms LINDA BURNEY: Say that again.

Mr Barry O'Farrell: What did you call them? That is what he was asking you.

Ms LINDA BURNEY: Well, get up and ask it properly.

Mr Barry O'Farrell: Point of order: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition has forgotten she is now on that side of politics. The bill before the House is very clear. The bill is about capping the salaries of members of Parliament, senior public servants, councillors and mayors. If the Deputy Leader of the Opposition opposes it, she simply ought to say that and vote against it.

Ms LINDA BURNEY: The Premier has been sitting at the table for a long time and he knows that is not exactly what I am saying.

Mr Barry O'Farrell: A ruling on the point of order, please?

Ms LINDA BURNEY: The member for Baulkham Hills has been dug out now. Is he comfortable now? Is he sitting back and relaxed?

Mr Daryl Maguire: To the point of order: It is protocol in this House that when a member takes a point of order, the member speaking shall sit. I ask that you enforce the standing order as this has been happening in this place on a regular basis.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): I note the point of order. The member for Canterbury has the call.

Ms LINDA BURNEY: I conclude by summarising the points that I have made. We will not oppose the bill but reserve the right to make amendments. We do not believe that the policy is terribly well thought out. We believe that the Premier has remunerated 64 of his 88 Liberal-Nationals members of Parliament, and that is not what he talked about prior to the election. This is an attempt to take the heat off the Government with respect to public sector wages through spin. This spin will not work because people are not fools. They know that the Government was disingenuous because it did not say anything about its wages policy prior to the election yet when it came to government was one of the first things that it did was to introduce its wages policy.

Mr Barry O'Farrell: Vote against the bill if you oppose it.

Ms LINDA BURNEY: The Premier can chat and throw little comments across the Chamber as much as he likes, but he knows that is the case. He knows that he was not honest; that he was sneaky and did not tell the truth to the electorate prior to the election about this wages policy—that is the truth and whether or not he likes it, he is going to wear it.

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

ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT AMENDMENT (PART 3A REPEAL) BILL 2011

Consideration in Detail

Consideration of the Legislative Council amendments.

Schedule of amendments referred to in message of 22 June 2011

No. 1 Page 6, schedule 1.2 [19]. Insert after line 37:

[20] Section 83 (4A)

Insert after section 83 (4):

(4A) Subsections (2) and (3) do not apply to State significant development. If development consent for any such development is refused by the Court on an appeal, any development consent that was granted ceases to have effect on the determination of the appeal.

No. 2 Page 9, schedule 1.2 [20] (proposed section 89F), line 31. Insert "and the environmental impact of the development concerned has not been reduced by the changes proposed in the amended, substituted or later application" after "substantially differs from the original application".

No. 3 Page 11, schedule 1.2 [20] (proposed section 89J (1) (g)), line 36. Insert "(other than an aquifer interference approval)" after "an activity approval".

No. 4 Page 23, schedule 1.3 [3] (proposed section 115ZG (1) (g)), line 27. Insert "(other than an aquifer interference approval)" after "an activity approval".

Motion by Mr Brad Hazzard agreed to:

That the House agree to the Legislative Council amendments.

Legislative Council amendments agreed to.

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

GOVERNOR'S SPEECH: ADDRESS-IN-REPLY**Fifth Day's Debate****Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) [12.35 p.m.]: I speak in reply to the Governor's Speech on the opening of the Fifty-fifth Parliament of New South Wales on Tuesday 3 May 2011. Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir is a terrific ambassador for service to the public in her role as Governor and I congratulate her on her contribution and performance. Her Excellency briefly described the O'Farrell Government's platform for this term in her address at the opening of Parliament. I say "briefly" with good reason because it would be impossible to give a lengthy description of a plan so lacking in credible detail and so uninspiringly short on good ideas—absolutely no ideas during the election campaign; no policies whatsoever.

Since Parliament recommenced, we have heard members of the Government dripping in unattractive teeth-gnashing triumphalism, but it has become apparent that in their 16 years in opposition they could not come up with a credible platform for government—nothing in 16 years. They say they have a five point plan, but it may as well be the scribbblings of afterthoughts on a restaurant napkin. That is about all their promises are worth. Point (4) of the Governments Five Point Action Plan is to restore accountability to government. That sounds all right. Perhaps we will unpack it and see. Before we even begin, it is worth noting the way that this Government tries to paint a predictably distorted picture of the previous Government by using the word "restore".

It has implied that government itself has somehow become unaccountable, that the people do not get to have a say. That is too rich, coming from members opposite. Let me compare accountability and independence. The previous Labor Government, for instance, reformed freedom of information laws to deliver openness and transparency, banned political donations from developers and put a cap on campaign spending, created the Parliamentary Budget Office to independently cost the promises of political parties modelled on the best elements of offices operating successfully internationally, and created a register of lobbyists and a lobbyist code of conduct, to name just a few.

What has this Government delivered, aside from a mightily tokenistic banning of success fees? That is certainly a worthy enough step, but on its own it simply smacks of grandstanding. What has the Government actually delivered? Does it still take donations from tobacco companies at a time when governments worldwide are trying to curb the harmful effects of smoking? Sure it does. Did two of its party executives—not one rogue element but two—have to give up their positions as party executives because of their massive conflicts of interest in lobbying the very Government whose members are under their influence? Check. Did the Government promise the "establishment of Infrastructure NSW, an independent body combining public and private sector expertise to remove the politics from infrastructure decision making", and then appoint at the very top of the chain as chairman of the supposedly independent body a former Liberal Party Premier of this State, Nick Greiner? Did it really do this? You bet it did.

This is independence. Welcome to the O'Farrell Government's job network, also known as jobs for the boys. In any circumstances that type of decision would be disgraceful, but it defies both logic and ethical substance, let alone any type of accountability, to follow it with a promise to the people of New South Wales that "an independent body combining public and private sector experts to remove politics from infrastructure decision-making" would be appointed. It also reflects a seriously flawed assessment of the intelligence of the people of New South Wales, who will not suffer such an absence of courage and conviction to deliver what had been promised. New South Wales people have caught a whiff of nepotism in the air, even at less than 100 days into the Government's tenure. The decision is malodorous for another reason, which is that this is yet another instance of this Government being underhand, trying to smear, and trying to paint a picture that is not based on facts when it suggests that its move will remove politics from planning.

The Government knows full well that there was no politics in infrastructure decisions made by the former Government because Labor got rid of it. People know that a Labor Government always will deliver better services and better infrastructure than will a Liberal-Nationals Government. This Government knows that appointing one of its own as head of what it calls an independent body is the very opposite of removing politics from decision-making. That is a broken promise if ever I have seen one. It took the Liberal-Nationals 16 years to be elected to government but it took them only a month to break promises—just a month. Why was the Premier puffing out his chest and telling the media that he wants to be known as the infrastructure Premier? It is time he

woke up because that dream is well and truly over. How will he be known? He will be remembered as the talk-and-bluster Premier—the one who thought parading and sloganeering throughout an election campaign was the same as actively delivering services to government.

Mr Andrew Cornwell: Point of order: The member for Cabramatta is making a personal reflection. I ask him to withdraw.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): Order! The member for Cabramatta will confine his remarks to the Address-in-Reply.

Mr NICK LALICH: I withdraw that, but I think it is true. Her Excellency the Governor stated in her speech that the new Government would embark on its programs with optimism. It would seem that the Government will certainly need to. Why is there a need for optimism? It is because the Government's only hope is that somehow it will come up with some good-enough policy ideas so that at some stage somebody out there will vote for it in four years time. The Government will need optimism and probably a great deal of luck. The way the Government is going now, it will not be here in the next four years. Since this Government came to office, it has displayed a pattern of behaviour that attacks workers and has attacked workers at every opportunity.

We saw examples of that in relation to the community services equal pay case. The Government attacked the rights of women to achieve pay equality. Another example was the Occupational Health and Safety Amendment Bill and the Work Health and Safety Bill. But the example that is the worst is the Industrial Relations Amendment (Public Sector Conditions of Employment) Bill 2011. When that bill was being debated, 12,000 public sector workers protested in Macquarie Street outside Parliament House. What did Government members say? They said, "We don't care. There were only 2,000 people there." The Government played down the numbers, but if the people had been protesting on behalf of the Government, it would have said that there had been 100,000 people on the streets.

Prior to introducing the legislation, did the Government conduct a referendum or a plebiscite? Absolutely not, but will it support a plebiscite at the suggestion of Tony Abbott in relation to a carbon tax? I predict that the Government will move a motion to support Tony Abbott's request for a plebiscite and expect Labor members to support it. As the unions have pointed out, if the result of a plebiscite favours a carbon tax, the Liberal-Nationals would not accept it. Members opposite have a great deal to answer for. Meanwhile they can be sure that the Labor Opposition will be firmly holding the Government to the bombastic promises it gave to the people of New South Wales and will be presenting strong alternatives to show the people of New South Wales that a Labor Government will be a government of delivery, intelligence and hardworking members for the benefit of the people of New South Wales.

Mr JOHN WILLIAMS (Murray-Darling) [12.44 p.m.]: It gives me great pleasure on behalf of my constituents in the Murray-Darling electorate to participate in the Address-in-Reply debate in response to the speech made by Her Excellency the Governor. Sixteen years of a Labor Government has led to this State becoming overregulated, much to the detriment of the people who live in the Murray-Darling electorate. During my speech I will focus on some of the changes that the Government will make. The changes will cost absolutely nothing and require just one thing—common sense. Unfortunately during 16 years of a Labor Government, public servants took over running departments and Ministers were not in charge anymore. Ministers had a choice of either running the department or letting the department run them.

Unfortunately, there was far too much evidence of departments running Ministers. To justify their jobs, bureaucrats decided to create regulations that were very restrictive and that created numerous problems for people who live in the Murray-Darling electorate and elsewhere throughout the State. Consequently I see the role of this Government as one of clearing away red tape and reversing the effects of some regulations that have made life so difficult for the people of New South Wales.

The frustration of local authorities caused by local environmental plans being imposed on local councils under a standard template is widespread. While in principle that may have appeared to be a good idea, in practice it created huge problems for local authorities obtaining approval for their standard local environmental plans. The standard local environmental plan format was introduced six years ago. To date only 43 have been approved. That means less than 30 per cent of local authorities are working with the standard template.

I am assured that the logjam that currently is creating huge problems for local authorities, particularly for local councils in State border areas, has adversely affected the development of residential areas. Other States such as Victoria granted approval for new residential developments and created a competitive advantage for Victorian local government areas over councils in New South Wales. My constituent councils have had to stand by while their Victorian counterparts reaped the rewards of population growth and development in towns such as Mildura. The Wentworth Shire Council estimates the potential loss to be the rates that would have been payable on 4,000 premises that could have been built in New South Wales, but for Labor's planning restrictions.

The frustration felt by the people of my electorate has only been increased by restrictions associated with natural resources management, in particular the Native Vegetation Act. There is no doubt that the current Government will review the Native Vegetation Act to restore common sense to that legislation. For far too long, farmers have been restricted by red tape and virtually looking after national parks on their properties. We must reach common ground. While there is a need for property owners to become involved in natural resources management, they also need to make a living. It is just common sense that a one-size-fits-all policy is inappropriate.

Some examples include farmers who had not worked areas of their property for a number of years and when they decided to rework that property were disallowed because of this 10-year rule. In many instances farmers cannot prove whether land has been worked in the previous 10 years because the previous farmer had died without documented evidence, even though major profiling of the ground had been undertaken—the construction of irrigation channels—providing clear evidence that the land had been worked. Unfortunately, the catchment management authorities have never had approval to change this procedure. Our Government will examine each application case by case to provide farmers with the opportunity to farm available acreage instead of trying to work under the restrictive practice created by the previous Government's interpretation of the Native Vegetation Act.

Catchment management authorities had wide management responsibility for natural resources in New South Wales, but progressively the Sydney bureaucracy decided to centralise some of the on-the-ground decision-making. The principles behind developing the catchment management authorities are being removed. Catchment management authorities were developed primarily to put natural resource management under local control so that local decisions would be made. The one-size-fits-all structure did not apply and commonsense then prevailed. Unfortunately, under the previous Government the bureaucracy thought that local responsibility should not continue. Certainly, the Government will work towards changing that process by reinstating initiatives with catchment management authorities to enable decisions to be made locally.

I refer specifically to the Greater Southern Area Health Service in regard to the frustrating health structures. People within the health system built empires and great walls that provided no transparency or ability to communicate and made decisions without community consultation. They imposed their regulations and rules in areas that were trying to resist that approach. The Federal Government recognised that the aim of the Liberal Party and The Nationals finally will be achieved. We might begin to see some commonsense and transparency in running Health in New South Wales. The best thing is that we have the support of the health professionals, particularly nurses, who embraced what this Government has put in place to try to fix the problems.

Regional and rural education has a new focus. The new Minister for Education believes that rural and regional education has its own challenges, and recognises that necessary resources must be provided for those schools to provide the same level of education enjoyed by those in capital cities. No doubt children's education in rural and remote areas of New South Wales will be improved greatly. The changes to occupational health and safety laws through harmonisation to embrace Federal regulations that have been adopted across Australia will bring benefits to those small businesses that work across borders. No longer will they have to deal with State recognition of skills; national skills recognition will suffice. The unions that imposed those restrictions and stopped progress in New South Wales will not have the opportunity to rip off those poor devils, who were only trying to make a quid.

The frustrations of local government will attract greater recognition. Local government was punished under Labor. The cost shifting of the past and some of the red tape with which local government must deal made the job more difficult. I deal with issues from 13 shires in my electorate, which all believe that changes need to be made. We are committed to those changes and the Minister is committed to those changes. Local government

will enjoy the change of government; we aim to reduce red tape and regulation whereas the previous Government shifted some of its costs back to local government. The Minister will make changes to some policies under which local government works. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

One big issue of the Murray-Darling concerns the roads that remain unsealed after 16 years of inaction by the previous Labor Government. Over those 16 years some work was done on the Silver City Highway, but it was only in dribs and drabs. During seasonal changes the town of Tibooburra is completely cut off when the Silver City Highway is closed. Businesses that rely heavily on tourism and the pastoralists who rely on that road link suffered huge financial problems for nearly three of the eight months when the road was closed. That situation cannot continue. The \$5 billion to be allocated to regional New South Wales provides the opportunity finally to seal the Silver City Highway.

The Cobb Highway remains unsealed between Ivanhoe and Wilcannia. When work on that road is finished, the road will be completely sealed from Melbourne to White Cliffs and be a huge bonus for the people of western New South Wales. The previous Government worked hard to promote Mungo National Park as a tourist destination, but the dream will not be fulfilled whilst Arumpo Road remains unsealed. The condition of Arumpo Road certainly restricts tourists from gaining access to Mungo National Park. The Menindee to Pooncarie road is another unsealed road that should be able to provide traffic flow from Broken Hill via Menindee through Pooncarie down to Wentworth. Certainly, the opportunity is available to set up a tourist route by providing sealed access to some of the more beautiful parts of the Darling River.

The restrictions imposed by the Roads and Traffic Authority, and the problems associated with trucking and the regulations that applied in New South Wales, have been a huge frustration for people in regional New South Wales. Within days of the Minister's appointment we adopted the regulation set down by the Federal Government, which became universal in all the States. That is a good move. It has been proposed that low loaders should be provided for graders working in New South Wales, that to move a grader more than five kilometres will require a low loader. The proponents have not thought about the people providing that service. The providers of the grading service on the unsealed roads have only a grader.

Buying a low loader and the necessary truck and registering them is prohibitive, and we will never see those roads graded. Some of the crazy New South Wales regulations create frustration for people working in remote areas of western New South Wales. We now have a dedicated Minister for Western New South Wales, the member for Barwon. He will serve in a role that was never recognised by the previous Government. He will ensure that the voice of western New South Wales is heard and brought to Cabinet. I look forward to working with the Minister. We have already done some great work, and I am sure that will continue. We will see a better distribution of capital works.

There has been a fair bit of discussion about Infrastructure NSW, which is about taking politics out of the decision-making on where infrastructure goes so that it will be about who puts up the best case. I have been assured that we can put up a good case for the infrastructure needs of the people in western New South Wales. In the past week—I did not intend to speak about this—we have heard Opposition members speak about how much they support the workers of New South Wales. I can advise the House that 1,200 families were decimated by the mob opposite. The former Government tore the guts out of 1,200 families receiving wages from the forestry industry when it decided to stop forestry in my electorate.

The former Government's actions gutted 1,200 families and the hardworking people whom members opposite say they support. Without a blink of the eye Labor ripped the guts out of those families. Members opposite should talk to those families about how they support workers. Labor never had any regard for workers in this State. It is an absolute disgrace, and members opposite will die with that around their necks. I will keep reminding them of how badly the former Government served the workers of this State.

I hope the Liberal-Nationals Government will be able to find some activities for those people because many of them could only work in the forestry industry. Many of them are Indigenous, but Labor did not care about them. Members opposite care when it suits them. They did not care for those people who are devastated. They do not know what to do. Labor put them in the unemployment queue because of its devastating decisions and its disregard for the workers in this State.

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

PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES**Establishment and Membership****Motion, by leave, by Mr Brad Hazzard agreed to:****(1) Public Accounts Committee**

That:

- (1) In accordance with section 54 (2) of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983, the following members be appointed to serve on the Public Accounts Committee: Mr Bart Bassett, Mr Michael Daley, Dr Geoff Lee, Mr Jonathan O'Dea, Mr Richard Torbay and Mr John Williams.
- (2) The Committee have leave to make visits of inspection within the State of New South Wales and other States and Territories of Australia.

(2) Legislation Review Committee

That:

- (1) In accordance with section 5 (1) (b) of the Legislation Review Act 1987, the following members of the Legislative Assembly be appointed to serve on the Legislation Review Committee: Mr Stephen Bromhead, Mr Garry Edwards, Mr John Flowers, Dr Geoff Lee and Ms Tania Mihailuk.
- (2) The Committee have leave to make visits of inspection within the State of New South Wales and other States and Territories of Australia.
- (3) A message be sent acquainting the Legislative Council of the resolution and requesting the Legislative Council to appoint three of its members to serve on the Committee.

(3) Committee on the Independent Commission Against Corruption

That:

- (1) In accordance with section 65 (1) (b) of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988, the following members of the Legislative Assembly be appointed to serve on the Committee on the Independent Commission Against Corruption: Mr Richard Amery, Mr Mark Coure, Mr Andrew Gee, Mr Thomas George, Ms Tania Mihailuk, Mr Tim Owen, Mr Nathan Rees and Mr Mark Speakman.
- (2) The Committee have leave to make visits of inspection within the State of New South Wales and other States and Territories of Australia.
- (3) A message be sent acquainting the Legislative Council of the resolution and requesting the Legislative Council to appoint three of its members to serve on the Committee.

(4) Committee on the Office of the Ombudsman and the Police Integrity Commission

That:

- (1) In accordance with section 31C (1) (b) of the Ombudsman Act 1974, the following members of the Legislative Assembly be appointed to serve on the Committee on the Office of the Ombudsman and the Police Integrity Commission: Mr Kevin Anderson, Mr Lee Evans, Mr Paul Lynch and Mr Ryan Park.
- (2) The Committee have leave to make visits of inspection within the State of New South Wales and other States and Territories of Australia.
- (3) A message be sent acquainting the Legislative Council of the resolution and requesting the Legislative Council to appoint three of its members to serve on the Committee.

(5) Committee on the Health Care Complaints Commission

That:

- (1) In accordance with section 67 (1) (b) of the Health Care Complaints Act 1993, the following members of the Legislative Assembly be appointed to serve on the Committee on the Health Care Complaints Commission: Mr Ryan Park, Mr Andrew Rohan, Mrs Roza Sage and Mrs Leslie Williams.
- (2) The Committee have leave to make visits of inspection within the State of New South Wales and other States and Territories of Australia.
- (3) A message be sent acquainting the Legislative Council of the resolution and requesting the Legislative Council to appoint three of its members to serve on the Committee.

(6) Committee on Children and Young People

That:

- (1) In accordance with section 29 (1) (b) of the Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998, the following members of the Legislative Assembly be appointed to serve on the Committee on Children and Young People: Mr Andrew Cornwell, Mr Andrew Gee, Ms Melanie Gibbons and Dr Andrew McDonald.
- (2) The Committee have leave to make visits of inspection within the State of New South Wales and other States and Territories of Australia.
- (3) A message be sent acquainting the Legislative Council of the resolution and requesting the Legislative Council to appoint three of its members to serve on the Committee.

(7) Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters

That:

- (1) A Joint Standing Committee, to be known as the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters, be appointed.
- (2) The Committee inquire into and report upon such matters as may be referred to it by either House of the Parliament or a Minister that relate to:
 - (a) The following electoral laws:
 - (i) Parliamentary Electorates and Elections Act 1912 (other than Part 2);
 - (ii) Election Funding, Expenditure and Disclosures Act 1981; and
 - (iii) Those provisions of the Constitution Act 1902 that relate to the procedures for, and conduct of, elections for members of the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council (other than sections 27, 28 and 28A);
 - (b) The administration of and practices associated with the electoral laws described at (a).
- (3) All matters that relate to (2) (a) and (b) above in respect of the 26 March 2011 State Election, shall stand referred to the Committee for any inquiry the Committee may wish to make. The Committee shall report on the outcome of any such inquiry within 12 months of the date of this resolution being agreed to by both Houses.
- (4) The Committee consist of seven members, as follows:
 - (a) two members of the Legislative Assembly, and
 - (b) five members of the Legislative Council.
- (5) Mr Andrew Fraser and Mr Gareth Ward be appointed to serve on such committee as the members of the Legislative Assembly.
- (6) Notwithstanding anything contained in the standing orders of either House, at any meeting of the Committee, any four members of the Committee shall constitute a quorum, provided that the Committee meets as a joint committee at all times.
- (7) The Committee have leave to sit and transact business during the sittings or any adjournment of either House, and despite any prorogation of the Houses of Parliament.
- (8) The Committee have leave to make visits of inspection within the State of New South Wales and other States and Territories of Australia.
- (9) A message be sent acquainting the Legislative Council of the resolution and requesting the Legislative Council to appoint five of its members to serve with the members of the Legislative Assembly upon the Committee, and to fix a time and place for the first meeting.

(8) Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety

That:

A Joint Standing Committee (to be known as the Staysafe Committee) be appointed to inquire into and report on road safety in New South Wales with the following terms of reference:

- (1) As an ongoing task, the Committee is to—
 - (a) Monitor, investigate and report on the road safety situation in New South Wales, and
 - (b) Review and report on countermeasures aimed at reducing deaths, injuries, and the social and economic costs to the community arising from road accidents.

- (2) The Committee consist of five members of the Legislative Assembly and three members of the Legislative Council and that, notwithstanding anything contained in the standing orders of either House, at any meeting of the Committee, any five members shall constitute a quorum provided that the Committee shall meet as a joint committee at all times.
- (3) Mr Greg Aplin, Mr Stuart Ayres, Mr Robert Furolo, Mr Darren Webber and Mr John Williams be appointed to serve on the Committee as the members of the Legislative Assembly.
- (4) The Committee have leave to sit and transact business during the sittings or any adjournment of either House, and despite any prorogation of the Houses of Parliament.
- (5) The Committee have leave to make visits of inspection within the State of New South Wales and other States and Territories of Australia.
- (6) A message be sent acquainting the Legislative Council of the resolution and requesting the Legislative Council to appoint three of its members to serve with the members of the Legislative Assembly upon the Committee, and to fix a time and place for the first meeting.

(9) Joint Standing Committee on the Office of the Valuer-General

That:

- (1) A Joint Standing Committee, to be known as the Joint Standing Committee on the Office of the Valuer-General be appointed.
- (2) The Committee's functions be:
 - (a) to monitor and review the exercise of the Valuer-General's functions with respect to land valuations under the Valuation of Land Act 1916 and the Land Tax Management Act 1956, and in particular:
 - (i) to monitor the methodologies employed for the purpose of conducting such valuations;
 - (ii) to monitor the arrangements under which valuation service contracts are negotiated and entered into; and
 - (iii) to monitor the standard of valuation services provided under such contracts,
 - (b) to report to both Houses of Parliament, with such comments as it thinks fit, on any matter connected with the exercise of the Valuer-General's functions referred to in paragraph (a) to which, in the opinion of the Committee, the attention of Parliament should be directed,
 - (c) to report to both Houses of Parliament any change that the Committee considers desirable to the Valuer-General's functions referred to in paragraph (a),
 - (d) to inquire into any question in connection with the Committee's functions which is referred to it by both Houses of Parliament, and to report to both Houses on that question.
- (3) The functions of the Committee not extend to the investigation of any matter relating to or arising from a particular valuation of a specific parcel of land.
- (4) The Committee consist of five members as follows:
 - (a) three members of the Legislative Assembly of whom two must be Government members and one must be a non-Government member, and
 - (b) two members of the Legislative Council of whom one must be a Government member and one must be a non-Government member.
- (5) Mr Clayton Barr, Mr Matt Kean and Mrs Leslie Williams be appointed to serve on the Committee as the members of the Legislative Assembly.
- (6) Notwithstanding anything contained in the standing orders of either House, at any meeting of the Committee, any three members of the Committee shall constitute a quorum, provided that the Committee meets as a joint committee at all times.
- (7) The Committee have leave to sit and transact business during the sittings or any adjournment of either House, and despite any prorogation of the Houses of Parliament.
- (8) The Committee have leave to make visits of inspection within the State of New South Wales and other States and Territories of Australia.
- (9) A message be sent acquainting the Legislative Council of the resolution and requesting the Legislative Council appoint two of its members to serve with the members of the Legislative Assembly on the Committee, and to fix a time and place for the first meeting.

(10) Standing Committee on Parliamentary Privilege and Ethics

That, notwithstanding anything contained in the standing orders:

- (1) A Standing Committee on Parliamentary Privilege and Ethics be appointed to consider and report upon any matters relating to privilege which may be referred to it under standing order 92 or by resolution of the House.
- (2) The Committee is the designated committee for the purpose of exercising the functions in Part 7A Division 2 of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988, relating to Parliamentary ethical standards including the review of the code of conduct.
- (3) The Committee consist of six members being: Mr Glenn Brookes, Mr Andrew Fraser, Ms Clover Moore, Mr Andrew Rohan, Mr John Sidoti and Mr Guy Zangari.
- (4) Any three members of the Committee shall constitute a quorum.
- (5) The Committee have leave to sit during the sittings or any adjournment of the House and despite any prorogation of the Houses of Parliament.
- (6) The Committee have leave to make visits of inspection within the State of New South Wales and other States and Territories of Australia.
- (7) The Committee have power to confer with any similar committee appointed by the Legislative Council.

(11) Legal Affairs Committee

That, notwithstanding anything contained in the standing orders:

- (1) A Specialist Standing Committee, to be known as the Legal Affairs Committee be appointed to inquire into and report on any proposal, matter or thing concerned with legal affairs in New South Wales.

Initiation of inquiries

- (2) The Committee may be referred an inquiry by resolution of the House or in writing from a Minister.
- (3) The Committee may initiate an inquiry on its own motion and report on any proposal, matter or thing relevant to its functions, including an annual report or petition.
- (4) The Committee shall take care not to duplicate an inquiry into any matters under examination by a portfolio committee or another standing committee of the House, and any question arising in this connection may be referred to the House for determination.

Membership

- (5) The Committee consist of five members, comprising:
 - (a) three members supporting the Government (one of whom shall be the Chair), and
 - (b) two members not supporting the Government.
- (6) The following members of the Legislative Assembly be appointed to serve on the Committee: Mr Clayton Barr, Mr Stephen Bromhead, Mr Bryan Doyle, Ms Sonia Hornery and Mr Dominic Perrottet.

Sub-committees

- (7) The Committee have the power to appoint sub-committees, consisting of three members, and to refer to a sub-committee any of the matters which the Committee is empowered to consider. In this regard, the sub-committee may be responsible for conducting hearings, briefings, visits of inspections and other activities but cannot make decisions concerning the conduct of an inquiry, such as the selection of witnesses, and the Committee's reports.
- (8) The Committee and any sub-committee have power to send for persons and documents, to move from place to place, and to meet and transact business during the sittings or any adjournment of the House, and despite any prorogation of the Houses of Parliament.
- (9) A sub-committee have at least one member supporting the Government and one member not supporting the Government, and a quorum for a sub-committee shall be at least two members.

Visits of inspection

- (10) The Committee have leave to make visits of inspection within the State of New South Wales and other States and Territories of Australia.

(12) Social Policy Committee

That, notwithstanding anything contained in the standing orders:

- (1) A Specialist Standing Committee, to be known as the Social Policy Committee be appointed to inquire into and report on any proposal, matter or thing concerned with social policy in New South Wales.

Initiation of inquiries

- (2) The Committee may be referred an inquiry by resolution of the House or in writing from a Minister.
- (3) The Committee may initiate an inquiry on its own motion and report on any proposal, matter or thing relevant to its functions, including an annual report or petition.
- (4) The Committee shall take care not to duplicate an inquiry into any matters under examination by a portfolio committee or another standing committee of the House, and any question arising in this connection may be referred to the House for determination.

Membership

- (5) The Committee consist of five members, comprising:
 - (a) three members supporting the Government (one of whom shall be the Chair);
 - (b) two members not supporting the Government.
- (6) The following members of the Legislative Assembly be appointed to serve on the Committee: Mr Troy Grant, Ms Sonia Hornery, Mr Bruce Notley-Smith, Mr John Sidoti and Ms Anna Watson.

Sub-committees

- (7) The Committee have the power to appoint sub-committees, consisting of three members, and to refer to a sub-committee any of the matters which the Committee is empowered to consider. In this regard, the sub-committee may be responsible for conducting hearings, briefings, visits of inspections and other activities but cannot make decisions concerning the conduct of an inquiry, such as the selection of witnesses, and the Committee's reports.
- (8) The Committee and any sub-committee have power to send for persons and documents, to move from place to place, and to meet and transact business during the sittings or any adjournment of the House, and despite any prorogation of the Houses of Parliament.
- (9) A sub-committee have at least one member supporting the Government and one member not supporting the Government, and a quorum for a sub-committee shall be at least two members.

Visits of inspection

- (10) The Committee have leave to make visits of inspection within the State of New South Wales and other States and Territories of Australia.

(13) State and Regional Development Committee

That, notwithstanding anything contained in the standing orders:

- (1) A Specialist Standing Committee, to be known as the State and Regional Development Committee be appointed to inquire into and report on any proposal, matter or thing concerned with State and regional development in any area of New South Wales.

Initiation of inquiries

- (2) The Committee may be referred an inquiry by resolution of the House or in writing from a Minister.
- (3) The Committee may initiate an inquiry on its own motion and report on any proposal, matter or thing relevant to its functions, including an annual report or petition.
- (4) The Committee shall take care not to duplicate an inquiry into any matters under examination by a portfolio committee or another standing committee of the House, and any question arising in this connection may be referred to the House for determination.

Membership

- (5) The Committee consist of five members, comprising:
 - (a) three members supporting the Government (one of whom shall be the Chair), and
 - (b) two members not supporting the Government.
- (6) The following members of the Legislative Assembly be appointed to serve on the Committee: Ms Linda Burney, Mr Daryl Maguire, Mr Geoff Provest, Mr Chris Spence and Mr Richard Torbay.

Sub-committees

- (7) The Committee have the power to appoint sub-committees, consisting of three members, and to refer to a sub-committee any of the matters which the Committee is empowered to consider. In this regard, the sub-committee may be responsible for conducting hearings, briefings, visits of inspections and other activities but cannot make decisions concerning the conduct of an inquiry, such as the selection of witnesses, and the Committee's reports.
- (8) The Committee and any sub-committee have power to send for persons and documents, to move from place to place, and to meet and transact business during the sittings or any adjournment of the House, and despite any prorogation of the Houses of Parliament.
- (9) A sub-committee have at least one member supporting the Government and one member not supporting the Government, and a quorum for a sub-committee shall be at least two members.

Visits of inspection

- (10) The Committee have leave to make visits of inspection within the State of New South Wales and other States and Territories of Australia.

(14) Legislative Assembly Committee on Economic Development

That, notwithstanding anything contained in the standing orders:

- (1) A Portfolio Standing Committee to be known as the Legislative Assembly Committee on Economic Development be appointed. The following portfolio responsibilities stand referred to the Committee—Premier; Western Sydney; Treasury; Finance and Services; Planning and Infrastructure; Trade and Investment; and the Illawarra.
- (2) The name and portfolio groupings of the Committee may change to correspond with any changes made by the Government to the relevant portfolios.

Terms of reference

- (3) The Committee may examine, inquire into and report on the following matters concerning its portfolio areas:
 - (a) any matter referred to it by the House,
 - (b) any relevant policy, bill or subordinate legislation,
 - (c) any relevant financial matter, and
 - (d) any relevant portfolio issue.
- (4) Legislative scrutiny—The Committee, in this context, have a legislative scrutiny function that shall include evaluating the policy impact and consequences for each portfolio of any relevant bill introduced in Parliament, any existing legislation and any item of subordinate legislation.
- (5) Financial matters—The examination of financial matters by the Committee include the review of government financial management, by considering the financial documents, expenditure, performance and effectiveness of any relevant government department, agency, statutory body or state-owned corporation.
- (6) Examination of annual and other reports—The Committee may examine any matter in the annual report or other reports of any public body, including:
 - (a) the adequacy and accuracy of all financial and operational information, and
 - (b) any matter arising from the annual report or other report concerning the efficient and effective achievement of the agency's objectives.
- (7) Public works—The Committee may consider any matter concerning public works relating to the portfolio area.

Initiation of inquiries

- (8) The Committee may be referred an inquiry by resolution of the House or in writing from a Minister.
- (9) Except in the case of bills, the Committee also may initiate an inquiry on its own motion and report on any proposal, matter or thing relevant to its functions, including an annual report, other report or petition. The committee can only consider a Bill on referral from the House, in accordance with standing order 323 (Legislation Committees).
- (10) The Committee take care not to duplicate an inquiry into any matters under examination by another portfolio or standing committee of the House, and any question arising in this connection may be referred to the House for determination.

Membership

- (11) The Committee consist of five members, comprising:
 - (a) three members supporting the Government (one of whom shall be the Chair), and
 - (b) two members not supporting the Government.
- (12) That the following members of the Legislative Assembly be appointed to serve on the Committee: Mr Stuart Ayres, Mr Steve Cansdell, Mr David Elliott, Ms Noreen Hay and Mr Jamie Parker.

Sub-committees

- (13) The Committee have the power to appoint sub-committees, consisting of 3 members, and to refer to a sub-committee any of the matters which the Committee is empowered to consider. In this regard, the sub-committee may be responsible for conducting hearings, briefings, visits of inspections and other activities but cannot make decisions concerning the conduct of an inquiry, such as the selection of witnesses, and the Committee's reports.
- (14) The Committee and any sub-committee have power to send for persons and documents, to move from place to place, and to meet and transact business during the sittings or any adjournment of the House, and despite any prorogation of the Houses of Parliament.
- (15) A sub-committee have at least one member supporting the Government and one member not supporting the Government, and a quorum for a sub-committee shall be at least two members.

Visits of inspection

- (16) The Committee have leave to make visits of inspection within the State of New South Wales and other States and Territories of Australia.

(15) Legislative Assembly Committee on Community Services

That, notwithstanding anything contained in the Standing Orders:

- (1) A Portfolio Standing Committee to be known as the Legislative Assembly Committee on Community Services be appointed. The following portfolio responsibilities stand referred to the Committee—Health; Medical Research; Education; Mental Health; Healthy Lifestyles; Ageing; Aboriginal Affairs; Disability Services; Family and Community Services; Women; Citizenship and Communities; Western New South Wales; and Sports and Recreation.
- (2) The name and portfolio groupings of the Committee may change to correspond with any changes made by the Government to the relevant portfolios.

Terms of reference

- (3) The Committee may examine, inquire into and report on the following matters concerning its portfolio areas:
 - (a) any matter referred to it by the House,
 - (b) any relevant policy, bill or subordinate legislation,
 - (c) any relevant financial matter, and
 - (d) any relevant portfolio issue.
- (4) Legislative scrutiny—The Committee, in this context, have a legislative scrutiny function that shall include evaluating the policy impact and consequences for each portfolio of any relevant bill introduced in Parliament, any existing legislation and any item of subordinate legislation.
- (5) Financial matters—The examination of financial matters by the Committee include the review of government financial management, by considering the financial documents, expenditure, performance and effectiveness of any relevant government department, agency, statutory body or state-owned corporation.
- (6) Examination of annual and other reports—The Committee may examine any matter in the annual report or other reports of any public body, including:
 - (a) the adequacy and accuracy of all financial and operational information, and
 - (b) any matter arising from the annual report or other report concerning the efficient and effective achievement of the agency's objectives.
- (7) Public works—The Committee may consider any matter concerning public works relating to the portfolio area.

Initiation of inquiries

- (8) The Committee may be referred an inquiry by resolution of the House or in writing from a Minister.
- (9) Except in the case of bills, the Committee also may initiate an inquiry on its own motion and report on any proposal, matter or thing relevant to its functions, including an annual report, other report or petition. The committee can only consider a Bill on referral from the House, in accordance with Standing Order 323 (Legislation Committees).
- (10) The Committee take care not to duplicate an inquiry into any matters under examination by another portfolio or standing committee of the House, and any question arising in this connection may be referred to the House for determination.

Membership

- (11) The Committee consist of five members, comprising:
 - (a) three members supporting the Government (one of whom shall be the chair), and
 - (b) two members not supporting the Government.
- (12) That the following members of the Legislative Assembly be appointed to serve on the Committee: Mr Kevin Anderson, Mr Kevin Conolly, Mr Tony Issa, Mrs Barbara Perry and Ms Anna Watson.

Sub-committees

- (13) The Committee have the power to appoint sub-committees, consisting of 3 members, and to refer to a sub-committee any of the matters which the Committee is empowered to consider. In this regard, the sub-committee may be responsible for conducting hearings, briefings, visits of inspections and other activities but cannot make decisions concerning the conduct of an inquiry, such as the selection of witnesses, and the Committee's reports.
- (14) The Committee and any sub-committee have power to send for persons and documents, to move from place to place, and to meet and transact business during the sittings or any adjournment of the House, and despite any prorogation of the Houses of Parliament.
- (15) A sub-committee have at least one member supporting the Government and one member not supporting the Government, and a quorum for a sub-committee shall be at least two members.

Visits of inspection

- (16) The Committee have leave to make visits of inspection within the State of New South Wales and other States and Territories of Australia.

(16) Legislative Assembly Committee on Transport and Infrastructure

That, notwithstanding anything contained in the standing orders:

- (1) A Portfolio Standing Committee to be known as the Legislative Assembly Committee on Transport and Infrastructure be appointed. The following portfolio responsibilities stand referred to the Committee—Regional Infrastructure and Services; Special Minister of State; Transport; Roads; Ports; Tourism; Major Events; Hospitality; Racing; the Arts; the Central Coast; and the Legislature.
- (2) The name and portfolio groupings of the Committee may change to correspond with any changes made by the Government to the relevant portfolios.

Terms of reference

- (3) The Committee may examine, inquire into and report on the following matters concerning its portfolio areas:
 - (a) any matter referred to it by the House,
 - (b) any relevant policy, bill or subordinate legislation,
 - (c) any relevant financial matter, and
 - (d) any relevant portfolio issue.
- (4) Legislative scrutiny—The Committee, in this context, have a legislative scrutiny function that shall include evaluating the policy impact and consequences for each portfolio of any relevant bill introduced in Parliament, any existing legislation and any item of subordinate legislation.
- (5) Financial matters—The examination of financial matters by the Committee include the review of government financial management, by considering the financial documents, expenditure, performance and effectiveness of any relevant government department, agency, statutory body or state-owned corporation.

- (6) Examination of annual and other reports—The Committee may examine any matter in the annual report or other reports of any public body, including:
- (a) the adequacy and accuracy of all financial and operational information, and
 - (b) any matter arising from the annual report or other report concerning the efficient and effective achievement of the agency's objectives.
- (7) Public works—The Committee may consider any matter concerning public works relating to the portfolio area.

Initiation of inquiries

- (8) The Committee may be referred an inquiry by resolution of the House or in writing from a Minister.
- (9) Except in the case of bills, the Committee also may initiate an inquiry on its own motion and report on any proposal, matter or thing relevant to its functions, including an annual report, other report or petition. The Committee can only consider a Bill on referral from the House, in accordance with standing order 323 (Legislation Committees).
- (10) The Committee take care not to duplicate an inquiry into any matters under examination by another portfolio or standing committee of the House, and any question arising in this connection may be referred to the House for determination.

Membership

- (11) The Committee consist of five members, comprising:
- (a) three members supporting the Government (one of whom shall be the Chair), and
 - (b) two members not supporting the Government.
- (12) That the following members of the Legislative Assembly be appointed to serve on the Committee: Mr Charles Casuscelli, Ms Tania Mihailuk, Mr Tim Owen, Mr Greg Piper and Mr Paul Toole.

Sub-committees

- (13) The Committee have the power to appoint sub-committees, consisting of 3 members, and to refer to a sub-committee any of the matters which the Committee is empowered to consider. In this regard, the sub-committee may be responsible for conducting hearings, briefings, visits of inspections and other activities but cannot make decisions concerning the conduct of an inquiry, such as the selection of witnesses, and the Committee's reports.
- (14) The Committee and any sub-committee have power to send for persons and documents, to move from place to place, and to meet and transact business during the sittings or any adjournment of the House, and despite any prorogation of the Houses of Parliament.
- (15) A sub-committee have at least one member supporting the Government and one member not supporting the Government, and a quorum for a sub-committee shall be at least two members.

Visits of inspection

- (16) The Committee have leave to make visits of inspection within the State of New South Wales and other States and Territories of Australia.

(17) Legislative Assembly Committee on Law and Safety

That, notwithstanding anything contained in the standing orders:

- (1) A Portfolio Standing Committee to be known as the Legislative Assembly Committee on Law and Safety be appointed. The following portfolio responsibilities stand referred to the Committee—Attorney General; Justice; Police; Emergency Services; and the Hunter.
- (2) The name and portfolio groupings of the Committee may change to correspond with any changes made by the Government to the relevant portfolios.

Terms of reference

- (3) The Committee may examine, inquire into and report on the following matters concerning its portfolio areas:
- (a) any matter referred to it by the House,
 - (b) any relevant policy, bill or subordinate legislation,
 - (c) any relevant financial matter, and
 - (d) any relevant portfolio issue.

- (4) Legislative scrutiny—The Committee, in this context, have a legislative scrutiny function that shall include evaluating the policy impact and consequences for each portfolio of any relevant bill introduced in Parliament, any existing legislation and any item of subordinate legislation.
- (5) Financial matters—The examination of financial matters by the Committee include the review of government financial management, by considering the financial documents, expenditure, performance and effectiveness of any relevant government department, agency, statutory body or state-owned corporation.
- (6) Examination of annual and other reports—The Committee may examine any matter in the annual report or other reports of any public body, including:
 - (a) the adequacy and accuracy of all financial and operational information, and
 - (b) any matter arising from the annual report or other report concerning the efficient and effective achievement of the agency's objectives.
- (7) Public works—The Committee may consider any matter concerning public works relating to the portfolio area.

Initiation of inquiries

- (8) The Committee may be referred an inquiry by resolution of the House or in writing from a Minister.
- (9) Except in the case of bills, the Committee also may initiate an inquiry on its own motion and report on any proposal, matter or thing relevant to its functions, including an annual report, other report or petition. The Committee can only consider a Bill on referral from the House, in accordance with standing order 323 (Legislation Committees).
- (10) The Committee take care not to duplicate an inquiry into any matters under examination by another portfolio or standing committee of the House, and any question arising in this connection may be referred to the House for determination.

Membership

- (11) The Committee consist of five members, comprising:
 - (a) three members supporting the Government (one of whom shall be the Chair), and
 - (b) two members not supporting the Government.
- (12) That the following members of the Legislative Assembly be appointed to serve on the Committee: Mr John Barilaro, Mr Garry Edwards, Mr Nickola Lalich, Mr Jai Rowell and Mr Guy Zangari.

Sub-committees

- (13) The Committee have the power to appoint sub-committees, consisting of 3 members, and to refer to a sub-committee any of the matters which the Committee is empowered to consider. In this regard, the sub-committee may be responsible for conducting hearings, briefings, visits of inspections and other activities but cannot make decisions concerning the conduct of an inquiry, such as the selection of witnesses, and the Committee's reports.
- (14) The Committee and any sub-committee have power to send for persons and documents, to move from place to place, and to meet and transact business during the sittings or any adjournment of the House, and despite any prorogation of the Houses of Parliament.
- (15) A sub-committee have at least one member supporting the Government and one member not supporting the Government, and a quorum for a sub-committee shall be at least two members.

Visits of inspection

- (16) The Committee have leave to make visits of inspection within the State of New South Wales and other States and Territories of Australia.

(18) Legislative Assembly Committee on Environment and Regulation

That, notwithstanding anything contained in the standing orders:

- (1) A Portfolio Standing Committee to be known as the Legislative Assembly Committee on Environment and Regulation be appointed. The following portfolio responsibilities stand referred to the Committee—Environment; Heritage; Small Business; Local Government; Fair Trading; Primary Industries; Resources and Energy; and the North Coast.
- (2) The name and portfolio groupings of the Committee may change to correspond with any changes made by the Government to the relevant portfolios.

Terms of reference

- (3) The Committee may examine, inquire into and report on the following matters concerning its portfolio areas:
- (a) any matter referred to it by the House,
 - (b) any relevant policy, bill or subordinate legislation,
 - (c) any relevant financial matter, and
 - (d) any relevant portfolio issue.
- (4) Legislative scrutiny—The Committee, in this context, have a legislative scrutiny function that shall include evaluating the policy impact and consequences for each portfolio of any relevant bill introduced in Parliament, any existing legislation and any item of subordinate legislation.
- (5) Financial matters—The examination of financial matters by the Committee include the review of government financial management, by considering the financial documents, expenditure, performance and effectiveness of any relevant government department, agency, statutory body or state-owned corporation.
- (6) Examination of annual and other reports—The Committee may examine any matter in the annual report or other reports of any public body, including:
- (a) the adequacy and accuracy of all financial and operational information, and
 - (b) any matter arising from the annual report or other report concerning the efficient and effective achievement of the agency's objectives.
- (7) Public works—The Committee may consider any matter concerning public works relating to the portfolio area.

Initiation of inquiries

- (8) The Committee may be referred an inquiry by resolution of the House or in writing from a Minister.
- (9) Except in the case of bills, the Committee also may initiate an inquiry on its own motion and report on any proposal, matter or thing relevant to its functions, including an annual report, other report or petition. The Committee can only consider a Bill on referral from the House, in accordance with standing order 323 (Legislation Committees).
- (10) The Committee take care not to duplicate an inquiry into any matters under examination by another portfolio or standing committee of the House, and any question arising in this connection may be referred to the House for determination.

Membership

- (11) The Committee consist of five members, comprising:
- (a) three members supporting the Government (one of whom shall be the chair), and
 - (b) two members not supporting the Government.
- (12) That the following members of the Legislative Assembly be appointed to serve on the Committee: Mrs Tanya Davies, Mr Thomas George, Mr Jamie Parker, Mr Chris Patterson and Ms Carmel Tebbutt.

Sub-committees

- (13) The Committee have the power to appoint sub-committees, consisting of 3 members, and to refer to a sub-committee any of the matters which the Committee is empowered to consider. In this regard, the sub-committee may be responsible for conducting hearings, briefings, visits of inspections and other activities but cannot make decisions concerning the conduct of an inquiry, such as the selection of witnesses, and the Committee's reports.
- (14) The Committee and any sub-committee have power to send for persons and documents, to move from place to place, and to meet and transact business during the sittings or any adjournment of the House, and despite any prorogation of the Houses of Parliament.
- (15) A sub-committee have at least one member supporting the Government and one member not supporting the Government, and a quorum for a sub-committee shall be at least two members.

Visits of inspection

- (16) The Committee have leave to make visits of inspection within the State of New South Wales and other States and Territories of Australia.

(19) Substitute Committee Members

That, during the current session, unless otherwise ordered, the following sessional order be adopted:

- (1) Where a member of a Portfolio or a Specialist Standing Committee finds they are unable to continue to sit on the Committee temporarily they may stand down for a period of time, or for a particular inquiry, and a member may be appointed by the House as their substitute for the period concerned.
- (2) If the House is not sitting, the member unable to attend a meeting of the Committee may, in writing to the chair of the Committee, nominate a member to act as a substitute member at that meeting.
- (3) If the member is incapacitated or unavailable, a letter to the Chair of the Committee nominating a member to act as a substitute member of the Committee may be signed on behalf of the member by the office holders responsible for nominating members to the Committee.
- (4) The substitute member has all the rights of a Committee member, including to participate in all Committee proceedings and to vote on any question before the Committee.

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

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I acknowledge the presence in the gallery of Sendi Siregar, Vice Consul of the Republic of Indonesia, who is a guest of the member for Tweed. I also acknowledge the presence of Robert Quirk, a leading sugarcane grower and Australia's only representative on the International Sugar Board, who is also a guest of the member for Tweed.

FATHER FINIAN EGAN POLICE INVESTIGATION**Personal Explanation**

Mr GREG SMITH (Epping—Attorney General, and Minister for Justice) [2.16 p.m.], by leave: Last night Channel 7 *News* ran a story about my association with a Catholic priest whom Channel 7 claims will be charged with child abuse offences. I am a parishioner of St Gerard Majella's Church at Carlingford. Father Finian Egan was the parish priest there from the time I moved into the area in 1996 until about 2000. Since that time we have had occasional contact. The last time I saw or spoke to him was in about July last year. The only other contact I have had with him since then came through two third parties. The complaints made against Father Egan are the subject of a police investigation. It would therefore be inappropriate for me to make any further comment.

PARLIAMENTARY STAFF RETIREMENTS**Ministerial Statement**

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL (Ku-ring-gai—Premier, and Minister for Western Sydney) [2.17 p.m.]: Madam Speaker, at 10.30 a.m. today a number of longstanding employees of this place were farewelled in your courtyard. Regrettably, because I was farewelling the Italian Consul-General Benedetto Latteri I was unable to attend. However, I do want to place on record my appreciation for the service of Nina Barrett, Catherine McLean, Margherita Lorenzato and Terry Parker. I particularly acknowledge the outstanding service that Margherita and Terry have provided to this place. Margherita has worked here for 31 years, starting as a part-time cleaner, becoming an attendant in this place—which is the role she occupied when I arrived here in 1995—and finishing her time here sorting the mountains of mail that still arrive despite the best attempts of social media to reduce it.

Terry Parker's 40 years in this place exceeds Margherita's by almost a decade. He started work in another place in 1975, was a parliamentary attendant from 1980 until 1996, and was also an attendant in this place when I arrived in 1995. He has also been delivering mail to us since 1996. These people assist this place to operate. While all the focus and media attention is on members of Parliament, other people work in this place day in and day out to make our work possible. At times they ensure that the place runs despite us. They also ensure that parliamentary democracy continues in such a way that the people of this State can be proud. I acknowledge their service to the Parliament.

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON (Blacktown—Leader of the Opposition) [2.18 p.m.]: I also pay tribute to the staff members who are retiring and acknowledge the contribution they have made to the operation of the

Parliament over many years. This is an extraordinary place where we ask much of the people who work behind the scenes. We often work strange and extraordinary hours—debates go on and on, and on and on—and we expect the staff to be here to ensure that this place functions as it should. I know that people can find leaving the workplace quite traumatic. These people have spent the bulk of their working life in this place in various roles. On behalf of the Opposition I thank them for their contributions. Parliamentary staffing is currently being reviewed and I ask that the Government tread warily and deal with staff in the appropriate way.

The SPEAKER: I also attended the function this morning and expressed on behalf of all members our gratitude for the long years of service performed by those staff members and offered them our good wishes for their retirement. I thank the member for Mount Druitt, who also attended the function.

Mr Barry O'Farrell: He has been here as long.

The SPEAKER: He has, indeed.

QUESTION TIME

[Question time commenced at 2.23 p.m.]

DEATHS IN CUSTODY

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: My question is addressed to the Attorney General. Why did the Attorney table a report into deaths in custody late last month in which an individual was identified by name, despite the court making a non-publication order to suppress the identity of the deceased?

Mr GREG SMITH: The report was by the Coroner. The Coroner was the person who made the suppression order. I have no right to amend the Coroner's report and I understand that the Coroner will provide me with a corrected report so that I can table it.

PUBLIC SERVICE EMPLOYMENT

Mr THOMAS GEORGE: I address my question to the Premier. What steps is the Government taking to end Labor's public sector orts?

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: The member for Lismore knows full well the value of public services and the importance of providing public services, particularly in rural and regional areas of the State. The member for Lismore is a strong supporter, for instance, of our plans to establish a public service commission to return independence, professionalism and fearlessness so that we get the best possible advice and, as a result, the best possible services out of our professional public servants across New South Wales. That contrasts with 16 years in office by those opposite. It is no wonder that New South Wales became known as a basket case under Labor when one considers that it allowed public servants to remain on the payroll for up to and over five years without a permanent job.

It is hard to imagine how any government could countenance a situation where hundreds of workers without jobs are allowed to remain on the payroll, but that is what happened under the Government of those opposite. It happened because they could not make the tough calls; they could not make the tough decisions. Currently 390 excess employees are in the New South Wales public service, 56 of whom have not held a permanent role for at least 12 months, 25 of whom have been without a permanent role for five years and, remarkably, one of whom has been without a permanent role since 1995. What sort of administration allows that to happen? I will tell you: a hopeless, incompetent administration that deserved to be, and was, thrown out in record numbers on 26 March. On 26 March the people of New South Wales elected a government to make tough decisions.

We are not going to sit back and allow taxpayers to be hit with a \$5.3 million bill, for instance, for 56 employees who have not held a permanent role for 12 months or more. The Liberal-Nationals Government will end Labor's policy of no forced redundancies. From 1 August we will reduce the period for retaining excess employees from 12 months to three months. That is right: from 12 months to three months. If displaced public servants have not found a permanent job after three months, they will be given a forced redundancy. Once again,

this is in line with our election commitments outlined in the document released by the Treasurer in January this year. For those 390 excess employees we have already identified, special arrangements will be put in place to encourage them to leave the public service immediately.

That includes a generous redundancy payment and a \$10,000 one-off incentive payment to leave within a month. If they decline the offer, they will be made a less generous offer and they will be subject to the new scheme from 1 August so that they will have to find a permanent role within three months or receive a forced redundancy. It is no longer an option for public servants to stay in jobs indefinitely and be paid by taxpayers indefinitely. We are going to run the public service like any other business, and that means providing a redundancy system that is fair but sensible. And, for the first time in decades, government departments will be willing to restructure and make their operations more efficient because they will not have to worry about carrying a redundant employee for more than 12 months.

[*Interruption*]

The Leader of the Opposition unwisely interjects about where we are getting our advice. Well may he ask, because I have in my hand a copy of the Public Sector Employment Management Amendment (Displaced Employees) Bill 2005, a bill the political editor of the *Daily Telegraph* is well aware of, a bill about which he broke a story in 2007, and a bill that was approved by Cabinet before the 2007 State election but was blocked by the union movement from coming into effect.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: I would have concluded my answer by now if not for that interjection. When the august political editor of the *Daily Telegraph* asked the spokesman for Unions NSW, Secretary John Robertson, on 16 March 2007 about existence of the bill—

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: —did he disown any knowledge of it? No. He said, "It's an ongoing discussion."

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: We are not going to have discussions. The changes we have announced today will save taxpayers \$16 million a year. That is \$16 million a year that can be put into front-line services that people across this State deserve. We will end those union-Labor rorts whenever we come across them.

SMOKING AND HEALTH

Ms LINDA BURNEY: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Healthy Lifestyles. Could the Minister please outline to the House the effect that cigarette smoking has on the community?

Mr KEVIN HUMPHRIES: I thank the member for her question. I left teaching in 2001, and I would think of that as a grade 3 question. Was the question: What effect does smoking have on the community?

Ms Linda Burney: Yes.

Mr KEVIN HUMPHRIES: An amazing question. My answer is: It is not good for you.

Ms Carmel Tebbutt: Point of order: The standing orders are quite clear. The Minister should not debate the question, but rather answer the question.

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

Mr KEVIN HUMPHRIES: Apart from not being good for you—

The SPEAKER: Order! An Opposition member asked the question, and Opposition members should listen to the answer.

Mr KEVIN HUMPHRIES: I can outline the New South Wales Tobacco Strategy if that is what the member is asking about. The action plan in healthy lifestyles was certainly set up to help prevent the uptake of smoking, given that smoking is one of the leading killers from chronic disease, not just in this State but right across the country. Do we know that there is an issue around smoking and preventing its uptake? Yes, we do. One thing that the Cancer Council and other groups in the community have done well is decrease smoking rates. From memory, over the past seven or eight years the smoking rate has decreased from about 24 per cent to about 14 per cent or 15 per cent of the population. However, such efforts have not worked on some groups, as members opposite would know, and for that reason we need to take a more targeted approach on the prevention of uptake, particularly with regard to some of our more vulnerable communities.

One of the groups that we will seek to target in this term of government to prevent their uptake of smoking is pregnant Aboriginal women, for whom I am sure the member for Canterbury would have some concern given that today 50 per cent of Aboriginal women who are pregnant still smoke. That is more than double the average statistic for the general community. Another group in relation to which smoking is still on the increase is teenage girls. We know there is an issue there. Part of our commitment—and this has been discussed with the department—is to re-emphasise the focus we need to take on preventing the uptake of smoking in our community. Interestingly, I read recently that there is still one political party—and not just in this State—that is negotiating for donations from cigarette companies, and that is the New South Wales Labor Party through its affiliation with New South Wales unions. That was reported publicly last week. We have had no comment or disclaimer about that from the Opposition.

So we still have one party in this State and country that is still negotiating with cigarette companies for political donations. I am interested to hear any comment at all on this issue, but to date members opposite have been largely silent in that regard. It seems there are rules for some and other rules for the minority on the Opposition benches. One of the reasons that Labor members are in the minority, and will remain in the minority, is their disengagement and disconnect with the community of New South Wales. As I said yesterday, they did not walk away from the community of New South Wales, they crawled away—and they crawled into a very deep, dark hole. And they will be there for a long time. They cannot continue to live by rules different from those that apply to others. They have continued to be hypocrites, and people have worked them out. That is one thing for which the member for Canterbury and the Leader of the Opposition will be acknowledged. The people of New South Wales spot a fake.

[Interruption]

I hope members opposite can count; they certainly cannot read and write. The people of New South Wales have worked it out; members opposite are hypocrites.

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

Mr KEVIN HUMPHRIES: They have not learnt from the results of 26 March, and they will continue to pay for that. As for the question asked by the member for Canterbury, I repeat: No, smoking is not good for you.

WARATAH TRAIN PROJECT

Mr DARREN WEBBER: My question is directed to the Minister for Transport. What are the latest developments in the delivery of the Waratah train?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I thank the member for his question, which raises a very serious issue. On 20 April this year RailCorp took delivery of the first of 78 trains to be built under a public-private partnership that was signed by the previous Labor Government five years ago. This train set was received for testing, as per the contract, pending acceptance by RailCorp. RailCorp proceeded to test the set to ensure it was ready to be put into passenger service. In what has proven to be a microcosm of this messy Labor deal, a number of faults were uncovered in the train set delivered to RailCorp. For instance, there are problems with the internal passenger message screens; the screen on which the guards view closed circuit television footage of passengers boarding and leaving the train is difficult to see in some light; and in the past few days it was discovered that the wrong bolts had been used to secure seats to the floor. As I said, a number of faults, most of them minor thankfully, were identified. Work is continuing to resolve these issues to get this train on the tracks as soon as possible.

The SPEAKER: Order! All members should be interested in this answer.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: While the complications have been many, they should not ultimately be an obstacle to having the Waratah in passenger service.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Cabramatta will come to order. I call the member for Mount Druitt to order.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: The obstacles now are commercial negotiations between the private companies involved in the deal, Downer and Reliance Rail, and their lead financiers Syncora and FGIC. This mess has its genesis, as so many messes do, in the actions of the previous Labor Government. In June 2004 the then Minister for Transport, Michael Costa, announced a public-private partnership to replace CityRail's 498 non-airconditioned carriages in six years. Labor promised to have these new trains in service in 2010. In February 2004 another Labor transport Minister, John Watkins, confirmed the construction and delivery of the new trains, but he went even further. Mr Watkins, in a media release dated 24 February 2006, said:

These state-of-the-art carriages will start rolling out into service as early as 2008, with all carriages in service by 2010.

So Labor's story was changing and these trains would now magically appear on our tracks in 2008. That was an incredible claim because I can now inform the House that construction of the first Waratah shell did not even begin until July 2008. It would be remiss of me not to mention the involvement of the former Minister for Transport, now the Leader of the Opposition, in this matter. On 16 June last year, speaking in the other place, he said that the Waratahs would "start to be delivered later this year," that is, 2010. Further, in November last year he told the media that the trains would be in service by April 2011. What convenient timing.

He plucked out a post-election date because he knew it would not be his problem. Labor's record of dealing with the private sector is utterly appalling. The Waratah train project has been a mess. There is no other way to describe it. I am aware of suggestions that the Government may step in to provide financial support to Reliance Rail, the company that signed the deal with the previous Labor Government. My colleague the Treasurer will have more to say about the financial aspects of the deal, but, as Minister for Transport, let me send this message loud and clear: We want these trains, but not at any price. We want our trains to be more modern and more comfortable, but we will protect the interests of taxpayers.

The fact is that the contract that Labor signed with Reliance Rail was deeply flawed and, as I said, my colleague the Treasurer will comment further on that. We cannot change what happened and we are working hard to find solutions. I encourage all parties who have a stake in the delivery of new trains to New South Wales to approach the continuing negotiations in a spirit of goodwill. We have been left with a dreadful mess, thanks to Labor, and we are working to clean it up. In conclusion I repeat: We want these trains, but not at any price. Train travellers deserve new trains. Train travellers also pay tax. They rightly expect us to manage their money responsibly.

MINISTER FOR HEALTHY LIFESTYLES ADVISER

Ms CHERIE BURTON: My question is to the Minister for Healthy Lifestyles. Given his views on the ill effects of smoking and the problems with political parties being linked to the tobacco lobby, why has he employed a former manager of regulatory affairs for British American Tobacco as an adviser?

Mr KEVIN HUMPHRIES: That is a good question. At least he has had a real job, not like some of those opposite. The member is absolutely correct. One of my staff members did work for British American Tobacco in a consultancy role. I am sure the tobacco industry is not very happy about it. One of the ways we wanted to engage in a preventative strategy to reduce smoking uptake—

The SPEAKER: Order! Opposition members asked the question and they will listen to the answer.

Mr KEVIN HUMPHRIES: We actually get to choose our staff, not the apparatchiks that the Opposition inherits. We wanted to know how the industry worked. The tobacco industry was not happy about it. It is part of our preventative health strategy.

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

Mr KEVIN HUMPHRIES: It is about having good information, about having good people on the ground and making sure that we know how the industry works.

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

Mr KEVIN HUMPHRIES: Where were those opposite when their Federal colleagues started to take a preventative stance on smoking at the beginning of the year? Even before this Parliament sat, the Minister for Health and I were backing any preventative uptake strategy related to smoking. Those on the other side were silent on it. We have good staff on this side and we will take the issue seriously. We are not fakes like the people opposite. I am certainly proud of my staff and the contribution they have made to date.

RELIANCE RAIL PROJECT

Mr CHRIS HOLSTEIN: My question is directed to the Treasurer. Can the Treasurer detail to the House the financial issues arising from the former Government's Reliance Rail project?

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I thank the member for his question and for his interest in all things sensible financially. The former Government left many problems, including the \$5.2 billion budget black hole that it forgot to tell us about, the blowouts in the Solar Bonus Scheme—the work of Captain Solar—and the mess of the electricity gentrader transaction. Another significant mess left by the former Government is the Reliance Rail project, which has both construction and financial issues. The Minister for Transport has separately reported on the state of delivery of trains. I will now provide a quick update on the financial issues associated with the project. The former Labor Government used to brag about how clever it was when it came to public-private partnerships. Indeed, on 24 May 2006 Michael Costa said:

In this State, we have used public-private partnerships very effectively; we have led the way on public-private partnerships.

The facts tell a very different story. The Reliance Rail project included an extraordinarily complex and risky financing structure, including an extreme level of debt. Most industrial companies used around 30 per cent to 40 per cent of debt in 2006, with the balance being equity. This provides a buffer for any unexpected and adverse developments that may arise. Public-private and infrastructure projects do tend to have even higher initial gearing. This reflects that such projects are considered to have stable revenues. But Reliance Rail seems to have set the record for the least use of equity with only 6 per cent of the capital base or less than \$150 million being equity. That is, of the \$2.4 billion in capital, about \$2.25 billion was debt. Overlaid on this extreme level of debt was over \$1.5 billion in interest rate and inflation derivatives. The whole package was wrapped—in other words, guaranteed—by two global insurance companies.

Further, additional risk was added by having multiple debt drawdown and refinancing dates. The extreme use of debt significantly increased the risk of the transaction by leaving limited ability to deal with unexpected developments. In December 2006, when the deal was signed, the Government said it all looked very clever. Back then, the debt structure had a credit rating of triple-A with the financiers involved taking out incredible upfront payments of more than \$50 million. It now looks more and more like another complete mess from the former Labor Government. Just last week the ratings agency Standard and Poors again downgraded the credit rating of Reliance Rail debt, this time to triple-C plus, which is some three notches below what is considered investment grade. In other words, well into junk bond status. The financing structure, put simply, was too aggressive and too complicated.

The whole structure is now under pressure as a number of adverse developments have arisen, together with further debt drawdowns starting in February 2012. The global financial crisis, which eliminated the appetite for highly leveraged transactions, and delays in the delivery of trains have worked against us. I would strongly argue that the financiers who put the deal together with the former Government pushed the envelope too far. It was too leveraged, provided no reasonable contingencies and, accordingly, it is no surprise that the project is now at serious risk. It assumed that the extremely favourable finance market conditions that existed just before the global financial crisis would continue for decades into the future. A prudent Government would have required flexibility for the financing of such an important project in order to be able to deal with potential risks.

In response to this situation, the Government anticipates it may need to enter a period of complex and sensitive discussions with involved parties. Our objective is to ensure that the people of New South Wales get their trains, but not at any price. The Government will consider any reasonable proposals that protect the interest of the New South Wales taxpayer. In doing so, we expect that the financiers involved in the funding of Reliance Rail will take responsibility for the risks and funding they were paid to take and provide. We also expect all parties involved will continue to work to ensure the new Waratah trains can be delivered as promised for the people of New South Wales without further delay.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: Given the sensitivity—

[Interruption]

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: He has a hide to talk.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: He was Minister for this project—

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: He is kidding.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: Given the sensitivity of discussions, and to help achieve the best outcome for New South Wales, the Government will refrain from making further public comment on the status of any discussions that might take place. What we are saying is that we are interested in looking after the taxpayers of New South Wales and cleaning up yet another mess left by State Labor.

BROADMEADOW SPORTING PRECINCT

Ms SONIA HORNER: My question is to the Minister for Sport. When will the Minister return control over the Broadmeadow sporting precinct to the people of the Hunter?

Mr GRAHAM ANNESLEY: I thank the member for Wallsend for her question. The new western grandstand at Ausgrid Stadium is virtually complete with a certificate issued on Friday 10 June 2011. The grandstand will increase stadium capacity to 33,000 and provide spectators and guests with improved comfort and convenience as well as corporate facilities for use as meeting and conference spaces outside of event days. There is no question that this is a very good facility, but projects like this cannot be built at any cost.

My decision to remove all members of the authority was made following a budget blowout in funds available to complete the \$78 million western grandstand redevelopment. In this case not only was the authority unable to tell me how or why the budget was exceeded, to make matters worse, the authority was not in a position to pay outstanding invoices, meaning it was technically insolvent. As a result, I have acted to remove the authority and have appointed the Office of Communities on an interim basis while a number of financial and governance issues are dealt with. I have assured the Newcastle Knights and the Newcastle Jets that this decision will have no operational impact on them; it will be business as usual for the teams and their fans.

The six sports, entertainment and leisure precincts controlled by the authority are vital community assets and it is critical that their financial integrity be maintained. They are Ausgrid Stadium, Newcastle International Paceway, Newcastle Showground, Newcastle Exhibition and Entertainment Centre, Newcastle Hockey Centre and District Park. Consequently, I have authorised the Office of Communities to reallocate funds to pay the authority's outstanding invoices for this month, to ensure that the authority will continue to trade and that no contractors are out of pocket.

As of today, all outstanding bills either have been paid or are in the process of being paid. I again emphasise that my decision to take control of the authority was to allay any concerns about their operation, to guarantee payments to suppliers and to ensure that stringent controls are in place regarding future authority operations. The Department of Education and Communities has appointed former senior public servant and current Wollongong council administrator, Bob McGregor, Peter Bell from KPMG, and Janet Milligan from the department to oversee the role of the authority.

Mr Nathan Rees: Point of order: We cannot have this. The Minister actually is answering the question.

The SPEAKER: Order! That is not a point of order. The Minister has the call. I am sure the member for Wallsend would like to hear the balance of the answer to her question.

Mr GRAHAM ANNESLEY: I am merely trying to reverse the trend of the past 16 years. Currently, I am considering options to ensure that local people maintain involvement with the authority. It should be pointed out that all employees of the authority have been retained in their jobs. The New South Wales Government is committed to ensuring communities across the State continue to have access to high-level sports and sporting facilities. But it is imperative that those in charge are fiscally responsible with taxpayer funds.

CARERS

Mr MARK COURE: My question is directed to the Minister for Ageing, and Minister for Disability Services. What action is the Government taking to address issues faced by carers in New South Wales, which was raised at a recent meeting of the Carers Advisory Council?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I thank the member for Oatley for his eminently sensible question and recognise his interest in matters relating to carers, particularly in his local community.

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

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Obviously they do not want to hear this. The question has nothing to do with industrial relations so those opposite have no interest. Carers in this State have suffered enormously in silence: high levels of depression, marriage breakdown, high levels of financial hardship and social isolation. All too often they spend their time fighting government agencies and departments in order to get support services for their loved ones. In opposition the Liberals and The Nationals led by example by introducing the carers recognition legislation; in government we will enact it. It is clear that the 850,000 high-level carers in this State, of which 265,000 are primary carers, make an enormous contribution. Last year Access Economics revealed data that showed carers contribute some \$14 billion in unpaid carer leave to our community. Yet all too often their role remains unrecognised.

The reason for the implementation of the Carers (Recognition) Bill was twofold: first, to enact a carers' charter, which establishes a number of clauses; and, second, to enact a process that enabled carers, particularly primary carers, to have a direct route to government to talk about their concerns and ideas to meet some of their challenges. A fortnight ago I chaired the first Ministerial Advisory Council for Carers and was particularly concerned about some issues faced by carers across this State. Some issues were the most basic things, such as establishing a carers group within a community, and all too often having to deal with challenges about insurance and in some cases a place to meet. I was concerned also to learn about some of the challenges facing young carers in this State: 90,000 carers are under the age of 25 and 40,000 of that number are under the age of 18— incredible statistics.

This demonstrates that too many young people in this State do not enjoy the same benefits as their peers because they must deal with the challenges of looking after someone with a disability, mental illness or chronic illness, or someone who is frail aged. I was pleased to meet Tabitha Wilson, who is a young carer on the advisory council and who resides in Queanbeyan in the Monaro electorate. Tabitha spoke of the enormous challenges she faces, but particularly about her desire to see the establishment of a carers group in her community for young people. She also would like greater awareness amongst the teaching profession about the challenges young carers face during their schooling and beyond the classroom in their home environment where they care for a loved one.

Many carers face this enormously difficult issue. Research clearly shows high levels of depression, upwards of 50 per cent in some instances, and upwards of 25 per cent for severe depression. This Government is determined to provide better support for carers in this State. That is why our five-year disability plan that will commence on 1 July will make available 4,500 more respite places. We are determined to better support the State's carers because for too long government ignored their plight and the challenges they face. The O'Farrell Government is determined to turn that around.

HOMELESSNESS

Ms CLOVER MOORE: My question is directed to the Minister for Family and Community Services. Given that one-third of the city's homeless people live in parks and public spaces of Woolloomooloo, what action will the Minister take to provide permanent housing for this vulnerable group?

Ms PRU GOWARD: I thank the member for her question. Homelessness is of particular importance to the O'Farrell-Stoner Government. It is a critical issue of human dignity and, as the member would know, is extremely challenging. The 2006 census revealed that more than 27,000 people were homeless in New South Wales and, no doubt, that number has increased. Of course, that figure includes a range of people from children and families with small children to the elderly. Woolloomooloo attracts a significant number of rough sleepers for a range of reasons, of which the member also would be aware: proximity to support services, public amenities, including proximity to Central railway station, and a community support reputation that invites the homeless.

The Matthew Talbot Hostel expansion was approved at all government levels, which enabled the number of people in that space to expand. Since becoming Minister I have spent time with my housing staff to learn about the intricacies and challenges of addressing chronic homelessness. Recently I met with a number of service providers who support homeless people to see their work firsthand. Homeless people, particularly rough sleepers, have a range of complex needs; they are not homeless for one single reason. Shelter and meals provided by institutions such as the Matthew Talbot Hostel are crucial, but they are not enough. We need to work better with that hostel to ensure that homeless people have support and activities during the day to enable them to move on from homelessness.

I am aware of recent comments by the member for Sydney and have her letter to me about antisocial behaviour in Woolloomooloo: street drinking, public urination and defecation, offensive noise and arguments in the street throughout the night, especially around Tom Uren Square. I understand that homeless people have made the member aware of the difficulty of getting accommodation and support for their health and welfare needs. I thank the member for making these issues known to the House and to me as Minister.

Cleaning of Tom Uren Square is undertaken five times a week by Housing NSW contractors, in addition to disinfecting the square by the City of Sydney. I am pleased to inform the House that Housing NSW has also recently engaged a new contractor for the cleaning of common areas, streets and laneways owned by Housing NSW. While the department does not have a community development worker based in Woolloomooloo, it engages tenant and community opinion through meetings with the Woolloomooloo Neighbourhood Advisory Board every six weeks. The meetings are also attended by Housing NSW, the Police Force, four tenant representatives, the member for Sydney as the local member, Sydney city council and other service providers. I encourage the city council to ensure that services are provided commensurate with the hostel accommodation available.

To address any antisocial behaviour in Woolloomooloo, Housing NSW and the Kings Cross Local Area Command have devised strategies to work collaboratively and proactively. This includes weekly meetings and providing the police with access to common areas and properties for surveillance activities. We are also investigating the potential for laneway closures around Tom Uren Square and the development of a proposal for the City of Sydney to classify Tom Uren Square as an alcohol-prohibited zone. These issues cannot be resolved by any one level of government, one department, one scheme or one service provider. I look forward to working with the member and the City of Sydney council in addressing issues such as those in Woolloomooloo.

ABORIGINAL HEALTH

Mr JOHN WILLIAMS: My question is directed to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs. What is the Government doing to ensure that we continue to work to close the gap when it comes to Aboriginal health?

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: I thank the member for Murray-Darling for his robust representation of Aboriginal people in New South Wales. Yesterday my colleague the Minister for Health announced \$790,000 in funding for important Aboriginal health projects aimed at closing the gap in health outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in New South Wales. Specifically, funding has been granted to the Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council for medical equipment and training across 16 Aboriginal community controlled health services. Some examples of projects this funding will enable include a foetal heart monitor in Albury-Wodonga; a portable electrocardiogram machine for doctors in Broken Hill; asthma medications, peak flow meters and blood sugar machines in Orange; retinal cameras to detect eye disease for western Sydney, south-western Sydney, Redfern, Griffith, Kempsey and the South Coast; and statewide mental health first aid training for Aboriginal medical staff.

It is clear that there is a strong need for this investment and these projects. The infant mortality rate for babies born to Aboriginal mothers is twice that for babies of non-Aboriginal mothers. Aboriginal people are

more than three times as likely as non-Aboriginal people to die as a result of diabetes and more than 1½ times more likely to die as a result of injury or poisoning. And the list goes on. But these are not just statistics; we speak here of people's lives in the real world, where there has been in part failure by governments to work with Aboriginal people towards improved lives and communities. Sadly, the current situation in Aboriginal health has shown no improvement over the past 16 years. That must be addressed, and the O'Farrell Government is determined to do so.

This includes what has not existed before, that is, unprecedented ministerial cooperation between the Minister for Health, the Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Healthy Lifestyles, and Minister for Western New South Wales and other key Ministers concerned with the cause of closing the gap. I acknowledge that the Minister for Health is a tireless and inspiring leader for making New South Wales number one in health outcomes for all its citizens, including Aboriginal people. I acknowledge the Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Healthy Lifestyles, and Minister for Western New South Wales for his advocacy on behalf of the Aboriginal community and for never tolerating the continuation of human misery. My colleagues and I are strongly of the view that healthy lives are productive lives. It has long been established that there are strong connections between health outcomes and economic outcomes.

While I am pleased to outline this specific initiative in the House today, I note that the O'Farrell Government will be equally focused on and strongly concerned about the underlying causes of ill health among Aboriginal people, especially those in regional and remote communities. Every member in this Chamber would acknowledge that the fight to close the gap for the most economically and socially disadvantaged group in Australian society is full of complexities and challenges. The Auditor-General's report into the Two Ways Together Program identified a number of those complexities and challenges, including a lack of coordination and accountability. It is worth noting the findings of the 2008-09 Productivity Commission's report.

Under the previous administration some \$2.65 billion per year was spent on services relating to Aboriginal people. Of this, on a per capita basis, approximately 25 per cent was spent on public order aspects, whereas only 1 per cent of the \$2.65 billion was spent on labour and employment services. The O'Farrell Government has different priorities from members opposite. Rather than focus on the symptoms we will focus on solutions based on early intervention and prevention. Rather than create programs for program's sake we will listen to Aboriginal communities and work with them for sustainable approaches founded on shared responsibility. This includes approaches that see cultural empowerment and educational performances as critical to economic advancement. Rather than believe that government always knows best we know that communities, including Aboriginal communities, and non-government organisations always know better.

Mr John Williams: Madam Speaker, I request that you give the Minister more time to speak on this matter.

The SPEAKER: Order! The standing orders provide an additional two minutes for the Minister to give additional information.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: I will not be that long. I can see that members opposite are interested in this matter. We will show political leadership—leadership that is desperately needed and that has been lacking over the past 16 years—and accountability. That leadership demands excellence in public service delivery, including for Aboriginal health improvement and for that accountability to be measured against what we promise.

CHINESE TOURISM

Mr NICK LALICH: My question without notice is addressed to the Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Hospitality and Racing, and Minister for the Arts. Will the Minister outline to the House what initiatives the Government is currently working on to attract more Chinese visitors to Sydney, given that China is now Australia's most valuable source of tourism income?

Mr Barry O'Farrell: We're not handing out racist signs in election campaigns.

Mr GEORGE SOURIS: I thank the member for his question, although I did not hear the last 48 words. I will take the question as being generally about the Government's view of the newly created

Destination NSW. I am pleased to indicate to the House the intentions and plans of the O'Farrell-Stoner Government to develop tourism and major events, including the attraction of Chinese visitors and tourists to our country, and to make New South Wales number one again. That has been the issue. In the immediate past the previous administration was riven by division and turf warfare. Five Ministers were fighting over the general tourism portfolio area, so the former Premier created a Cabinet subcommittee to try to put them inside one tent.

Mind you, the subcommittee remained completely dormant. There were three boards and seven advisory committees. There were totally separate silos. There was a proprietary limited company and a partly-owned proprietary limited company. It is no wonder that the whole tourism sector was in despair at the lack of focus, lack of leadership and lack of commitment to tourism as one of the number one industries in this State. The determination I have and that the O'Farrell-Stoner Government has is to commit ourselves to the sector and create once again a tourist destination in New South Wales that very strongly includes the regions. The main thing I want to see is an influx of Chinese visitors—which is occurring—through the arrival of the world's largest airline, China Southern, in Sydney. It is up to us, with a new focus and determination, to attract tourists, including Chinese tourists, to the best parts of Sydney and the regions.

I was delighted yesterday to listen to the agreement in principle debate on the Destination NSW Bill and hear members from the metropolitan areas, our major cities and the regions talking about the attractions—the wonderful heritage and tourist experiences we have—and the welcome that visitors from China and indeed any part of the world will receive in country New South Wales. They are experiences that will last them a lifetime—not only the welcome but the wonderful heritage attractions and the natural beauty of New South Wales, whether on the coast, in the metropolitan areas, the large cities or the regions. That is something the world has yet to discover. They certainly got no leadership, no encouragement, no effort, no focus, no whole-of-government approach—nothing—from members opposite for 16 years. Members would be amazed at the number of emails and SMSs et cetera that I have received from past Ministers for tourism, including the immediate past administration.

Ms Linda Burney: You're on fire.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Canterbury will resume her seat.

Mr GEORGE SOURIS: It is a fiery issue because we bring commitment.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Canterbury will resume her seat.

Mr GEORGE SOURIS: I ask the question: Does the new administration have a commitment to tourism?

Government members: Yes.

Mr GEORGE SOURIS: Does the new administration realise that the greatest, fastest growing market in the world is—

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order.

Mr GEORGE SOURIS: I heard "China", I heard "tourism", and I heard absolutely nothing from members opposite. What would you expect from a former administration that vandalised tourism, vandalised our economy and vandalised our jobs and our security. I can assure the House this Government has the completely opposite view. [*Time expired.*]

Mr Barry O'Farrell: After that bravura performance surely we need an encore and more information.

The SPEAKER: Order! Is the Premier requesting additional information? The time for questions has expired.

Question time concluded at 3.14 p.m.

INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION

Report

The Speaker tabled, pursuant to section 78 of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988, the report of the Independent Commission Against Corruption entitled "Investigation into the corrupt conduct of a Willoughby Council officer", dated June 2011.

Ordered to be printed.

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**.

Haberfield Public School Land Acquisition

Petition requesting support to prevent the compulsory acquisition of Haberfield Public School playground land for private interests and, if necessary, to have the acquisition reversed, received from **Mr Jamie Parker**.

Greendale Planning

Petition requesting the overturning of the joint regional planning panel decision regarding DA-1291/2010 and the suspension of any government decisions regarding cemeteries, crematoria and places of worship in Greendale, received from **Mrs Tanya Davies**.

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**.

PETITIONS

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

Wind Turbine Developments

Petition requesting a moratorium on all wind turbine developments until health, acoustics, visual and property value studies have been conducted and the State Plan for wind farm development has been revised, received from **Ms Katrina Hodgkinson**.

CONSIDERATION OF MOTIONS TO BE ACCORDED PRIORITY

Government Services

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) [3.18 p.m.]: The motion that I propose be accorded priority is:

That this House commends the Government for making the tough but necessary decisions to fix New South Wales and provide people with the services they deserve.

This motion deserves priority because there is nothing more important to the people of New South Wales than delivering quality services at the lowest cost to the taxpayer. Nothing demonstrates more the urgency of this motion today than the waste and extravagance of the unattached list described by the Premier. The unattached list involves people on the public payroll who have no permanent role and who do not have to turn up for work. I can see from the worried look on Opposition members' faces that they think I am talking about the member for Heffron, who is apparently on holidays and has not asked a single question—

Dr Andrew McDonald: Madam Speaker—

The SPEAKER: Order! Does the member for Macquarie Fields rise on a point of order?

Dr Andrew McDonald: There are two points of order.

The SPEAKER: I will hear one point of order at a time.

Dr Andrew McDonald: The first is that the member is meant to be arguing priority and the second relates to the standing order that states that attacks on other members must be by way of substantive motion.

The SPEAKER: Order! I draw the attention of the member for Cronulla to both points of order.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: I am not talking about the member for Heffron; I am talking about 390 public servants who have no permanent role but who remain on the public payroll. This motion needs to be accorded priority because every day we sit here 390 public servants are sitting somewhere with nothing meaningful to do. Money is wasted and is not available for teachers, nurses, police, infrastructure and matters that are essential to the taxpayers and consumers of New South Wales. Fifty-six of those employees have been excess to requirements for more than a year and 25 have not had a permanent role for more than five years. One of them was declared excess in 1995.

This matter is urgent and deserves to be accorded priority because nothing is more important than providing quality services at the lowest cost to the taxpayers of New South Wales. That is why it is important that this House debate why we need to fix the waste and mismanagement that 16 years of Labor Government have produced. The motion deserves priority today because over the past decade the economic performance of this State, which is meant to be the premier State, has lagged the nation: We have had the slowest economic growth of any major State.

Mr John Robertson: Point of order: The member is misleading the House. It was Nick Greiner—

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

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: This motion must be accorded priority because we have been left with the legacy of the lowest job growth of any mainland State, after 16 years of Labor.

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

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: This motion must be accorded priority because we were left with a legacy of the lowest business confidence of any State. This motion deserves priority because we have the legacy of a Government that has failed to live within its means, a Government that spent \$16 million more than it budgeted over the past seven years to 2009-10. This motion must be accorded priority because if we do not rein in the waste and mismanagement of those opposite in a few years' time we will face the greatest risk to our triple-A credit rating. That is why today we must deal with the waste and mismanagement that our Labor opponents have left us as a matter of urgency. We must debate this matter urgently because we face Labor administration debt has risen from \$1.5 billion in 2006 to almost \$10 billion last year. Unless we do something it is projected to rise to \$15.8 billion by 2014. This motion should be accorded priority so that we can get on with giving the people of New South Wales the services they deserve.

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

Government Performance

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON (Blacktown—Leader of the Opposition) [3.23 p.m.]: My motion should be accorded priority because just nine calendar days ago an almost identical Government motion was moved and debated in this House and to argue again that something that was recently debated should be accorded priority is absurd in the extreme. As this is the last day of the session I also argue that we should debate my motion because it is appropriate that we review the track record of this new Government, which promised real change, higher standards and greater public accountability. The Premier promised an end to spin.

Mr Brad Hazzard: Today is the second last day.

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: I stand corrected by the Leader of the House.

The SPEAKER: Order! That is wishful thinking.

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: Yes, I know, by all parties. The Premier promised an end to spin—high ideals. My motion deserves priority so we can review what the people of New South Wales received in return for that trust. The Premier's promise to end spin has been broken. It is a matter of public record that the Premier could not even last the distance from Government House to Parliament House before launching the oldest spin in the play book, the oldest classic when he tried to convince New South Wales the cupboard was bare. They laid it on with a trowel. A multibillion-dollar black hole, they cried. But did it exist? The Department of Treasury said it did not.

The Parliamentary Budget Office said it did not, but the Premier and the Treasurer continue to insist, even to this day, that they can still see a black hole. Spin at warp speed. The promise of greater independence and integrity in our public sector has been broken. The independence and integrity of the Parliamentary Budget Office was rewarded by having its lights turned off—not shut down, members will understand; they just did not employ anyone. We know that is a signal to all senior public servants to not even think about providing professional and apolitical advice to this Premier, because their reward will be a kneecapping.

I will need to quicken my pace as my time is expiring and I have so many broken promises and so little time. What about the promise that Infrastructure NSW would be independent from political interference? Broken in spectacular fashion. Headed by a former Premier and reporting exclusively to the current Liberal Premier and, no doubt, a soon to be future Premier if the Treasurer is still here. Nothing could be more political than Infrastructure NSW. What about the promise to uphold legally binding contracts under the Solar Bonus Scheme? Broken, broken, broken, and then the Premier backflipped so dramatically it is a wonder he is not in traction. What about the promise to hand back planning control to local councils? Broken again. Part 3A, by any other name, is still part 3A.

Mr Brad Hazzard: Point of order—

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: Ooh.

Mr Brad Hazzard: It was not that exciting. I point out that, unfortunately, the Clerks made a mistake, not that I do not want to listen to these words of wisdom, and gave the Leader of the Opposition seven minutes. He has actually two minutes more than he should have. Having in mind that I have just interrupted, I have no objection if he gets another two minutes, but he is well passed that. I am worried that he might run out of paperwork.

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: I can fill the time.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! The clock is being adjusted by two minutes.

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: Ten minutes.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! The clock is being adjusted by two minutes. The member may get an extra 10 seconds if he continues speaking while the adjustment is being made.

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: Part 3A by any other name is still part 3A. Local councils still have the Government deciding major projects in their patch, except now they have had the insult of having a ton of projects taken out of the planning Minister's too-hard basket and dumped on them. No new powers, no new money and no new staff but "Here, sort this out for me, will you?" What a friend of local government he has turned out to be! What about the promise to have higher standards of scrutiny in the Parliament—broken when they silenced the independent Parliamentary Budget Office, and gagged the Parliament for the first time in more than a century with Standing Order 99. What about the promise that there was no threat to our public servants?

We just heard the member for Cronulla talk about that broken promise—broken with a massive betrayal of the many front-line workers who, I am prepared to acknowledge, probably voted for the Coalition for the first time in their lives. Does that betrayal deserve our attention? Last but not least, what about the very public promise that police would be exempt from the Premier's WorkChoices-style Act? Broken, broken, broken. Our police have been misled, our public servants have been deceived, and the people of New South Wales have been insulted by the new depths of spin and deception from this Government—no real change, no higher standards and one great big broken contract with the people of New South Wales.

Question—That the motion of Mr Mark Speakman be accorded priority—put and resolved in the affirmative.

STANDING ORDERS AND PROCEDURE COMMITTEE**Appointment and Membership**

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Infrastructure NSW) [3.28 p.m.], by leave: It is necessary to deal with the Standing Orders and Procedures Committee and to make various appointments to that committee, therefore I move:

That:

- (1) a Standing Orders and Procedure Committee be appointed to inquire into, and report on any matter relating to the standing orders or the procedures of the House and its committees;
- (2) notwithstanding anything contained in the standing orders, such Committee consist of: The Speaker, Mr Richard Amery, Mr Stuart Ayres, Mr Michael Daley, Mr Andrew Fraser, Mr Thomas George, Mr Brad Hazzard, Mr Paul Lynch, Mr Daryl Maguire and Mr Richard Torbay;

Ms Linda Burney: Not one girl.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: That shows how sensible they are. They do not want to be on this committee.

- (3) the committee have leave to sit during the sittings or any adjournment of the House, and despite any prorogation of the Houses of Parliament; and

Just out of interest is the Speaker not a girl? I am just checking.

Ms Linda Burney: This is about standing orders.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: I am just answering your question.

[Interruption]

I will finish the motion:

- (4) the Committee have leave to make visits of inspection within the State of New South Wales and other States and Territories of Australia.

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

Motion agreed to.

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

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Infrastructure NSW) [3.31 p.m.]: I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to permit the passage through all remaining stages, at this or any subsequent sitting of the Regional Relocation (Home Buyers Grant) Bill 2011.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) [3.31 p.m.]: In passing, might I say that I think there is a conspiracy between the Leader of the House and the Treasurer. More often than not, bills that are the subject of motions of suspension to enable their passage through all stages, without notice to the Opposition, seem to be bills that relate to the junior Treasurer. I wonder whether the Leader of the House is trying to protect the Treasurer and his bills from scrutiny. But I move on from that observation. Yesterday I made the point that the Opposition has been entirely reasonable in allowing the Government's legislative program to proceed in the early days of its administration. The Leader of the House has indicated to me that the other place is short of business. On the basis that this is a very simple bill, and that the Opposition is unlikely to oppose it, we will not object on this occasion to the suspension motion. However, I would encourage the Leader of the House to get his act together and to run the House a little more efficiently. If he cannot run this House, what hope has the Government got of running this State?

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

Motion agreed to.

GOVERNMENT SERVICES**Motion Accorded Priority**

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) [3.33 p.m.]: I move:

That this House commends the Government for making the tough but necessary decisions to fix New South Wales and provide people with the services they deserve.

This Government must make, has made and will make the tough but necessary decisions to fix New South Wales and provide its citizens with the services they deserve. Those tough but necessary decisions must be made because of the legacy that we on this side of the House have been left after 16 years of Labor government. Over the past decade economic performance in this State has lagged behind that of the nation. New South Wales has had the slowest economic growth of any major Australian State. That is not just comparing New South Wales with the resource-rich States of Queensland and Western Australia. Even by comparison with the benchmark of Victoria, New South Wales has lagged badly. Over the past decade we have had the lowest jobs growth record of any mainland State in Australia, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, and for 54 of the last 60 months under Labor, the unemployment rate in New South Wales was higher than the national average.

New South Wales has had the lowest business confidence of any State. According to the Sensis Business Confidence Index, under Labor, New South Wales had the lowest support for State government policies for 26 of 27 quarters. Indeed, according to the Budget Papers for 2002-03 to 2009-10, the past administration failed to live within its means, spending \$12 billion more than had been budgeted over the past seven years. If expenses continue to grow at that rate, an average of 6.5 per cent for the four years to 2009-10, according to Treasury this State's triple-A credit will be lost. Debt, under Labor, has risen from \$1.5 billion in 2006 to almost \$10 billion in 2010, and is projected to rise to \$15.8 billion by 2014.

In New South Wales that represents an increase from \$220 to nearly \$2,100 per person. Net financial liabilities across government more than doubled, from \$50 billion in June 2006 to a projected \$110 billion in 2014. So something has to be done urgently. The O'Farrell Government is faced with a mess and it has a massive mandate from the people of New South Wales to fix that mess. The people expect us to fix it, they are entitled to expect us to fix it and we will fix it. We in this Parliament have frequently heard about the \$5.2-billion black hole that has been left to the incoming administration. Unless something is done to fix the mess, the Government will be borrowing to pay its day-to-day bills, including for wages.

Nothing illustrates more the incompetence of the previous Labor administration than the solar bonus bungle. The recent KPMG independent audit that was commissioned by the Government estimates that cost to be \$1.44 billion. Doing rough-and-ready calculations, rounding that figure to \$1.5 billion for the purpose of a back-of-the-envelope exercise, and dividing it by, say, \$100,000 as the cost of employing a nurse, policeman or teacher, including on-costs for superannuation, leave and so on, it becomes clear that that money could be spent on employing 20,000 nurses, firemen, police or teachers for a year, or 5,000 of them for four years.

So over the next four years our schools, hospitals, fire stations and police stations will have 5,000 fewer front-line service personnel because of the \$1.44-billion waste of the previous Government. This spending could not be argued to be cost efficient in terms of addressing climate change. There have been estimates that each tonne of carbon dioxide emissions saved by this scheme will cost the taxpayer somewhere between \$300 and \$500. That is a complete and utter waste of money. The new Government of New South Wales needs to do something to fix the mess.

It needs to fix the mess that the unattached list represents. That is because money we can save is money that we can put into front-line services. Our attack on the unattached list, our attack on that waste and mismanagement, that scandal and that rort, is a way to save money so that we can employ more teachers, firemen, nurses and others on front-line service personnel. We are not doing anything with the unattached list with those front-line people. Rather, we are committed to employing almost 2,500 extra nurses and 900 extra teachers. This is a government that is committed to maintaining and improving the quality of front-line services here in New South Wales.

This is a government that also has made the tough but necessary decision about Infrastructure NSW. Why is that a tough decision? It is a tough decision because it would be very easy for us to have some kind of politician slush fund, draw a line on the map and allocate the money to where it suits us, where we think we will

pick up votes in marginal seats. However, rather than do that, the Government is committed to giving the taxpayer the best bang for his or her buck. The Government is committed to having an expert group look at the best way to spend taxpayer dollars. The Government will not waste \$500 million on the Rozelle metro or \$1.44 billion on solar panels, but it is committed to giving the people of New South Wales the services they deserve.

Mr NATHAN REES (Toongabbie) [3.40 p.m.]: I speak against the motion accorded priority. My learned friend is confusing tough decisions with instinctive decisions. There are three big decisions that this Government has made since it came to power, and each one of them has involved an attack on the working men and women of New South Wales. The Government cut a swathe through the Occupational Health and Safety Act and then it neutered the independent umpire in the Industrial Relations Commission. Now those opposite have the hide to come in here today and, with a smile on their collective face, talk about sacking 390 people, who, after this Government has finished with them, are going to struggle to pay their mortgage, struggle to pay their rent and struggle to rear their children.

They are big decisions, but they are not tough decisions. When a foal is born its instincts are to stand, like a fish instinctively wants to swim; the Liberal-Nationals' instincts are to get stuck into workers and their families. Let us do away with the fallacy that these are tough decisions. They are big decisions, but they are reflexive decisions. They are not tough at all because they are part of the DNA of those opposite. Let us talk about some of the decisions that this Government has not made. We have not seen hide nor hair of the 130 train services that were announced for western Sydney. We do not know where they are going to be, we do not know when they are going to be there and we do not know the rollout period.

With regard to my own shadow portfolio of the Arts, despite the Government's new-found commitment to western Sydney, it has not decided to allocate more than 50 per cent of the Sydney Festival arts program to western Sydney. It has not made a tough decision as to whether to commit to the arts precinct in Parramatta—I know the member for Granville is on record as having backed that project. The Government has not committed to a real increase in health spending. It has not committed to matching demand, let alone increasing real spending. It certainly has not made the tough decision and said no to tobacco company donations. When it comes to the environment, the Government has not made a decision at all.

Mr Gareth Ward: Point of order: This is not a debate about things that the member for Toongabbie failed to do when he was Premier; this is a debate about things that the Government is actually doing now.

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

Mr Gareth Ward: I ask that he be brought back to the leave of the priority motion.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): I am sure the member for Toongabbie is just about to return to the leave of the motion.

Mr NATHAN REES: I will come directly to the things that the Government is failing to do now. I have a whole range of notes and I could have gone on for another 20 minutes or so, but instead I turn to the defining document to demonstrate the dirty mind of Government members' collective consciousness. For the purposes of Hansard, I am referring to the allocation of Acts. This document allocates each Act of Parliament to a Minister—and guess what? There is page after page of different Acts jointly allocated to any number of Ministers because the new transparent and accountable Government could not decide who would be responsible for them. I will walk members through each of the Acts. Responsibility for the Anti-Discrimination Act is with the Premier and also with the Attorney General. The Anzac Memorial (Building) Act, which one would think was pretty straightforward, is the joint responsibility of the Premier and the Minister for Citizenship and Communities.

Responsibility for the Community Relations Commission and Principles of Multiculturalism Act is also with the Minister for Citizenship and Communities. The Essential Services Act is a fair cop. Responsibility for the Public Finance and Audit Act, except for schedule 1, lies with the Treasurer. The Public Sector Employment and Management Act—I know it is dear to the hearts of those opposite; they want to gut it—and chapter 7 is administered by the Minister for Finance and Services and the senior Treasurer. The Returned and Services League of Australia (New South Wales Branch) Incorporation Act is administered jointly by the Minister for Citizenship and Communities. All elements of the Water Industry Competition Act sit with the Premier—not the water Minister—except part 3, which is with the Minister for Finance and Services.

Here is the doozy. The document says, "The Minister for Regional Infrastructure and Services has joint administration of all Acts listed for the Minister for Primary Industries, which are not listed below". So I turned to the list for the Minister for Primary Industries and did a quick count. I might be out by one or two, but I counted 106 Acts that are jointly administered by the Minister for Regional Infrastructure and Services and the Minister for Primary Industries. If that is a recipe for transparency and accountability, I will walk down Pitt Street—no, I will refrain from making a comment.

Leaving aside the issues around transparency and accountability, there is a serious question about how the Government develops public policy and who is accountable for what in the Coalition Government. Some 106 Acts are allocated jointly to two people. Where those two Ministers disagree on a point, the Government cannot claim that it has a policy—to point out the obvious. I could go on. The Minister for Health has joint administration of all Acts listed for the Minister for Mental Health and Minister for Healthy Lifestyles. The Cancer Institute (NSW) Act is administered jointly with the Minister for Medical Research, as is the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (NSW), except for section 165B and so on insofar as it relates to the Attorney General. The Minister for Education—

Mr Stuart Ayres: Point of order: I know that the colleagues of the member for Toongabbie are upstairs watching this audition for the leadership, but I would really like him to come back to the relevance of the motion.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! That is not a point of order. I am sure the member for Toongabbie is about to return to the leave of the motion.

Mr NATHAN REES: This is entirely relevant. If the assertion is that the allocation of Acts of Government is not relevant to making tough decisions and to the motion accorded priority, then I do not know what is. The Minister for Police and Emergency Services administers child protection jointly with the Attorney General, the Community Welfare Act jointly with the Minister for Disability Services and the Minister for Family and Community Services and partly also with the Minister for Education. It is a dog's breakfast, but it takes an experienced eye to spot. If any of those opposite had been across this they would have said to their Premier, "Listen, this looks really suspect, we've got to sort it out." One cannot develop policy effectively when there are three, four and sometimes five Ministers administering the same Act. Those opposite know it—I can tell from the looks on their faces.

Mr Charles Casuscelli: Look at my face.

Mr NATHAN REES: You haven't been here long enough to know what I am talking about, so sit and learn. The Transport Administration Act is with the Minister for Roads and Ports— [*Time expired.*]

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Castle Hill) [3.47 p.m.]: I speak in favour of the motion that this House commends the Government for making the tough but necessary decisions to fix New South Wales and provide people with the services that they deserve. We are in the early days of the Government—it has not been 100 days—but we are already giving to those opposite lessons in good governance and lessons in making tough decisions, not simply making decisions because they are popular but because they are right and necessary. That is what this Government will do. Those opposite can sit here all day, they can make up figures about how many people are marching outside and they can create illusions about people revolting, but they have not worked it out. We, as a government, are not going to pander to illusions from the other side.

We have been elected by the people of New South Wales to turn this State around and to make decisions in the interests of this State, whether or not they are popular. Members of the failed Labor Government need to accept responsibility for the disastrous state of our economy after 16 years of their mismanagement. They need to accept that tough decisions are required to resuscitate the economy of New South Wales. Members opposite must accept—and I know it is hard for them—that we have a mandate to make those tough decisions.

New South Wales has the slowest economic growth, the lowest job growth rate and the lowest business confidence of any mainland State. That is what Labor left behind for this Government. That is why tough decisions have to be made and why the Government is making them. The Labor Government failed to live within its means. Over the past seven years it spent \$12 billion more than was budgeted for. Under Labor, debt increased from \$1.5 billion in 2006 to almost \$10 billion in 2010. Debt is projected to increase to \$15.8 billion

by 2014. When we were elected to government, we found that the situation was worse than Labor members had us believe. It was a case of hello to the \$5.2-billion black hole, and goodbye to all of Labor's projected surpluses. This Government is faced with years and years of large deficits.

Given the extent of the damage, one would think that Labor members would accept the mess in which they have left New South Wales, recognise their place in this House, realise the error of their ways and get out of the way while this Government makes tough decisions to get this State back on track. Our task of turning around the economy is made all the more difficult by the state of the infrastructure that the former Government left behind. Tough decisions are needed and the Government will make them. Let me examine some of Labor's infrastructure failings. This Government must not only get the economy back on track but also fix infrastructure. I acknowledge the presence in the Chamber of the member for Hawkesbury. North-western Sydney has fallen behind because of a lack of infrastructure. The north-west rail line was promised four times and never delivered.

The member for Toongabbie mentioned that the Liberals and Nationals promised the north-west rail line during the election campaign. Labor regarded the north-western Sydney area as a Liberal-voting area. We advocated building the north-west rail line not because it was in our political interest, but because it was much-needed infrastructure for New South Wales. That is our style of government. The Government does not care about which political party people vote for or where they live. This Government is delivering for New South Wales across the entire State. In conclusion I make the point that although we have not been in government for very long, already we are making tough decisions that Labor members failed to make. We are making tough decisions that the State needs made to turn the economy around and to make New South Wales number one again. I am proud to be part of the Government. I commend to the House the motion moved by the member for Cronulla.

Ms SONIA HORNERY (Wallsend) [3.52 p.m.]: The theme for this motion that has been accorded priority is the quest of the O'Farrell Government to make decisions. At every single parliamentary sitting since the Government has been in office, it has devoted much of its time to patting itself on the back; Government members have been patting each other on the back. We have endured 80-odd days of back-patting but the people of New South Wales are calling on the Government to make decisions. Pray tell, what are the tough decisions that have changed the face of Western civilisation, or at least New South Wales? Let us go back a short time to the first days of this new Government. The Premier consulted page one of the Nick Greiner playbook and quickly manufactured a budget black hole. Of course, there was no budget black hole. The New South Wales Parliamentary Budget Office discredited the Government's analysis of the State's financial position. Page 7 of its report states:

A fear that "Labor had 'cooked the books' to distort the true state of New South Wales's finances" is not supported either by the report issued by Mr Lambert or by this Office's examination of available data.

There is no black hole—only a Premier and a Treasurer who are determined to mislead and deceive the people of New South Wales. The Premier used that budget story to fool the good people of New South Wales. Why—so that the Government could pretend to be forced to make so-called tough decisions. Unfortunately that is code for cutting jobs, slashing services and breaking promises. Take the Premier's changes to the Industrial Relations Act. That is not a tough decision; it is a bad decision. That decision gives unprecedented power to politicians to cut workers' conditions with no guarantee that there will be a wage increase or other benefits in return. That is not reform; it is a decision that attacks our hardworking public sector workers.

Mr Stuart Ayres: It is okay for Tasmania, it is okay for Queensland, it is okay for Western Australia, but it is not okay for New South Wales. If you are going to read someone else's speech, don't expect us not to interject.

Ms SONIA HORNERY: I just call that bad manners. The Government's terrible policy has been backed up with more legislation that will limit pay increases of members of Parliament. That is not a tough decision; it is a story. It is about a Premier feeling the heat of thousands of public sector workers who are outraged at the Government's attack on their conditions. But what the Premier does not want to publicise is that at the same time as he introduced legislation that will limit members of Parliament to increases of 2.5 per cent, he has rewarded 64 of his 88 members of Parliament with new titles and cash bonuses to go with them. More than seven out of 10 Liberal and Nationals members of Parliament will earn tens of thousands of dollars on top of their backbench salary, and taxpayers will be forced to foot the bill. That is not progress, and it is certainly nothing to be proud of; nor is the Premier's handling of the Solar Bonus Scheme anything to be proud of. That decision was so bad the Premier was forced into a humiliating backflip.

Backflips are not something to be proud of. This so-called tough decision was set to cost 110,000 families thousands of dollars. The Premier admitted that the only reason he will honour the contract under the Solar Bonus Scheme is because the crossbench in the upper House forced him to do it. That was a major backflip. Now Government members are trying to pretend that these are tough decisions. The member for Cronulla said that the Government is committed to giving the people of New South Wales the best bang for their buck. Would the people of New South Wales believe that 39 Government speakers at 20 minutes a pop, waxing lyrical on a very minor amendment to the Library Act, is a tough decision? All Labor members love libraries too, but it is hardly tough talk or tough decisions. Members of the Government should give up making any more tough decisions and start making good decisions for a change. They should also stop being so bad mannered.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) [3.57 p.m.], in reply: I thank members from both sides of the House for their contributions to the debate. With all due respect to the member for Castle Hill, in particular I thank the member for Wallsend and the member for Toongabbie for their contributions. I thank the member for Toongabbie for his contribution because when I visit schools in my electorate that have leaking roofs, no air-conditioning and blocked toilet systems, I will be able to say, "I'm sorry, but Labor members think it is more important to keep people who do nothing on the public payroll for up to 16 years." That is how Labor members want to spend taxpayers' money—not on maintaining schools and hospitals, but on a continuation of that sort. I thank also the member for Toongabbie for confirming that the Liberal-Nationals' policies are part of our DNA. Yes, they are part of our DNA because our DNA is to stop wasting taxpayers' money and give taxpayers the best services possible. Our DNA is to make decisions based on merit.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! The member for Wallsend was heard in silence and the member for Cronulla also will be heard in silence.

Ms Noreen Hay: You are shouting.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! Is the member for Wollongong disputing my ruling?

Ms Noreen Hay: No. I said he was shouting.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! The member for Wollongong will cease interjecting.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: According to the way the member for Toongabbie approaches matters, it is okay to make 12 policy announcements of new infrastructure to win votes, but not deliver. I thank the member for Toongabbie for his candid exposition of Labor policy and legacy on this matter. I thank the member for Wallsend for her contribution because, as she said, people are calling on the Government to make decisions. She is dead right. After 16 years of Labor either decisions were not made—remember the rorts and the 390 employees on the unattached list—or the wrong decisions were made. Money was squandered on the Solar Bonus Scheme—\$1.44 billion that could have kept 5,000 police, firemen, nurses and teachers on the front line for four years. Our DNA, to use the language of the member for Toongabbie, is the decisions the people are calling on us to make and which we will make.

The member for Wallsend spoke about jobs being cut and services slashed. Not a single service has been slashed. Of course, no mention was made of the wages policy which dare not speak its name—the wages policy of the previous Keneally Government. If the member for Heffron were in the building, she could confirm that our announced policy is no different from hers except that we will implement it—that is the only difference. We will secure the productivity savings and, as part of our DNA, make sure that the taxpayers of New South Wales get the best bang for their buck. We are not cutting workers' conditions; they are guaranteed a 2.5 per cent wage increase every year. If workers elect to offer productivity offsets or cost savings—it is not forced on them—they can negotiate for higher wages.

Ms Noreen Hay: Why did you dump the umpire then?

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: The member for Wollongong should check out the website of the Queensland Government budget last week and she will see that it is exactly the same policy that Anna Bligh supports. I did not hear the member for Wallsend complain about Kristina Keneally's policy or about Anna Bligh. It is all a smokescreen on that side because the policy cupboard is bare. Our policy is the same, except we have the wherewithal, strength and fortitude to deliver, implement and carry it through. Our goal for the next

four years is to give taxpayers the best bang for their buck. We want them to have the services they deserve. The money to fix the maintenance problems, infrastructure problems and employ more front-line staff will only be available if we make the tough but necessary decisions that we have made and will make over the next four years.

Motion agreed to.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! The motion accorded priority having concluded and it being before 5.00 p.m., the House will now consider Government business.

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

Agreement in Principle

Debate resumed from an earlier hour.

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) [4.03 p.m.]: I speak to the Parliamentary, Local Council and Public Sector Executives Remuneration Legislation Amendment Bill 2011. The Opposition does not oppose the bill in principle, however, it reserves its right to scrutinise the bill and propose any amendments necessary to achieve fairness, equity and transparency—issues about which the other side of the House knows little. Members of Parliament are in a very different situation to those thousands of public sector workers whose pay and conditions have been slashed by the Coalition Government. We do not have the same cost-of-living pressures as public sector workers. Nurses, teachers, social workers and all public sector workers earn half, if not less, of what we earn and the families they support will feel the brunt of the legislation. The real slap in the face is the fact that Barry O'Farrell—

Ms Robyn Parker: Premier O'Farrell.

Ms ANNA WATSON: Premier O'Farrell has rewarded 64 of his 88 Liberal and Nationals members of Parliament with new titles and associated cash bonuses. This bill is a cash splash that flies in the face of all that Premier O'Farrell promised prior to the election. Clearly, he cannot be trusted. More than seven out of 10 Liberal and Nationals members of Parliament will earn tens of thousands of dollars on top of their backbench salaries. Nurses, teachers and other public sector workers will be forced to have their wages cut to prop up these new cash splashes for those opposite. This bill is nothing more than a blatant grab for cash. One week ago 12,000 workers—make no mistake about that—gathered out the front of Parliament House and protested about this legislation.

Premier O'Farrell and the lot opposite prior to the election promised to listen to the people of New South Wales. I did not see one Government member out the front listening to the people—not one. All Government members should hang their heads in shame. Nearly every Liberal and Nationals member of Parliament has been given a whopping pay increase off the backs of public sector workers who were never told of this intention before 26 March 2011. Not one word was said about it. The Government cannot be trusted. Barry O'Farrell has broken his promise to scale back paid parliamentary positions. In fact, he has increased them by appointing quasi committees and positions.

Mr Brad Hazzard: Point of order: I do not want to interrupt the member's flow, but she is talking about matters outside the leave of this bill. The bill relates to remuneration for Ministers, members of Parliament, councillors, statutory officers, executives and visiting medical officers only. It does not relate to the group of workers to whom she is referring. I ask that the member return to discuss this particular bill.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! The member will return to the leave of the bill.

Ms ANNA WATSON: This bill really is not about fiscal discipline; it is all about spin. This bill has no substance. Members opposite should never underestimate the long memories of voters. We remember the little gem known as WorkChoices: the Howard Government introduced it and was dismissed on it. Here we are again in New South Wales with far-reaching changes and no independent umpire. This Government is so arrogant that it believes it has a mandate to destroy the earning capacity of our most valued workers and their families. For those on that side of the House—

Mr Brad Hazzard: Point of order: I have no problem if the member addresses the issues contained in the bill, but she is not doing that. I indicate also that taking advice from the member for Wollongong probably is not a good idea. I ask that the member be brought back to the leave of this bill. I indicate also to the member that protocols in the Chamber require her to refer to the Leader of the Government as the Premier, not by name.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): The member will return to the leave of the bill.

Ms ANNA WATSON: For those on that side of the House I say one last thing: make no mistake, the people of your electorates will be outraged. They will vote with their feet at the next election. It is a race to the bottom.

Ms NOREEN HAY (Wollongong) [4.09 p.m.]: I make a contribution to debate on the Parliamentary, Local Council and Public Sector Executives Remuneration Legislation Amendment Bill 2011. I agree with the comments made earlier in the debate by the Leader of the Opposition, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and other speakers. We reserve the right to scrutinise the bill and to propose amendments. It is not the first time that members have spoken on a bill without seeing the detail, and the amount of time provided to us is not unusual. The Opposition has assisted the Government in terms of accepting a shorter time in which to scrutinise legislation. However, the Government must start meeting the rules and regulations of the House so that Opposition members have time to scrutinise the Government's proposals and study them carefully so that we can respond appropriately.

The Government cannot get away from the fact that its proposals are bad for public sector employees, and its proposals should be bad for those who inflicted the proposals on the public service. Labor members have no problem accepting a limited pay rise, given the salaries we receive, which are a different ball game to the salaries of public sector employees. Before the demonstration by more than 12,000 people outside Parliament House—indeed, before the election in March this year—members opposite were talking about transparency and how a Coalition Government would be accountable, open, honest and truthful. What have members opposite proven during their first days in government? They have proven that they are dishonest. As the member for Shellharbour said, not one Government member identified to the community—

Mr John Williams: Careful, Noreen.

Ms NOREEN HAY: Is the member for Murray-Darling threatening me? He should learn the rules of the Parliament.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order!

Ms NOREEN HAY: I will not be intimidated by the member for Murray-Darling.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! The member for Murray-Darling and the member for Wollongong will direct their comments through the Chair.

Ms NOREEN HAY: I will not be intimidated by the member for Murray-Darling not to contribute to this debate. It is not appropriate behaviour in the Parliament for the member to warn me to be careful.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! The member for Murray-Darling will desist.

Ms NOREEN HAY: It is a shame that Government members did not tell the truth before the election. That would have helped.

Mr Tony Issa: We did tell the truth.

Ms NOREEN HAY: Members opposite did not tell the truth. They did not tell public servants what the Government intended to do to them. They did not tell the public service their intentions.

Mr Brad Hazzard: Point of order: I appreciate the enthusiasm of members opposite, but they should acknowledge that the Parliamentary, Local Council and Public Sector Executives Remuneration Legislation Amendment Bill refers only to members of Parliament, local councillors, statutory officers, senior executives and hospital visiting medical officers. On the basis of numerous decisions from the Chair, it is entirely inappropriate for members to revisit a debate that has already concluded. At present members opposite are seeking to debate a bill that has already been passed.

Speaker Kelly, a most excellent Labor Speaker, ruled that it is out of order for a member to refer to a debate already concluded. That was confirmed by Speaker Rozzoli in 1990 and 1992, relying on Speaker Kelly's determination. Members opposite should speak strictly about matters contained in the bill and not revisit a previous debate. Labor members, with the exception of the member for Heffron, had ample opportunity to speak in the previous debate. Now they must desist from referring to that debate.

Mr Richard Amery: On the point of order: First, the connection between this bill and general policy in the public service was not raised by the member for Wollongong or other Labor members. In fact, it was raised by the Premier when he introduced this bill. Secondly, earlier in the debate the Leader of the Opposition and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition responded to the Premier's contribution, and the member for Wollongong is simply referring to the points raised by those Labor members. I heard the previous points of order taken against the member for Wollongong and the member for Shellharbour. The Leader of the House is trying to truncate the debate to stop members talking. I make this point: the matters raised by Labor members were first raised by the Premier, to which the Leader of the Opposition and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition responded earlier today.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! The bill before us is the Parliamentary, Local Council and Public Sector Executives Remuneration Legislation Amendment Bill 2011. The member will return to the leave of the bill.

Ms NOREEN HAY: I am speaking to the bill and, as was said earlier, I am responding to comments made earlier in the debate. Nonetheless members of Parliament do not have the same cost-of-living pressures that nurses, teachers and social workers earning one half or one third of our salaries are now facing. The Premier has rewarded 64 of his 88 Liberal and Nationals members with new titles and cash bonuses to go with them. As the member for Shellharbour rightly said, the outrageous cash splash goes against everything the Premier promised prior to the election. I repeat: At no stage before the election did the Liberals and Nationals tell the community or public sector employees what they intended to do.

In fact, it was quite the reverse. Public sector employees and union members were told that they had nothing to fear from a Liberal-Nationals Government, that all would be well under them. Of course, it did not take long to show that that was not the case. As was said earlier, more than seven out of 10 Liberal and Nationals members will earn tens of thousands of dollars on top of their backbench salaries and taxpayers will be forced to foot the bill. There is no getting away from that. That is what the Government has done. In the past it would have been described as a sleight of hand. What is the reality of the Premier's actions?

Mr Brad Hazzard: Point of order—

Ms NOREEN HAY: I understand why members opposite do not want to hear this.

Mr Brad Hazzard: I would love to debate that matter with you because you, at the table of knowledge, with all those allegations of corruption, ended up as a parliamentary secretary on a massive bonus with car spaces everywhere.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! The Leader of the House will direct his comments through the Chair.

Mr Brad Hazzard: The member for Wollongong knows that she is talking drivel.

Ms NOREEN HAY: The Leader of the Government is low.

Mr Brad Hazzard: The queen of the table of knowledge.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! That is not a point of order.

Mr Brad Hazzard: The Acting-Speaker is right; I was responding to an interjection. My point of order is that the comments of the member for Wollongong are well outside the leave of the bill. If she has nothing to say you should sit her down, or she should sit down.

Ms NOREEN HAY: Excuse me. I ask the Leader of the House to withdraw his comments in relation to the table of knowledge and me. That lie has been corrected a number of times on the parliamentary record.

Once again the Leader of the House has lied to the Parliament, much like the member for Murray-Darling did. Lies are placed on the record and members opposite get away with them every time. I have been forced time and time again to make a personal explanation to rectify the record because they continue to lie to the community. They lie in the Parliament. They have proven to be the same old, same old.

Mr John Williams: You want to take action against the press. They publish it.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! A previous Speaker has ruled on the inappropriate use of those words. The member for Wollongong should desist from using them in the Chamber.

Ms NOREEN HAY: I suggest that members opposite be asked to withdraw those comments. For the benefit of the member for Murray-Darling, the media never printed that I was at the table of knowledge. I will not be corrected on language while you are allowing members opposite to make all those comments.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! The member for Wollongong has the call.

Ms NOREEN HAY: There are two sides in this House and I think the behaviour of members on the opposite side has been extremely rude. They really should be called to order. The constant attempts at spin by the New South Wales Government are not good for financial management. It tried to cover up its attacks on public sector employees. It has misled the community and now it is trying to take the moral high ground by hiding the truth and the reality of its intentions.

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) [4.20 p.m.]: I support the Parliamentary, Local Council and Public Sector Executives Remuneration Legislation Amendment Bill 2011 in principle. The object of this bill is to amend the Parliamentary Remuneration Act 1989, the Local Government Act 1993, the Statutory and Other Officers Remuneration Act 1975 and the Health Services Act 1997. These amendments will apply the same government public sector wages cap and bind the Industrial Relations Commission to the determination of remuneration for Ministers and other members of Parliament, local councillors, statutory officers, public sector executives and hospital visiting medical officers. We in Opposition have the right to view, scrutinise and criticise bills and make suggestions and proposals for amendments. Premier Barry O'Farrell has just rewarded 64 of the 88 Liberal and Nationals members of Parliament with new titles and other salubrious bonuses.

In effect, these members of Parliament remain subject to the capped salary components of the bill. However, they are duly financially rewarded and generally unaffected by the salary cap thanks to their allegiance to Premier Barry O'Farrell. Any negative impacts imposed on the public sector as a result of legislative changes should be imposed on those who inflicted the unfair legislation and working conditions upon them. We in this House are in a very different situation from the nurses, teachers, firefighters and other public sector workers who were shafted recently by the Government. As a former teacher of 17 years and now the elected representative of the electorate of Fairfield, I am very aware of the cost of living pressures that face the hardworking nurses, teachers, firemen, and social workers who are earning half—

Mr John Williams: Point of order: It is very clear what this bill is about. There is no scope for any discussion outside the leave of the bill. Members opposite continually get on their old hobbyhorse. Let us get on with the bill.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! The member for Fairfield will return to the leave of the bill.

Mr GUY ZANGARI: I refer to schedule 1, which amends the Parliamentary Remuneration Act 1989, No. 160, which deals with the basic salary of members of Parliament. We all know what the basic salaries are for members of Parliament. As I was saying, in Fairfield and throughout New South Wales workers are earning one half or one third of our salaries. Talk about deal or no deal. The new members of Parliament get the deal and the nurses, teachers, firemen and social workers get no deal. This is amazing. The golden lining of pockets goes against everything the Premier promised prior to the election. The Government gets the goldmine and the workers of New South Wales get the shaft. I remind the Government of the 12,000 New South Wales workers who came to Parliament to voice their concerns.

Ms Robyn Parker: Point of order: I have sat here for some time listening to this debate and it is clear that the Opposition has to learn what debating legislation is all about. It is about sticking to the leave of a bill, not straying from it and talking about other matters. They are flouting your rulings time and again. This is about wages of members of Parliament; it is not about anything else. I ask you to draw the member back to the leave of the bill.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! We are dealing with the Parliamentary, Local Council and Public Sector Executives Remuneration Legislation Amendment Bill 2011. The member should not rehash what has been discussed previously in this House.

Mr GUY ZANGARI: Going back to schedule 1, the amendments to the Parliamentary Remuneration Act 1989, No. 160, I am speaking about the current basic salary of members of Parliament. New members are getting a nice salary increase while the public sector workers of New South Wales suffer the consequences of this arrogant Government. However, here are some of the members who missed the boat: the member for Granville, the member for Smithfield, the member for Rockdale and the member for Campbelltown. Don't worry, fellas—

Mr Brad Hazzard: Point of order: The bill is pretty clear. If this is going to continue I will simply adjourn the bill until tonight and members opposite can talk a lot of rot during the night. They should stick to the bill. That was the deal. If the member for Fairfield does not want to stick to the bill I am quite happy for members opposite to talk to their heart's content tonight. That is what is going to happen.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! The member for Fairfield will return to the leave of the bill and not rehash other matters that have been debated previously in the House.

Mr GUY ZANGARI: I am referring to schedule 1, which deals with the amendment to the Parliamentary Remuneration Act 1989 and which was referred to earlier by the Leader of the Opposition and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. Members opposite are receiving nice fat pay increases while workers are suffering. Seven out of 10 Liberal and Nationals members of Parliament will earn tens of thousands of dollars on top of their backbench salaries. The taxpayers will be forced to foot the bill. Are the members for the electorates of Granville, Smithfield, Rockdale and Campbelltown listening? This is how much the Premier cares for you.

The Premier knows that you are only one-term wonders. He does not care about you or your electorates. The Premier has broken his promise to scale back paid parliamentary positions. Cash grabs go against what the Premier promised prior to the election: the wallets of 64 of the 88 Liberal and Nationals members are getting fatter. No salary cap here, folks, just one for the teachers, nurses, firemen, social workers and other public sector workers in Fairfield and throughout New South Wales. This is one aspect of the bill we oppose. That is why the Premier has brought this forward. This is not about fiscal discipline, it is about spin.

Mr Brad Hazzard: Point of order: If members needed a lesson in absolute stupidity, this is it. The member for Fairfield said he supported the bill. Now he is saying he opposes the bill. He has gone back to the speech he used in a previous debate. I have already referred to the decisions of the Chair. He is rehashing the speech. If he keeps this up the debate will cease. I am quite happy for the House to sit tonight and for members opposite to carry on. There will be nobody in here except members opposite; they can talk to themselves. It will be empty rhetoric. That is what will happen.

Mr GUY ZANGARI: I am referring to what the Leader of the Opposition and other Opposition speakers have said in the debate and I am reiterating and supporting what they have said. I am speaking about the bill. I have referred on numerous occasions to schedule 1 of the bill. What can I say? This is a dodgy effort. The Government is trying to say we are all in the same boat when clearly members opposite are not.

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) [4.28 p.m.]: I support the Parliamentary, Local Council and Public Sector Executives Remuneration Legislation Amendment Bill. I do not think anyone in this House would not support a cap on members' wages, given that schedule 1 clearly outlines that as members of Parliament we are entitled to a base salary of \$136,140, which is equivalent to the annual salary payable to a backbencher of the Commonwealth House of Representatives, less \$500. No-one in this place would argue that 2.5 per cent for those of us on a six-figure salary is more than generous and reasonable. But I come from a community where people who earn that sort of money are in the absolute minority. As a fellow Illawarra member of Parliament, Mr Acting-Speaker (Mr Lee Evans), you will know that our community is doing it tough when it comes to cost-of-living pressures.

I find it astonishing that apart from the Premier not a single person on the Government benches has spoken on this legislation. A couple of weeks ago all members from that side of the House spoke on the Library Amendment Bill. It is astounding that with a couple of days to go in relation to this important legislation that the Opposition supports, capping to 2.5 per cent increases for all members of Parliament, including Ministers of the

Crown and Senior Executive Service officers, not one member of the Government will support the Premier and this bill. That says a lot because they were happy to waste time and dilly around a few weeks ago with the Library Amendment Bill.

Mr Brad Hazzard: You don't support libraries in your local area?

Mr RYAN PARK: I completely support libraries. I also support the 12,000 people who were out demonstrating, many of whom were from the Illawarra.

Mr Brad Hazzard: Point of order: I do not think I need to repeat it, except that this member may not have been listening—I do not know. The Parliamentary, Local Council Public Sector Executives Remuneration Legislation Amendment Bill 2011 does not refer to any of the debate that occurred previously. We have already had that debate. I have already referred to decisions from the Chair from Speakers Rozzoli and Kelly. I ask you to rule the member for Keira out of order. If he wants to contribute to this debate he can but if he does not he should sit down.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! The member for Keira will return to the leave of the bill.

Mr Tony Issa: Haven't you got something important to say?

Mr RYAN PARK: Obviously the member for Granville has not got anything important to say. He was not awarded with anything. I find it astonishing that members on this side of the House are prepared to speak to this important legislation but apart from the Premier not one member on that side is prepared to speak on this legislation. Even more astonishing, given that their leader, the Premier, introduced this bill and spoke on it extensively—and the Leader of the Opposition spoke on it extensively—I would have thought is that maybe one, two, even three members had the gall to back their leader.

Ms Robyn Parker: Point of order: Over and over again—I know members opposite are learning but they are slow learners—Mr Acting-Speaker has ruled that this debate is about the leave of the bill. The member for Keira should speak to the content of the bill and not tediously repeat the same drivel. This is about the bill and not about who does and who does not speak to it. It is about the content of the bill. Please draw the member for Keira back to the leave of the bill or rule him out of order.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! The member for Keira will return to the leave of the bill.

Mr RYAN PARK: All members of the Opposition support the bill, support schedule 1 in relation to the 2.5 per cent, but have concerns that not one other person from the Government spoke.

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) [4.35 p.m.]: The Parliamentary, Local Council and Public Sector Executives Remuneration Legislation Amendment Bill 2011 is a tokenistic gesture providing that parliamentarians, among others, accept a 2.5 per cent increase in remuneration. In reality, the salary of 64 of the 88 Coalition members of Parliament will be topped up with extras, given that many positions are being created. Prior to the election I thought this place was going to be tightened up. I strongly believe that as parliamentarians in times of financial restraint we should lead by example as former Prime Minister Kevin Rudd did in 2008: the pay of Federal members of Parliament was frozen in 2009 to set an example of restraint to the community.

We are demanding our front-line workers be duded, essentially, with lower real wages. We should demonstrate that we can go without any increase at all. The bill is an attempt to create a perception that the Premier and his cohorts are sympathising with the women and men who work as teachers, nurses, firefighters, bus drivers, police, ambulance officers and others in our health and education sectors, our public servants who work hard to ensure that the people of New South Wales have the best services and support available. Instead, the Coalition Government is making sure—

Mr John Williams: Point of order: The bill is clear: Do you want your salaries capped as politicians? It is as simple as that. It is not about anything else. I ask the member for Bankstown to return to the leave of the bill.

Mr Richard Amery: To the point of order: I refer to the Premier's speech on this very bill. He said:

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.

Clearly, in introducing this bill the Premier linked it to the Government's wages policy. I believe it is outrageous to rule the member for Bankstown out of order because she is talking about the general wages policy after the Premier introduced that point in his agreement in principle speech yesterday.

Mr John Williams: Further to the point of order: Leniency is extended to the Premier or Minister and the Opposition lead speaker when legislation is introduced. Other members must speak strictly to the bill.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! The member for Bankstown will direct her comments to the leave of the bill.

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK: Rather than make a genuine attempt to cap our wages, the Coalition Government is making sure that more than 70 per cent of its members will earn tens of thousands of dollars above their base salary and taxpayers will be expected to foot the bill, including our hardworking public servants. This bill serves to throw into the faces of many mums and dads across our State—teachers, health care professionals and others—that they should sadly have to accept the despicable amendment to the Industrial Relations Act which will hamper the Industrial Relations Commission and allow the Government to dictate to thousands of people what their take-home wages will be, without any ability to bargain or demonstrate their job's worth before an independent body.

I would be interested to hear from members representing the electorates of Blue Mountains, Drummoyne, Campbelltown, Camden and others about what the workers in those electorates think about this token gesture of a 2.5 per cent cap. If the Government wanted to demonstrate that it was really serious about financially restraining members of Parliament it could have followed what former Prime Minister Kevin Rudd did, that is, freeze our wages entirely for the next financial year rather than allowing a capped increase of 2.5 per cent. This is a tokenistic gesture.

Ms Robyn Parker: Are you supporting it or not?

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK: Your Government will have to go back to the people of New South Wales and explain why you slapped in the faces the mums and dads and the front-line workers of this State, including police. How will the member for Campbelltown, one of the most senior police officers in this State, go to the police officers that he worked with and say, "I'm capping your salary, but in reality I will get a bit extra so I'm not too concerned"? It is a sad day when the Government makes such tokenistic gestures while totally disregarding the fact that many public service workers are working hard. Half a million people are giving their time and energy to work hard for the people of New South Wales.

Ms Robyn Parker: Support the bill and sit down.

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK: I support the cap on our wages, but I do not think we are going far enough. If the Government were really serious it would have gone a lot further and ensured that we did not receive a 2.5 per cent increase. In reality, Government members are having their earnings topped up by the creation of extra positions. This is a slap in the face for the many workers in this State who deserve the right to have an independent body such as the Industrial Relations Commission determine their wages.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL (Ku-ring-gai—Premier, and Minister for Western Sydney) [4.40 p.m.], in reply: I thank all members who have spoken in the debate on the bill. I was tempted to come down earlier and rescue the member for Murray-Darling from that vicious attack launched upon him by his very good friend the member for Wollongong. I appreciate in particular the contribution of the member for Bankstown, who since her arrival here only a few weeks ago is making a habit of leading with her chin. I noted her description of this bill as a token gesture. As I said when the bill was first announced at Erskine Park on 25 May, then re-announced a couple of weeks ago, I make no bones about the fact that the impact of this bill will not be the same upon members of this House, Senior Executive Service members, Chief Executive Service members, mayors and councillors as it will be on front-line public servants.

But the principle is absolutely clear: if the policy is good enough to pursue for the public sector it is good enough to pursue for public officials, who are also paid out of the public purse. That is the first point I want to make. The second point I want to make is that the reason that the member for Bankstown knows not what she says is that this Government is pursuing the wages policy more broadly through other legislation than Labor applied across the public sector for four years. At any stage over those four years did Labor think to cap—or freeze, as the member for Bankstown said—parliamentary salaries? The answer is no. Hypocrisy, thy name is Labor once again.

The third theme that I have heard today is about parliamentary committees. I make the point that Labor's wages policy allowed an increase of 2.5 per cent—the same as our wages policy—with any increases beyond that based on productivity increases. Mr Deputy-Speaker, you have one of the three presiding officer positions in this Chamber. As you know, in the last Parliament there were four such positions, and in the Parliament before that there were two such positions. So over three parliaments the number has gone from two to four, and I have reduced it to three. But what has happened to the number of members of this Chamber over that time? It has not changed at all.

While Labor subjected the public sector for four years to a 2.5 per cent wage cap, while subjecting public servants to a policy that there were to be no increases beyond 2.5 per cent without productivity gains, the Labor Party overnight doubled the number of presiding officers, for the same number of members, giving two more Labor members an opportunity to put their snouts in the trough. Today I have heard it said relentlessly—so relentlessly to be almost wounded by it—that 7 of 10 members of the Liberal and Nationals parties will chair committees, will have presiding officer positions, and the like. What was the percentage under the Labor Party? It was 95 per cent. All but three members had additional salary. What we have done is wind it back in. We have reduced the number of Presiding Officers. We have ended the rot of the supercharged Parliamentary Secretary who ran the House.

We have ensured that the increase in the number of committees will be paid out of the existing budget. How? We have made savings in travel and chairmen of our committees will not be paid the same as chairmen of Labor's committees. That is how you run government: you get more for the same amount, or more for less. We make no bones about applying those sorts of approaches to us in the same way as they are being applied to the public sector. Those opposite ran double standards. I am happy to support this legislation. I am concerned that in the course of this debate we have seen from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition an attack upon veterans, and we have seen from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition an attack upon the importance of regional health and regional hospitals. Both attacks are despicable and disgusting, particularly from someone who I believe was actually born in the country, but who seems to have forgotten the importance of health facilities to people who live in rural and regional areas.

This bill applies the same government public sector wages cap that binds the Industrial Relations Commission on the determination or remuneration for Ministers and other members of Parliament, local councillors, statutory officers, public sector executives and hospital visiting medical officers. The Government believes statutory office holders and senior bureaucrats should be treated in the same way as nurses, teachers and other front-line public servants. We want to end the double standards and the hypocrisy pursued by Labor over the past four years. In fact, it is necessary to end the double standard to help bring the State budget under control so that we can improve the delivery of essential services and fund vital infrastructure projects.

The Government's wages policy is clear: we will allow 2.5 per cent across the board for public servants, with rises above that level needing to be offset by productivity gains that have actually been achieved. We will not continue Labor's policy of promised productivity gain arrangements between the unions and the government. Those productivity gains were not made and taxpayers footed a \$900 million bill for which they got nothing. The wages policy we are implementing is the same as Labor's wages policy, except we will apply it across the board. We are not going to be hypocritical about it.

I finish by saying that I noticed, in relation to hypocrisy, comments in today's papers about how hard-worked members of the upper House are. I note that the Leader of the Opposition in the upper House said there was too little business in the upper House. The last time I checked it had passed 20 bills in the last 21 days. Now that the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Part 3A Repeal) Bill 2011 has passed the same number of bills have been passed by this House. So the member for Wollongong is complaining about too much work in this House and the Leader of the Opposition in the other place is complaining about too little work. Is it a wonder that the Opposition is such a shambles? 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.

INFRASTRUCTURE NSW BILL 2011

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

REGIONAL RELOCATION (HOME BUYERS GRANT) BILL 2011

Bill introduced on motion by Mr Mike Baird.

Agreement in Principle

Mr MIKE BAIRD (Manly—Treasurer) [4.48 p.m.]: I move:

That this bill be now agreed to in principle.

This is yet another bill that delivers on an election commitment by the O'Farrell Government: to support and encourage growth in regional New South Wales. The bill provides for a new Act to implement a key element of the Government's action plans: to make Sydney liveable again and to provide a regional kick-start. The Regional Relocation (Home Buyers Grant) Bill 2011 introduces a \$7,000 grant for families and individuals who relocate from the metropolitan areas of Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong to regional New South Wales. The grant will be available to a person who purchases a home in regional New South Wales to be used as the applicant's principal place of residence, and sells his or her former home in the metropolitan area. The scheme will therefore assist with two complementary objectives: encouraging population growth in the regions and reducing population pressures in Sydney.

The grant will be payable after settlement of the purchase of the home, and will compensate families for some of the substantial transaction costs involved in relocating. Eligibility for the grant will be subject to a number of criteria: The applicant must be an Australian citizen or permanent resident; the value of the property purchased in regional New South Wales must not exceed \$600,000; and the former home must have been sold within 12 months before, or be sold within 12 months after, the purchase of the home in regional New South Wales. These criteria are consistent with those applying to the stamp duty concession for empty-nesters, which has already been extended by the O'Farrell Government to apply to homebuyers aged over 55 years. In fact the Regional Relocation Grant scheme complements the empty-nesters concession in helping to free up housing stock in Sydney.

The bill provides that the metropolitan area includes local government areas in the Sydney statistical division plus the local government areas of Newcastle and Wollongong. This is the same definition as applies to the payroll tax rebate under the Government's Jobs Action Plan. Once again, the Regional Relocation Grant complements another Government initiative—in this case supporting people relocating to the regions where the Jobs Action Plan delivers assistance for 40,000 new jobs created in regional New South Wales. However, the Government acknowledges that not all parts of regional New South Wales want to encourage rapid population growth. Councils in regional areas that are concerned about local population pressures will have the choice of opting out of the scheme.

The bill provides for any such council area to be excluded by regulations under the Act. The grant will apply to the purchase of a home between 1 July 2011 and 30 June 2015 and a maximum of 40,000 grants will be payable. It is estimated that the scheme will provide assistance to approximately 7,000 applicants each year. The scheme will be promoted by the Department of Trade and Investment, Regional Infrastructure and Services in conjunction with other regional assistance schemes, but will otherwise be administered by the Office of State Revenue. Adverse decisions by the Chief Commissioner of State Revenue will be subject to review by the Administrative Decisions Tribunal.

The Government is committed to policies that assist and encourage whole-of-state growth. The Regional Relocation Grant, together with our policies ensuring that regions get their fair share of jobs growth and infrastructure spending, will give regional New South Wales the kick-start it deserves. The grant will work together with policies such as the empty-nesters stamp duty concession to facilitate better use of housing stock and, importantly, reduce population pressures in Sydney. A grant of \$7,000 provides a very real benefit to families relocating within New South Wales, promotes growth in regional New South Wales and, obviously, reduces congestion pressures within Sydney. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) [4.52 p.m.]: I lead for the Opposition, which will not oppose the bill, but, as was the case with other legislation passed through this place last week amidst great fanfare from the

Government, this is not a measure that is going to drive growth and it is not going to assist the economy of the State. It gives assistance—not encouragement—to a person who lives in one part of the State in moving to another part of the State.

I should contrast the initiative in this bill with some of the real initiatives that the former Government gave to people who were building or purchasing homes and relocating. There were grants of up to \$7,000 for first home owners, stamp duty exemptions worth up to \$17,990 and benefits under the Home Builders Bonus. In fact, over the previous decade New South Wales homebuyers received more than \$7.25 billion in benefits. This included 471,800 grants worth over \$4 billion and stamp duty exemptions worth over \$3 billion. These were measures that drove economic growth. People moving into or building new homes drove economic growth. In this scheme the Government will give away possibly more than \$280 million after administration costs are factored in—40,000 payments at \$7,000 a pop is \$280 million, plus administration costs.

I note that the opening words of the Treasurer when introducing the bill were that it was a bill to encourage growth in regional New South Wales. There are areas in Wollongong that the Government might consider to be regional. I do not know why the Government wants to encourage people to leave the Wollongong area. The Government wants to encourage people to move out of the Hunter Valley and Newcastle area as well. This bill will not encourage a single person to do anything. What it will do is give them a handout when they are embarking upon an activity that they were otherwise going to do, which is to move. Is the Government really suggesting that there are people in New South Wales who, for reasons which are more likely to be employment or family reasons, or people who have finished their working life in Sydney, are going to relocate to a quieter location in the bush and that the crux of their decision to do so will be a \$7,000 handout from the Government?

I think that is too far a stretch. People will move anyway. This bill will give them assistance, which will come at a cost to taxpayers of up to \$280 million. We have heard some strange propositions put forward by Government members in the past week or so. The member for Murrumbidgee, the Minister for Education, made the startling admission in this place—in fact he lamented—that if it were not for the fact that the former Labor Government had scandalously and scurrilously paid unworthy nurses, teachers, policemen, firemen and all those government workers wages commensurate with their contribution to the State the Coalition Government could have done so much—it could have built classrooms and things like that.

We now have a Government that is willing to gift \$280 million to people for something they are going to do anyway. I think it is worthy for regions that people in metropolitan areas decide to make a life in those regions. I have thought about it myself, perhaps retiring in a few years and taking my family up to the little farm in Kempsey where my dad came from. I note the member for Oxley is here. My grandfather came from the South Coast—he was born in Wollongong. But why would I be worthy of \$7,000 of hard-earned taxpayer funds for wanting to relocate my wife and family in the bush?

Mr Brad Hazzard: Point of order: We cannot see why he should punish the regions, so we will put a special exemption into the Act to make sure that he gets nothing.

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

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: I regret that I have inadvertently injected some humour into this debate, because \$280 million is not an amount to be laughed at. This Government is throwing it away for reasons that I do not believe can be readily justified.

Mr Andrew Stoner: Aren't you the people who wasted \$500 million on the Rozelle metro?

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: You are about to waste \$280 million to do what? To give a gift to people to do something they would have done anyway. This is an indulgence on the part of the Government and I, for one, believe that \$280 million could be better spent, but the Opposition will not oppose the bill.

Mr ANDREW STONER (Oxley—Deputy Premier, Minister for Trade and Investment, and Minister for Regional Infrastructure and Services) [4.59 p.m.]: The member for Maroubra's bizarre contribution to the debate reminded me of the bloke with two wooden legs who is caught in a house fire—he did not have a leg to stand on. He said the bill is a waste of money, yet the Opposition will not oppose it. The Regional Relocation (Home Buyers Grant) Bill 2011 will implement a key element of the Government's Regional Kick-Start Plan

and is a key part of the Government's 100 Day Action Plan. Already more action has been taken by this Government—and there will be more during the Government's first 100 days—than was taken in 16 years of Labor government.

The Liberal-Nationals Government stands for balanced population and economic growth across the entire State. We understand that what is good for city areas is also good for country areas, and vice versa. When a government governs for the whole State and provides economic stimulus for regional New South Wales, city areas benefit, and vice versa. The Government's Regional Kick-Start Plan is one of the most innovative decentralisation policy initiatives this State has had for many years. It will result in the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government creating new jobs, building much-needed infrastructure and bringing additional people to regional areas of New South Wales.

Population projections released by the former Government forecast a 31 per cent population growth in Sydney over the next 25 years compared to less than half that rate, just 15 per cent, for regional areas of New South Wales. Labor is quite happy to see Sydney's population blow out to six million by 2036 despite congestion, crowded public transport, air quality issues and some of the most expensive housing on the planet. At the same time, Labor has been happy to let regional New South Wales languish, with static or even negative population and economic growth. The Government's Regional Kick-Start Plan will create jobs, build infrastructure and bring in the people. This bill is all about bringing in the people. The O'Farrell-Stoner Government is proud to introduce regional relocation grants.

The bill represents the third part of the Government's Regional Kick-Start Strategy. It will provide a \$7,000 grant to families or individuals who relocate from metropolitan areas, which have been defined as Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong, to regional areas of New South Wales. The grant will be payable after settlement of the purchase of a home and will compensate families for some of the substantial transaction costs involved in relocating. Eligibility for the grant will be subject to a number of criteria. First, the applicant must be an Australian citizen or permanent resident. Second, the value of a property purchased in regional New South Wales must not exceed \$600,000. I might add that \$600,000 would buy a very nice home indeed in most regional communities of the State.

Third, the applicant's former home in the metropolitan area must have been sold within 12 months before, or must be sold within 12 months after, the purchase of a home in regional New South Wales. The bill provides a definition of metropolitan area to include local government areas in the Sydney statistical division, plus the local government areas of Newcastle and Wollongong. That is the definition that applies to the payroll tax rebate under the Government's Jobs Action Plan. The Government's Jobs Action Plan complements the regional relocation grant by providing for payroll tax rebates for up to 40,000 new jobs that are created in regional New South Wales. People who relocate and decide to make a sea or tree change will have jobs to go to. As a result of the Restart NSW Fund Bill 2011, there also will be a substantial investment in infrastructure in New South Wales.

This Government is all about genuine decentralisation by building infrastructure, creating jobs and bringing in people. Indeed, that is what this bill is all about. Importantly, the bill provides for local councils and regional areas that are concerned about local population pressures to be able to opt out of the scheme. If a particular local government area does not want to attract more people as a result of incentives such as relocation assistance grants—for example, some highly populated local government areas on the North Coast—they will be able to opt out. Mr Deputy-Speaker, as you represent the Lismore electorate you would know that regional communities are a great place in which to live and work because they have clean air, fresh produce which includes some of the best available food and wine, friendly people, affordable housing and affordable costs of living.

Mr Steve Cansdell: And good local members.

Mr ANDREW STONER: And good members of Parliament, as the member for Clarence points out. By providing assistance with the costs of relocating, the Government will assist Sydney families to make the move and experience the many benefits of living in a regional area while at the same time providing for balanced population and economic growth across the entire State. Simply stated, this is good policy from a good Government. This bill delivers on yet another election commitment by the Liberal-Nationals Government to support and encourage growth in regional New South Wales. Unlike Labor members, Government members are about governing for the regions as well as for metropolitan areas of our great State. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) [5.06 p.m.]: My major concern with this bill, to which the Opposition reserves the right to move amendments, is that the Wollongong local government area is encapsulated by it. I represent a community in which there are lower rates of development and higher unemployment rates than we would like. I doubt that the Government's proposal to give people \$7,000 to flee Wollongong is evidence based. While I am sure no-one sets out to do that, we would want to reach the stage of encouraging people to leave regional areas. I am sick and tired of people in this place thinking that Wollongong is an extension of Sydney. It is not. It has its own fair share of challenges and difficulties. I do not want to see legislation that refers to the Wollongong local government area as a metropolitan area. While I understand that Wollongong may be geographically close to Sydney—approximately 90 kilometres away—I cannot allow Wollongong to be put into the same category as Sydney when it comes to economic stimulus measures.

This matter concerns me greatly. The Opposition reserves its right to move amendments. I certainly will discuss this bill with the Wollongong community and other Labor members to ascertain their views. Based on a preliminary reading of this bill, I would need to be convinced why I should encourage and support provision of an incentive that encourages people to leave the area I represent when we have been trying very hard to develop the local economy, assist local businesses to expand and increase the population so that the future of the Wollongong electorate is sustainable.

I am prepared to examine and discuss it. I reiterate that we reserve our right to move amendments to this bill. I hope the Treasurer can explain why Wollongong is categorised this way. I am sure the member for Kiama also has concerns about this bill. When the bill reaches the other place we will look more closely at it. I do not want to be told time and again that the Wollongong local government area is caught in the same stimulus category as Sydney. The Wollongong local government area has different needs and challenges and must be treated differently.

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) [5.10 p.m.]: I echo the remarks and sentiments of the member for Keira that the Regional Relocation (Home Buyers Grant) Bill 2011 identifies Wollongong as a metropolitan area. Similarly, Newcastle also is identified in the bill as a metropolitan area. More importantly, the bill refers specifically to the Newcastle local government area. Possibly that does not include the Lake Macquarie local government area but those two areas border each other. It probably does not include the Port Stephens local government area or the Maitland local government area. In effect, if I interpret the bill correctly, someone could move literally 100 metres down the road out of one local government area into another and this Government will pay them \$7,000. Of course, as this is a last-minute bill, we have not had an opportunity to digest it fully, but it strikes me as a little vague on that particular aspect.

The Minister earlier said that the regulations may declare the Newcastle local government area to be an area for which the relocation grant is not available. I seek clarity on that issue because I cannot understand a Government paying \$7,000 to someone who moves 100 metres down the road. Calculating the numbers in my head—I stand to be corrected by the Treasurer—I am a little surprised by the \$7,000 incentive as I recall the 4 per cent real estate agent fees payable on the sale of a house. On a property sold for \$600,000, the 4 per cent agent's fee would be about \$24,000 and moving fees would be approximately \$15,000. The chance for someone to spend \$39,000 to get \$7,000 sounds a little like investing in a horse racing syndicate. I foreshadow that amendments will be moved to this bill, particularly in respect of the Newcastle local government area being included as metropolitan by definition.

We do not want people leaving Newcastle. We want to increase areas like Newcastle and Lake Macquarie to make them significant places for people to work in and live. We want to build genuine industry in those places so they can be alternatives to Sydney, which, frankly, seems to be struggling under the weight of its population. I appreciate that is the target of this bill, but I question whether Newcastle and Wollongong have reached bursting point and whether we want people to move from these areas. I would have thought to the contrary: that we would want people to move into those regions.

I have heard much in this House from the member for Newcastle and the member for Charlestown who spoke specifically about trying to build up that region with infrastructure to increase its capacity, yet here we are trying to move people out. I ask the Treasurer to talk to other members of his team to clarify exactly what it means. I reiterate that I seek clarification on whether a person can literally move from the Newcastle local government area 100 metres down the road into the Lake Macquarie local government area and still receive the \$7,000 kick-start that the bill proposes. I foreshadow that amendments will be moved when the bill reaches the other place.

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) [5.14 p.m.]: I speak on the Regional Relocation (Home Buyers Grant) Bill 2011. At the outset it is important to refer to the general principles of the bill. The Greens support the Government's efforts for decentralisation. Members would have heard my contribution to debate on the Destination NSW Bill. The Greens acknowledge and recognise the wonderful opportunities and benefits of rural and regional areas of New South Wales. We encourage the Government's efforts to facilitate decentralisation. While recognising these important principles and benefits to the whole of New South Wales, I have several questions about this bill for the Treasurer. The detail in the bill raises significant questions about a range of issues. First, we understand that at present the Government does not know how many people are relocating from metropolitan Sydney, Wollongong and Newcastle to rural and regional New South Wales. I ask the previous speakers to excuse me for including the Wollongong and Newcastle regions in the definition of metropolitan.

Mr Clayton Barr: Isn't that what we know and the Government doesn't know?

Mr JAMIE PARKER: The Government does not know how many people currently are relocating from Wollongong, Sydney and Newcastle to rural and regional New South Wales. The first obvious question is: How does the Government intend to measure the success of this bill? The same principle applied with the payroll tax bill. Although we know, according to estimates, that in excess of 100,000 jobs will be created, on the bill's modelling only several thousand would result from \$400-odd million worth of expenditure. It is reasonable to ask the Treasurer how the Government expects to measure the performance of this bill, which proposes spending several hundred million dollars to achieve its proposal.

It will be interesting for the Government to make clear to the House how it will determine which people have moved because of the incentive and which people already have moved. From the crossbench briefing it is clear that the Government does not know how many people are moving. The second and important question is this: Has the Government produced this bill after considering different models and alternatives? Is it more efficient to invest in high-quality infrastructure in rural and regional New South Wales?

Mr Daryl Maguire: Are you going to oppose it?

Mr JAMIE PARKER: That is good, let us hear that. Is it more effective and efficient expenditure to relocate government departments to rural and regional areas to promote, for example, business incubation or innovation? The answers to these types of questions give the House more understanding of the reason the Government decided to undertake this measure and invest this significant amount of money. It would be worthwhile having a better understanding of how the Government intends to measure efficiency and the impact of this bill. What alternative measures did the Government consider to determine the most efficient investment? One thing The Greens know is that the former Government's approach to infrastructure in rural and regional New South Wales left a lot to be desired.

The Casino to Murwillumbah rail line is a good example of infrastructure that would have attracted economic development, trade, investment and transport options to local communities but that is no longer available because of its closure. I urge the Government to look first at infrastructure, which provides business and communities with opportunities to invest and grow. The Government has put forward a range of other proposals to that end. While infrastructure always is a critical element, does the Government plan to support regional and rural New South Wales through decentralising government departments? If so, it would be worthwhile presenting that so this House can measure that against the cost of this proposed regional relocation grant.

I echo the comments of members who contributed to the debate before me. It would be enlightening for the House to understand how the bill provides safeguards to prevent people moving only one or two kilometres in order to gain the \$7,000 grant. I would appreciate the Treasurer's response to those questions. Clearly, the Government is making efforts to support rural and regional New South Wales. Obviously, we look forward to its implementation and results. I simply ask three questions. How will the Government determine the effectiveness of this measure and its impact on the decision-making of individuals to relocate?

What alternatives did the Minister examine in order to reach this as the most appropriate expenditure of potentially close to \$280 million? I ask also whether the Government took into account other measures such as infrastructure, business incubation and the relocation of government departments. Finally, I seek the Minister's assurance that—other speakers raised this issue, which I echo—people who move only a short distance will not receive the grant. On behalf of The Greens, I recognise the potential benefits of this bill. I ask the Minister to address the questions raised.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Infrastructure NSW) [5.20 p.m.]: I support the Regional Relocation (Home Buyers Grant) Bill 2011. The member for Balmain acknowledged that the Liberal-Nationals Government is making every effort to support regional and rural New South Wales. That is the Government's clear focus. We all recollect the words of Bob Carr when he effectively put the "closed" sign on Sydney. The New South Wales Government is trying to seek a better balance in terms of housing needs in Sydney. We are also trying to ensure that the regional areas that want to grow are supported in their endeavours towards greater growth. There is no question that this Government is supportive of ensuring that the regions that want to grow get support. This bill seeks to address one part of the component. I listened to the contribution of the member for Keira. He seemed to be concerned that members of his community would be encouraged to move out of the Wollongong area. That is not the case.

Clause 3 of the bill provides that a metropolitan area is defined as, first, the Sydney metropolitan area; secondly, the Newcastle local government area; and, thirdly, the Wollongong local government area. The effect of this bill means that \$7,000 will be available if a resident seeks to move out of any of those areas and into regional or rural New South Wales. The member seemed to think that we are encouraging his residents to move out. We are doing that, but we are not saying that they must move out. The member seemed to say that we should not give the residents of Wollongong the option. I do not think that is a rational or reasonable approach. Wollongong is a fantastic area. Those of us who have visited Wollongong know that it has wonderful depth—natural beauty, employment opportunities and natural environment. But all of those things are reasons that residents normally want to continue living in Wollongong.

Mr Jamie Parker: They could move to Balmain.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: They could move to Balmain or Cessnock.

Mr Richard Torbay: Balmain is not regional.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: The member for Balmain is of the view that Balmain is now regional as a result of the latest representation. While the bill seeks to encourage residents to consider a regional lifestyle, it does not mean they have move. It is not a compulsory move. So the concern of the member for Keira that perhaps the residents of Wollongong should not be given this option is a little far-fetched and unrealistic. We would argue that residents in some areas of Newcastle, Sydney and Wollongong need options. We will do whatever we can to encourage the regions. I note that the member for Cessnock is in the Chamber. Cessnock is a wonderful region.

Mr Clayton Barr: God's country.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: It certainly is. It is a beautiful area. I enjoy visiting Cessnock and the surrounds. Indeed, right throughout the lower Hunter, and the Hunter area generally, is beautiful. There are some wonderful towns and villages. It would be remiss of the Government if we did not focus on those fantastic regional areas and tell the residents of Sydney who are finding life a little difficult, who are a little stressed and strained, that there are some fantastic places to go. They should get in a car and go for a drive, and on the weekends they will find paradise on the peripheral parts of Sydney. They should go for a longer drive, into the Northern Tablelands, out to Dubbo, Bathurst, Tamworth or up to the Tweed. Everywhere outside Sydney there are fantastic venues and fantastic opportunities for the residents of Sydney to find a much better lifestyle.

Many of my colleagues from my university and school days went out to the regions, and I cannot think of any who came back. None of them came back, including a mate of mine, a veterinarian, who headed to Dubbo. He spent his whole practising life in Dubbo and has only recently retired. Another friend, a respiratory specialist, headed to Armidale and he is still there. He is doing a fantastic job working with the university there. The Government is seriously telling tradespeople and professional people that every worker and family should look to the regions to see what they can do, and this Government will support them. If people want to move, there is \$7,000 on the table.

Mr RICHARD TORBAY (Northern Tablelands) [5.25 p.m.]: I support the Regional Relocation (Home Buyers Grant) Bill 2011. I commend the Government for not only this bill but also the intent behind it, which is important. As a vehicle on its own, it is a small but important part. An incentive-based approach for regional, rural and remote parts of New South Wales is a positive policy initiative and deserves to be commended. It is always a great time in this place when members make their inaugural speeches. I always enjoy

listening to them. While I may not have been in the Chamber for all of them, I enjoy listening to them because I always find that an inaugural speech is when members say what they really want to say. Of course, members are proud of their electorates and what they have to offer.

In regional and remote communities we often hear comments about how Sydney gets everything and regional and rural areas miss out. This bill highlights opportunities that exist for us to say, "Of course we support Sydney. It's a great city and it is part of New South Wales." But creating incentives to look at lifestyle changes to regional, rural and remotes parts of New South Wales is a complementary policy initiative that allows us to say, "Sydney's overdevelopment and congestion issues"—there are many campaigns in this place about those issues—"are solutions to the opportunities that regional and rural New South Wales are calling out for." An incentive-based approach such as that adopted in this bill is a good thing. Is it new? No.

We have heard the recommendations of many groups and organisations, such as the Rural and Regional Task Force, which was established by the last Parliament. I was proud to be a member of that task force. At the meetings we held in six regional centres we heard about the opportunities that regional and coastal communities were crying out for and the incentives necessary to do that. We have initiatives like the Country and Regional Living Expo that have provided a window for people to receive information about relocating to the regions. More recently, evocities, which comprise several cities including Armidale and Tamworth—I note the member for Tamworth is in the Chamber—have been working together successfully to promote the concept of regional New South Wales and what it has to offer, as opposed to the inaccurate perceptions that may exist but that have to be dealt with.

Measures such as this bill support those initiatives. I believe this bill is necessary. Only in the last sitting week I spoke about some of the stark population statistics throughout the State. The further west one goes, the more concerning those statistics become. Previously, I read some statistics into *Hansard*, but I want to refresh members' memories. The Australian Bureau of Statistics figures show that in the Northern Tablelands—that was the subject of my private member's statement—there was growth of 3.9 per cent in the 2004-09 period. That is what we would call reasonable growth. Regional areas work very hard to achieve that.

I know that growth in the Tamworth region has also been significant when compared with other regional centres. However, when you compare those figures with the cities and metropolitan areas we barely rank. That is why regional electorates are getting larger when electoral redistributions are carried out. Members should look at why that is happening. Out west, numbers in the electorate of Barwon declined by 3.28 per cent over that period. The electorate of Murray-Darling declined by 0.31 per cent from 2004-09.

The more remote the electorate, the more stark the statistics become. It is more difficult to attract people to those regions. In raising this matter I am saying that incentives are the way to deal with the problem. In supporting this bill we need to go further. That is not a criticism because no other government has created an incentive-based approach like this relocation program. It is one that I commend and support. But when you look at the work that has been undertaken by people like the Institute of Chartered Accountants in conjunction with the Australian Local Government Association and other parties to the report it says very clearly that the State and Commonwealth need to get together to create incentives to locate people to regional areas and assist them with population growth.

We do not want to see only cities in the country grow; we want to see the whole regional local government area participate in that growth. Zonal taxation incentives are another important aspect that governments could consider—not just State governments. Other governments should follow the lead given in this bill and this Government should continue to look at an incentive-based approach in other areas so that we are competitive. As many members may do, I write to all my new constituents. I not only tell them I am their local member and happy to assist them with their issues but also I ask them why they came. Quality of life is the number one standout reason people are relocating from some of the metropolitan areas. That is not an issue we should dismiss lightly.

It means there are opportunities with these sorts of incentives, modest as they are, to send an important and positive message to say, "This State supports you in your decision to relocate for a lifestyle change in regional, rural, remote or coastal New South Wales." It is something I support and will continue to support. I commend the Government for this legislation because it is not only the \$7,000 relocation program that will assist; the message it sends is a very important one that supports regional, rural, and remote New South Wales. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) [5.33 p.m.]: I support the Regional Relocation (Home Buyers Grant) Bill 2011. It gives me great pleasure to do so, given the fact that I come from an electorate that has been pushing for regional growth and economic development for many years. I note with interest that the member for Northern Tablelands talked about how important it is for regional centres to attract good people, businesses and others. I commend the member for Northern Tablelands for his comments and thank him for his support for the bill.

The bill introduces a \$7,000 grant for families and individuals who relocate from the metropolitan areas of Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong to regional New South Wales. There is nothing wrong with Sydney; it is a great place to live. Many people choose to live in Sydney and there are those who do not want to live in regional New South Wales. That is their choice. The bill refers to people relocating from the metropolitan areas of Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong. If we take the first letters of those three centres we get "NSW". The member for Cessnock is grinning; he understands exactly what I am talking about. We need to promote regional New South Wales. It is very pertinent that the bill highlights the exemption of Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong from this relocation grant.

The scheme will therefore assist two complementary objectives: encouraging population growth in the regions and reducing population pressures in Sydney. It is very easy to understand and get a grip on the population pressures in Sydney. All you need to do is listen to the traffic reports: "It's bumper to bumper on the M3; it's bumper to bumper on the M5; it's bumper to bumper in Macquarie Street." There is a lot of angst, a lot of frustration and a lot of road rage. The simple message is: take a look over the sandstone curtain. Take a look at regional New South Wales and the opportunities—

Ms Robyn Parker: And the Hunter Valley.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: Of course, do not forget the Hunter Valley but come a little further north to Tamworth. On your way through the Hunter Valley just wave and say, "Thanks very much; love the grapes, love the vineyards and we will enjoy drinking the beverages in sunny Tamworth." The regional relocation grant scheme complements the empty nesters concession in helping free up housing stock in Sydney. Once people move out of Sydney it eases the pressure on housing, which is very important. As we know, the housing market in Sydney is getting tighter and tighter. Another good aspect of this bill is the fact that local councils in regional areas that are concerned about local population pressures will have the choice of opting out of the scheme.

That dovetails nicely with the new planning laws under which we will give back planning to local government in line with their local environment plans. That is what this is also about. Who best to decide about regional growth and economic development in our centres than local government itself? They put a lot of resources into their local environment plans and they should be given the acknowledgement and respect to enable them to implement those plans. I acknowledge the member for Mulgoa, who reminded me of that fact and who also has a wonderful electorate. We will still encourage people to come north. When families think about relocating it poses many questions.

It is not easy to suddenly pack up and move hundreds of kilometres to the country and, in some instances, to the great unknown. Some of those questions relate to housing affordability, schools, medical services, employment, the social aspects, and the transport options. They are all considerations that need to be taken on board when thinking about moving to regional centres. A number of websites and expos in metropolitan areas will assist people looking for the answers to those questions. Moving out is not for everyone, but there are many who would like the opportunity to do it. They just need a bit of incentive and a bit of help.

This \$7,000 relocation grant is the key. It may just be the catalyst to get people moving again. I would like to talk about the abundance of lifestyle pleasures and benefits available in some areas. Going rural and regional provides the opportunity to enhance professional and personal lives in many ways. For example, you can be recognised for making a significant contribution to improving healthcare for the country community of New South Wales. You gain a sense of ownership in your area, you will be involved in a close-knit community and you can live in a family friendly environment.

It is very easy to be swallowed up and be lost and lonely in a big city, whereas in a regional community you are part of the community and part of the fabric of society that helps make that community tick. There are so many great organisations such as Rotary, Lions, Apex, the Country Women's Association, Probus—the list goes on—that people can become involved with and feel they are making a worthwhile contribution to their community. That is what you get when you live in a regional community. It is all well and good to pack up and say, "I want that lifestyle. I want that tree change. I want that sea change."

Mr Bryan Doyle: Hear! Hear!

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: I am sure the member for Campbelltown is encouraging people to move to Tamworth, which is fantastic.

Mr Bryan Doyle: And Wollondilly.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: And move to Wollondilly as well.

Mr Jai Rowell: See the trees.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: There are lots of trees. A serious question that often arises relates to job opportunities. We need to show there are job opportunities because people cannot move without having jobs to go to. We need to create employment.

A few of the jobs are open and the options available include accounting, agriculture, forestry, childcare, community welfare, consulting and corporate construction, healthcare, medical, information technology, local government, the burgeoning industry of the resources sector that is playing a very big part in the way this State moves forward, bricklayers, builders, plumbers, pilots et cetera. If someone wants to take part and have a crack at it he or she should think about moving to regional New South Wales. I will refer to centres in my electorate that would welcome people to such a warm and friendly community. The main city of my electorate is Tamworth with more than 50,000 warm, friendly, smiling faces. There is also Gunnedah, Barraba, Nundle, Werris Creek and Manilla. Tamworth is a dynamic, modern and progressive city and a major regional service centre with an easygoing lifestyle and a strong economy.

People think that because they move outside the sandstone curtain and live in Tamworth, the country music capital, they have to learn to play a guitar or the banjo. A lot of musicians who live in Tamworth do not play country music. It is a sophisticated community with good transport and good health. I thank the Minister for Health because this Government has honoured another election commitment, that is, to fund the redevelopment of Tamworth Base Hospital that will provide five-star facilities for the clinicians in our area, and that should be given a big tick. As the Government moves inside 100 days, what has it achieved? The relocation grant of \$7,000 for families to move to regional areas is another beauty. In relation to population growth in Tamworth it was 1.9 per cent in 2009, the second highest rate in inland New South Wales.

Tamworth is a progressive and sophisticated city that is going places big time. Besides the people, Tamworth is also interested in businesses. If one is thinking about relocating one's business, and they have the opportunity to do that, I ask them to think about moving to the Tamworth electorate. The member for Northern Tablelands talked about tax zonal rates, which I support because those who are thinking about moving their business to regional New South Wales will think twice about it. When one thinks about regional New South Wales—live, train, work the lifestyle—think about the tree change and the sea change. This \$7,000 grant for families and individuals to do that will be an incentive. I commend the Regional Relocation (Home Buyers Grant) Bill 2011 to the House.

Mr MIKE BAIRD (Manly—Treasurer) [5.42 p.m.], in reply: I thank all members for their contributions to the Regional Relocation (Home Buyers Grant) Bill 2011. I note the bizarre contribution of the member for Maroubra, about which I am still confused. The Opposition supports the bill yet says it is a waste of money. Labor members support things that they believe are a waste, something that I do not understand. If they think it is waste why do they support it? It is a political comment. The Opposition supports this legislation because it is good policy. How does the member for Maroubra establish growth in regional and rural New South Wales? How does he see devolvement to regional New South Wales? How does he grow those communities? We do not do just one thing, we have a coordinated policy. I know that is something that State Labor is not used to but it is what the O'Farrell Government has done.

How will we encourage growth? We have carried out a Jobs Action Plan, so 40 per cent of the incentives for those jobs will be allocated to regional New South Wales. Thirty per cent of our infrastructure spend through Infrastructure NSW is allocated to regional and rural New South Wales. Jobs and infrastructure money are coming as an incentive with this relocation grant. The grant is not just at an individual level, as the Opposition would have us understand, but is part of an overall package to get the whole of New South Wales moving and take population pressures off metropolitan areas by promoting growth in regional and rural New South Wales, which we are delighted to support.

The Deputy Premier spoke about a decade of decentralisation. How is that done? One pursues those policies I have just articulated. The difference is that we heard some of those words previously from State Labor but rather than just words this Government has put some policies into action, which is important for our communities. He also articulated that communities had the option to opt in, so it is not something that has been forced on our community across the State. We say that if they want growth in their community and have these incentives apply to it then opt in. We strongly believe that communities should have a say on what sort of growth comes into their area, and this is part of it. He talked about the need to govern the whole State.

I am confused about what my old mate, the member for Keira, was arguing. I am happy to discuss this legislation in detail with him. I am not sure whether he does or does not want his constituents to qualify for a \$7,000 grant and will take that message back to his community, or whether he wants much more growth in his region. If he wants more growth in the Illawarra and Wollongong I am happy to look at options and opportunities with him and other stakeholders. He should be clear about what he is arguing for. Is he saying he does not want anyone in Wollongong to qualify for a \$7,000 grant? Although that is an unusual political approach, can he justify it? If he wants to facilitate growth in the region, and this Government does, we will look at ways to do that.

The Illawarra and Newcastle are very important regions with distinct characteristics that need to be supported, and this Government is very happy to support those fantastic and critical parts of the New South Wales economy in every way it can. The member for Cessnock spoke about the Newcastle local government area and Lake Macquarie. We acknowledge that when lines are put on maps some areas will want to either opt in or opt out. We are happy to monitor this process on an ongoing basis through the Office of State Revenue. We do not want to see the process distorted or for people to take advantage of it. If circumstances start to emerge where that is occurring we will monitor them and look for appropriate opportunities to allay any concerns that arise.

The Office of State Revenue will watch it. We understand that parts of Lake Macquarie want growth and this Government is happy to support that. We will look for anomalies as they emerge across the State in relation to this policy. The member for Balmain asked how the policy would be monitored. The Government will watch it very closely. We learnt from State Labor that if programs are not monitored problems arise, such as occurred with the Solar Bonus Scheme and others. In response to the member for Balmain, we expect about 7,000 relocations under this policy, and we have limited the number that can apply. Importantly, the member for Balmain argued that this stand-alone policy will not achieve its objectives. However we argue that it is one of a number of initiatives undertaken to facilitate growth into regional New South Wales.

The member for Northern Tablelands again gave a rousing endorsement of support for regional New South Wales from his community. He also argued that people might move to improve their quality of life and it is important that we understand that. This proposal will offer an incentive to people who are looking for a lifestyle change. We hope this opportunity will take away some of the financial pain of such a transition and enable people to enjoy a new quality of life in regional and rural New South Wales.

The member for Tamworth yet again spoke about the incentives to move and devolving responsibilities to local community, and how that will help regional New South Wales. He gave a very good speech, as the Minister for the Environment said. In conclusion, I thank all members for their contributions. The bill implements one of the Government's commitments aimed at easing population pressures on Sydney and provides real economic benefit to regional New South Wales. Any measure that helps to reduce congestion on Sydney's roads and public transport, and free up homes for Sydney's population growth should be supported. The regional relocation grant will, in a modest but real way, help to achieve those objectives. More importantly, the grant will provide genuine assistance to residents of New South Wales who relocate from metropolitan areas to the regions. 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.

RESTART NSW FUND BILL 2011

Bill introduced on motion by Mr Mike Baird.

Agreement in Principle

Mr MIKE BAIRD (Manly—Treasurer) [5.51 p.m.]: I move:

That this bill be now agreed to in principle.

I am delighted, having just finished a bill that delivered on a commitment of the O'Farrell Government as part of our 100 Day Action Plan, to introduce a bill to deliver on another infrastructure commitment under the Government's 100 Day Action Plan. This bill provides the establishment of the Restart NSW Fund to set aside funding for and secure the delivery of major infrastructure projects. Why do we need the Restart NSW Fund? I think the record for the past 16 years speaks for itself. Sound investment in infrastructure is essential to the prosperity of this State. Investment in infrastructure underpins business activity, employment and growth. The importance of sound infrastructure decisions has been ignored for too long in this State. We need to restart the New South Wales economy. We need to regain New South Wales reputation as Australia's number one place to live and do business.

The Government recognises this need. It is establishing Infrastructure NSW so it can identify and prioritise the infrastructure projects that will help to grow the New South Wales economy and improve the lives of people in every community. But being able to fund infrastructure is just as important as sound investment decisions. And that is why the Government is also establishing a specific fund for major infrastructure projects. I turn to the scope of Restart New South Wales. The Government's infrastructure fund will be called the Restart NSW Fund. It will provide the funding for essential infrastructure that enhances economic productivity. Projects to be funded by the Restart NSW Fund will be recommended by Infrastructure NSW and assessed in the budget process against the five-year Infrastructure Plan and the 20-year State Infrastructure Strategy.

Restart NSW would fund projects such as public transport infrastructure; roads infrastructure that addresses urban congestion and missing links; economic infrastructure to address the economic competitiveness of New South Wales, including freight, inter-modal facilities and water; local infrastructure in regional areas that are affected by mining operations; hospitals and health infrastructure; and improvements to workplaces for front-line workers including law and justice officers, teachers and nurses. This Government is committed to a whole-of-State development and will address critical infrastructure needs outside the metropolitan areas of Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong. To this end, 30 per cent of funding will be reserved for non-metropolitan areas, including mining-affected communities.

Payments from Restart NSW will be made in a transparent manner with the Auditor-General reporting annually to Parliament to ensure that moneys have been invested in line with the fund's investment mandate. This will include the extent of investment of funds in non-metropolitan areas. Restart NSW will be funded from appropriations by Parliament and the budget process, including any such money certified as windfall tax revenue; realisation of the capital invested in assets, such as from the Sydney Desalination Plant; and potentially borrowings, including the issue of special bonds to the people of New South Wales such as Waratah bonds. Additional sources of funding will include the interest proceeds from investment of money in the fund; money directed or authorised to be paid into the fund by an Act or law; and money voluntarily contributed to the fund by a government agency or other person or body.

If additional borrowings are undertaken to be used to fund the Restart NSW Fund, they will be undertaken in strict compliance with the State's fiscal commitment to maintaining the triple-A credit rating. This bill provides Government with a dedicated fund to restart New South Wales and regain New South Wales reputation as Australia's number one place to do business. It is about restoring fiscal discipline to the operation of government, ensuring that as moneys become available they are directed to the future of the State, and not lost in day-to-day waste and mismanagement. Infrastructure NSW will be at the forefront of addressing New South Wales' infrastructure crisis, identifying the priorities by experts on a methodology that is clear and transparent, and provide funding to get this State moving again. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned on motion by Dr Andrew McDonald and set down as an order of the day for a future day.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**Notices of Motions****General Business Notices of Motions (General Notices) given.****WAGGA WAGGA BASE HOSPITAL****Discussion on Petition Signed by 10,000 or More Persons**

Mr DARYL MAGUIRE (Wagga Wagga) [6.03 p.m.]: I support the petition containing 10,000 or more names, which reads:

The undersigned petitioners therefore ask the Legislative Assembly to: immediately take all steps necessary to fully fund and build to completion a new and complete regional Wagga Wagga Base Hospital within four years.

On 2 June I presented this petition to the House and I am delighted to support all those who signed the petition and took an interest in what is the biggest infrastructure project in the Riverina-Murrumbidgee region. The community has worked tirelessly to achieve this project and some would suggest that it has been 30 years in the making. From 1992 to 1994 some \$32 million was expended on the Wagga Wagga Base Hospital by the Greiner Government. When the Carr Government came to power it cut stage two, three, four and five. The community has campaigned since then to see the hospital progress. Craig Knowles gave impetus to it with funding of some \$400,000, which allowed the planning process to begin, but it has been a long drawn-out affair and it has cost a lot more than that. I understand that up to \$11 million has been expended on planning to build a new hospital on the current site.

The development of the Wagga Wagga Base Hospital will provide the Wagga Wagga community with expanded quality health services. The project is another example of the New South Wales Government rebuilding New South Wales' hospital and health infrastructure. It is pleasing to note that the redevelopment will be delivered as a single continuous project following the Government's substantial boosting of its funding with the contribution of \$125 million on top of the \$90 million that the previous Government allocated in the 2010-11 budget. That clearly indicates this Government's priority to build the hospital. With a Federal Government contribution of some \$55 million, the total spend for Wagga Wagga phases one and two is \$270 million. There will be further funding opportunities through Federal funds, budgets and so on, which the Government and NSW Health can apply as they present, but \$270 million will be invested in a continuous phase.

Construction of new facilities for acute and non-acute mental health will occur in phase one, which will include an additional 30 mental health beds, 10 acute and 20 sub-acute beds. This will considerably improve regional capacity to respond to community needs. The new facilities will be in operation by about 2013. Phase two—the construction of new facilities for emergency services, operating theatres and inpatient units—will deliver an additional seven emergency treatment spaces and two additional emergency medical unit spaces. It will also deliver an expanded operating theatre and preoperative unit, which will include two additional operating theatres and one additional procedure room. Also delivered in phase two will be the new inpatient units to replicate the bed numbers that currently exist in the old tower building and a new helipad. These new facilities are scheduled to be completed in 2014.

Phase three will involve the demolition of the existing tower and construction of the balance of acute services, which will include new facilities for inpatient units to meet demand up to 2021-22, renal services, angiography suites, medical imaging and a new main entrance. Phase three will see the redevelopment of all acute hospital services completed by mid 2016. By the end of phase three there will be 19 additional acute overnight beds and six additional renal treatment spaces. Just last week I opened the improvements to renal services, which cost \$1.5 million and increased the total number of chairs, which is an enhanced service that the public appreciates.

The phasing approach is to ensure that the hospital remains operational throughout the redevelopment. The business case for stage one has been completed and lodged with Treasury. On 2 June 2011 early works for the Wagga Wagga project commenced following the appointment of the construction contractor Hansen Yuncken. The project demonstrates this Government's long-term vision for regional health planning. This has involved the development of a master plan, which demonstrates flexibility for future growth and expansion

beyond the current planning horizon of 2021. A detailed design development of the scheme will involve a consultation process with clinicians, stakeholders, user groups, the local area health network, and so on. Of course, consultation will include city councils and others who play a very important role in the delivery of health care.

I express my appreciation of all the people who delivered the names listed in the petition. People travelled to Sydney to deliver the petition personally and others walked the street to obtain names so that the petition could reflect to this House that the project is imperative to every person in the Wagga Wagga region. Approximately \$11 million has been spent on preparation. Southern New South Wales has a catchment of approximately 280,000 people. The regional hospital will service those people. It is not the first time that a petition of this size has been presented to Parliament. During the campaign to obtain more funding for the planning process I presented a petition with 20,000 names.

The Government is serious about delivering this project. Preparation for construction will commence during the next couple of months. Houses on the site have been acquired. As I speak, discussions are taking place with owners and occupiers of premises to organise vacant possession so that preliminary clearing works can begin. Construction of the project will commence early in the new year. That is exciting. I acknowledge the input of all the people who signed the petition and those along with Matthew Hogg who delivered the petition to Parliament.

Dr ANDREW McDONALD (Macquarie Fields) [6.10 p.m.]: The member for Wagga Wagga said the petition is dated 2 May but the petition shows it was received by this House on 2 June. The petition states:

The petitioners ask the Legislative Assembly to take all steps necessary to fully fund and build to completion a new and complete regional Wagga Wagga Base Hospital within four years.

I agree with the petitioners that it is time for the New South Wales Government to build this hospital. I am pleased that the member for Wagga Wagga has provided details, because the Government needed to come clean with more than 10,000 people from areas all over southern New South Wales, not just those in the electorate of Wagga Wagga, who signed the petition. They deserve to know what the Government is actually going to do. That is why on 10 May I asked the Minister for Health, and Minister for Medical Research, the Hon. Jillian Skinner, a simple unequivocal question. Question No. 0083 reads:

- (1) What are the sources of funding for the Wagga Wagga Base Hospital upgrade?
- (2) What is the total cost of the works?
- (3) When will works begin?
- (4) When are they due to be completed?

It is a simple question. Every person in southern New South Wales deserves to know the answer. The answer is dated 14 June and states:

The Government is currently undertaking a review of health capital infrastructure.

The specific timing, scope and funding of hospital projects will be announced after the budget process is completed in September 2011.

For \$11 million I would have expected a better answer. The answer was provided on 14 June in spite of the fact that on 13 May the Federal Gillard Government came up with a further \$58.4 million investment through the 2000-12 Federal budget for the Wagga Wagga Base Hospital redevelopment and for the Calvary Drug and Alcohol facility. If the Government knew so much why was the answer to my question so sparse? Government members choose to selectively ignore the Federal Government, unless of course they wish to apportion blame. How good would it have been if the Howard Government had shown the commitment to regional hospitals that the Gillard Government has shown.

Instead, the Howard Government took billions of dollars from the New South Wales health system—funds that surely would have helped the people of Wagga Wagga in their desperate need for infrastructure. On 13 May Simon Crean announced that the redevelopment would include an increase in bed capacity from 218 to 284, including an increase in acute care and dental health acute care beds and space for new mental health non-acute beds, a new emergency procedures centre, a new operating theatre complex, expansion of the renal dialysis unit and expansion of imaging and diagnostic services.

Mr Crean said that on 13 May, which was a month before the answer to my question was provided by the Minister for Health. He stated that the Wagga Wagga projects had been selected by the Federal Government for funding through the Health and Hospitals Fund regional priority round of applications assessed by the independent Health and Hospitals Fund's advisory board as having satisfied funding requirements. As Government members well know, the applications referred to by Mr Crean were submitted by the former Labor Government. The total value of the Wagga Wagga Base Hospital redevelopment is \$270.1 million, comprising \$55.1 million from the Gillard Government and \$215 million from the New South Wales Government. The total amount is \$10 million beyond the original Health and Hospitals Fund's project scope, and allows for further works to be completed at the hospital. Perhaps Michael McCormack, MHR, said it better than anybody:

"Minister, I have attached a timeline of funding pledges and, unfortunately, broken promises made by both sides of State politics ... over the past 30 years.

He estimated that the complete redevelopment would cost approximately \$360 million to \$400 million. The member for Wagga Wagga also indicated that the cost of the redevelopment may be between \$305 million and \$400 million, which means that there is still a funding shortfall. The people of Wagga Wagga are entitled to know how the State Minister for Health will obtain additional funding that is required to complete the redevelopment. The member for Wagga Wagga has a very strong personal interest in the redevelopment of the Wagga Wagga Base Hospital, but not for electoral reasons. He feels an enormous commitment to his constituents and wants to achieve the redevelopment for altruistic purposes and to do his job properly rather than for electoral reasons.

I acknowledge that because the people of Wagga Wagga and southern New South Wales richly deserve an upgraded hospital. Those are my words from the debate on 6 May. But as I asked on 6 May, where will the additional funds come from? It is now time for the Premier, Barry O'Farrell, and the Minister for Health, Jillian Skinner, to enter the arena. I notice they are not present in the Chamber for this discussion. They need to show the people of New South Wales what they will do about plugging the gap in funding between the \$270 million that has been committed and the \$325 million to \$400 million that is required for completion of the redevelopment project. In June 2010 the then shadow Minister, who is now the Minister for Health, stated:

The complete redevelopment of Wagga Wagga Base Hospital remains a priority for the NSW Liberals and Nationals ...

Construction of the Wagga Wagga Hospital redevelopment over the next four years will be a test of whether this Government can really walk the walk or if it is just a matter of talking the talk. Now that funding is in place the ball is well and truly in the Minister's court. It is time to see whether she can match her words with deeds. As the then shadow Minister for Health during the term of the former Government, Jillian Skinner issued scathing press releases about the former Government's ability to deliver new hospitals, such as the Orange and Liverpool hospitals that have now been built and that now function well. I will not act as the current Minister did. I want the new Wagga Wagga Base Hospital to be built quickly and successfully, as the petitioners have requested. I sincerely hope that this petition is successful and that there is a new Wagga Wagga Base Hospital in four years. I thank all those who contributed to the presentation of the petition. I wish everybody all the best, including the Wagga Wagga medical practitioners, whom I know well.

Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) [6.17 p.m.]: It is with pleasure that I contribute to discussion of the petition requesting the funding and construction of the new Wagga Wagga Base Hospital within the next four years. I congratulate the member for Wagga Wagga on his earnest work over many years to bring the project to fruition. When listening to the Opposition spokesperson on health one would think that he had a plan, that the former Government had a plan, had secured money from the Federal Government and had committed State funds and that the project was ready to go. But the Labor Government did not approach Federal governments to make the project possible.

It was Barry O'Farrell who made a promise to the people of Wagga Wagga during the 2011 election campaign that, if elected to government, construction of the hospital would begin during our first term. We all know that for 16 years the former Labor Government turned its back on the Riverina as well as on the hardworking medical professionals who continue to practise life-saving techniques at the Wagga Wagga Base Hospital. We should not forget that the New South Wales Labor Party also turned its back on the people of Tamworth, Bega, Dubbo, Parkes, Forbes, Port Macquarie and the northern beaches. Those people also cried out for hospitals for 16 years. They too were promised the earth but in fact were given nothing.

When we entered government on 27 March we immediately started reversing the 16 years of Labor inaction in Wagga Wagga and across regional New South Wales. As the member for Wagga Wagga indicated,

this term the Wagga Wagga hospital redevelopment will attract a total of \$270 million. The New South Wales Government's contribution totals \$215 million. Our investment brought forward a Federal contribution of \$55.1 million from the 2011 round of the Health and Hospitals Fund [HHF]. The O'Farrell Government's significant boost also ensures that the redevelopment will be delivered as a single continuous project. I refer to an advertisement and letter published in the *Weekend Advertiser* on Saturday 18 June from barrister Matthew Hogg, who has been a major protagonist behind bringing this petition to the House. He said that over the years he has campaigned for the rebuilding of the Wagga Wagga hospital but that there has been delay and neglect. In the advertisement he said:

However, credit goes to those who deserve it, and I wanted to share my praise for our local member Daryl Maguire who, while we were recently discussing the need to ensure that the debate of the People's Petition in the NSW Legislative Assembly was maximised, confirmed that the work he started in Opposition all those years ago has now borne fruit now he is in Government.

Daryl, I wanted to share with our community my thanks.

In the letter of congratulations regarding the full funding of the Wagga Wagga Base Hospital by the O'Farrell Government—

Mr Troy Grant: Is that a full-page ad?

Mr GREG APLIN: It is, in fact, a full-page ad that I had to reduce. It is rather difficult to read because it is from an A3 page. Nevertheless, I will read it because the House needs to hear the comments in relation to the petition we are discussing. Mr Hogg said in his letter:

I apologise for taking so long to write to congratulate the NSW Liberals/Nationals and you personally for recognising and prioritising the *full* rebuild of the WWBH and the O'Farrell Government's commitment that all the necessary funds to complete the entire rebuild of the hospital, inclusive of all stages as outlined in the most recent 2010 WWBH Master Plan, will be found.

Your commitment that the "*O'Farrell government has now agreed to fund the entire hospital in all its stages as quickly as they could build it*" is a pledge that the Riverina has waited more than 30 years to hear and today the region can rest assured that it has found three regional health advocates in Premier O'Farrell, Health Minister Skinner and yourself.

He continues:

A commitment to fund the estimated \$350 million to rebuild in total the WWBH represents a real and authentic commitment to the region's health infrastructure.

You have provided me with certainty, that the entire project will be funded within the next five years, where before we only had mere promises for funding of perhaps as little as two-thirds of the project.

That is indeed great praise from a man behind the petition we are now discussing and recognition of the hard work undertaken by my colleague just up the road from Albury, the member for Wagga Wagga, Daryl Maguire. Over the years I too have worked in that particular hospital. After spending 2001 in hospitals at Albury and Wagga Wagga I can attest to the dire need for the rebuilding of that particular hospital, having worked on level 6. I worked then with the University of New South Wales Rural Clinical School and was responsible for setting in motion the purchase of Harvey House, which lies within the grounds of Wagga Wagga Base Hospital. That too now has been renovated. Before long the whole hospital will be just as good as Harvey House. I look forward to that day.

Mr JOHN WILLIAMS (Murray-Darling) [6.22 p.m.]: It gives me great pleasure to speak in support of the petition from the Wagga Wagga electorate and the hardworking member for Wagga Wagga. The member for Murrumbidgee and Minister for Education, and the member for Burrinjuck and Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Small Business would have liked to join us in the Chamber but are not able to do so due to ill health. The topic is important to my electorate and those members representing the Murrumbidgee and Burrinjuck electorates because we rely on the services of the Wagga Wagga Base Hospital. The other side of this debate is pretty clear: the old doomsday cult has returned. The doomsayers repeat that the project will never happen.

Hospitals always have been problems in New South Wales, particularly in regional New South Wales. The previous Labor Government chose to ignore community needs and its responsibility for hospitals in regional New South Wales. The member for Dubbo, who is at the table, has shared the same frustration as the member for Wagga Wagga with lack of support for a renewed Dubbo Base Hospital. To make things worse,

no-one ever knew what was going to happen to the Parkes and Forbes hospitals. One thought was to amalgamate with Dubbo hospital, but that was another disaster for the member for Dubbo and the member for Tamworth, who is not in the Chamber.

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

Mr JOHN WILLIAMS: These bleedingly obvious projects should have happened in the past 16 years by that mob on the other side, but they chose to ignore them. As usual, they did not listen to the people of New South Wales. They ultimately found out what happens when you do not listen to the people. The member for Wagga Wagga has assured his community of a fine facility that will be built to support and service the needs not only of the people of Wagga Wagga, but also those in the Murray-Darling electorate who go to Wagga Wagga hospital to receive specialist services. This is a great result. To add insult to injury, the member for Wagga Wagga had to contest his seat at the election against one of those elements opposite who was an apparatchik of the previous Government and planned to talk down Wagga Wagga Base Hospital.

That candidate must have whitewashed his past because he decided to run against the member for Wagga Wagga at the March election. His decision was a fatal error because he supported doing nothing about Wagga Wagga Base Hospital. The Wagga Wagga community has spoken through this petition with significant numbers. Clearly, the community frustration is not a culmination of something that happened overnight. As the member for Dubbo said, his electorate has been hearing promises for nine years. I do not know for how long Wagga Wagga Base Hospital was promised by those on the other side; it was never on their radar because there were too many other priorities.

The mopping-up exercise resulted in a cover-up with no truth or transparency. The health system was amok. Organisations such as the Greater Southern Area Health Service ignored the needs of the people of Wagga Wagga. Many people in my electorate rely on the services of Wagga Wagga Base Hospital. They have been disappointed with the lack of action by the State Labor Government to even put together a plan to consider the renewal of the hospital. I am pleased to say that the move afoot from the Liberal-Nationals Coalition guarantees that the hospital will be built and the people of Wagga Wagga can rest easy knowing they will have a new facility in which to enjoy high-class health services in the future.

Mr TROY GRANT (Dubbo—Parliamentary Secretary) [6.27 p.m.], by leave: I join with my colleagues in congratulating the Wagga Wagga community and the member for Wagga Wagga on bringing this petition to the House. The people of Wagga Wagga reached this point after absolute frustration. The member for Wagga Wagga raised this petition to make sure this House clearly understands the journey his community has undertaken to finally have an essential and necessary service that the State Government should have provided over the years. The sad fact is that they are not alone. Members opposite had a worse rap sheet and worse antecedents than Neddy Smith in terms of failed promises over 16 years. Tamworth is in the same situation. Members opposite made the same promises to the people of Tamworth and Bega, and they betrayed the communities in regional New South Wales. Also, they failed my electorate of Dubbo.

Nine years ago, in a written undertaking to the Dubbo community, the former Premier, Mr Iemma, promised a redevelopment of Dubbo Base Hospital. During those nine years the Dubbo electorate was represented by two Independent members. Not only did members opposite betray the community; they betrayed the Independents who supported them. Members opposite should be ashamed because they were effectively betraying a member of their own team. The community had had a gutful on 26 March. I thank the Dubbo community for seeing through Labor's betrayal, for having faith and trust in this Government and for electing me to this place to ensure that I am their voice and that the Government delivers on its commitments.

My electorate is still paying the price for Labor's failures. The former Government's application to health and hospital funding for the Dubbo Base Hospital redevelopment was appalling. My 12-year-old daughter could have done a better job. The Dubbo redevelopment was a three-stage project. Thank God the Minister for Health and the Premier made an election commitment to the Dubbo hospital redevelopment to the tune of \$50 million. The health and hospital funding application predated that commitment and was being considered. What did we get from the colleagues of members opposite in Canberra? We got \$7.1 million.

Mr Daryl Maguire: I bet they didn't apply for enough money.

Mr TROY GRANT: They did not. Labor's application was absolutely disgraceful. The Federal Government took the easy way out, the cheap way out. It said, "The application is for \$57.1 million. We'll just

use the State's money"—it was earmarked for later stages of the redevelopment—"We'll take the easy road and just kick in \$7.1 million." It was disgraceful. What is worse—had the Minister for Health and the Premier not given a commitment, my community would have followed the same path of presenting a petition—is that the former Government did not even apply for any money for Parkes and Forbes. There was no application. That is absolutely disgraceful. I condemn members opposite who were involved in the application for letting down my communities of Parkes and Forbes. Once again, I commend the Minister for Health and the Premier for having courage and foresight. They removed the sandstone from their eyes; they recognised the true needs of Forbes and Parkes and made a genuine commitment.

Those communities are now looking forward to receiving the investment they rightly deserve in health infrastructure in their communities. Those communities service not only the population base within the town limits; they also service a wide catchment area to the west, up and along the western side of the Newell Highway. They will have a facility so that people do not have to give birth in cars on the side of roads. They will not be abandoned, as the former Government abandoned them. Forbes will have a facility that is a satisfactory standard so that we do not run the risk of losing services in that community. Parkes will get a new hospital and, despite the poor efforts of members opposite, Dubbo Base Hospital will be redeveloped. Those communities have been waiting nine long years for these services. Again I thank the Minister and the Premier. I commend the member for Wagga Wagga.

Discussion concluded.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

PITTWATER ELECTORATE WATERWAYS

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Parliamentary Secretary) [6.34 p.m.]: Today I raise a matter of real importance to the people of the Pittwater electorate. As members may be aware, Pittwater is a spectacular and renowned body of water in my community comprising an area of just over 17 square kilometres. In March 1788 Captain Arthur Phillip declared it "the finest piece of water I ever saw". He honoured it with the name of Pitt, after William Pitt the younger, who was the Prime Minister of Great Britain. Incidentally, at about the same time he named Sydney Harbour after Thomas Townsend, the Home Secretary. It is significant that he named Pittwater after a more important official. The Pittwater body of water is not just what my community is named after. Pittwater is one of the biggest recreational waterways in the State. It is the focal point of our community. It draws tourists and daytrippers. It is the venue of numerous recreation activities.

It provides an access way to and from offshore communities, and it is bordered to the west by the magnificent Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park, which has been handed to us in pristine condition by the Gadigal people who have lived there for thousands of years. From Bayview to McCarrs Creek, to Careel Bay, Currawong, the Basin and the entire western foreshore, Pittwater and its estuaries are a special place. The waterway has hundreds of species of fish and aquatic life. It supports a diverse ecosystem made up of numerous estuarine habitats, seagrass beds around Currawong, Great Mackerel Beach and Towlers Bay, and mangroves in the intertidal mud flats at Careel Bay, McCarrs Creek and Church Point. It supports many types of bird species. Indeed, Careel Bay wetland is recognised as an internationally important wetland in terms of supporting bird life.

It has salt marsh communities at Winnererremy Bay, Refuge Cove and Winji Jimmi, rocky shores and sandy beaches. It covers the gambit of many different types of coastal environment. However, Pittwater is coming under increased pressures and threats. There is huge community concern surrounding dwindling fish stocks, the impacts of commercial fishing operators and the introduction and spread of noxious aquatic weed. There is increasing dissatisfaction among recreational fishers. I thank the President of the Anglers Action Group, Sydney north side, Phil Ingram, for being such a strong advocate for recreational fishers in this wonderful waterway. There has been an increase in licensed commercial operators, which has resulted from their relocation from other areas in Sydney as a result of the commercial fishing licence buyback scheme. These commercial fishers and operators are engaging in hauling, netting and trapping. Hauling and netting in particular can do untold damage to breeding and juvenile fish stocks in an enclosed waterway like Pittwater.

There is also the spread of the aquatic caulerpa toxifolia, which was first discovered in New South Wales waterways in 2000. It has been the menace of the Mediterranean for many decades, and it is to the absolute horror of many New South Wales fishers that it was identified in New South Wales more than a decade

ago. Pittwater is one of the first places where it was identified. The former Labor Government did not provide resources to get rid of it before it got a foothold. It is now plaguing Pittwater; it is evident in numerous locations throughout the waterway. It is spread via nets, trawlers, tidal movements, seabed disruption, et cetera, and it produces large amounts of toxins that destroy natural seabeds and seagrasses.

Sadly, as a result of these things, Pittwater is no longer the haven for recreational fishers it once was. This is hurting families and recreational fishers, fishing tackle businesses, fishing charter businesses, hire boat businesses and local accommodation providers; the list goes on. It is no secret that fishing stocks have declined dramatically in recent years, and we now find ourselves in an alarming and disappointing scenario. There is real concern that fish stocks are in a downward spiral. We need rejuvenation and preservation. We need to ensure that future generations can enjoy our local waterways and that the simple pleasure of catching a decent legal size fish does not become a rarity or a thing of the past for recreational fishers.

Along with many in our community, I believe that measures such as tighter commercial restrictions or a commercial fishing closure must now be explored. It must involve thorough consultation and respect the interests of commercial operators. But there is enormous potential existing to better protect Pittwater to deliver long-term benefits. I look forward to working with the community to explore options that could help ensure the long-term sustainability of this precious community asset. I encourage feedback from all interested parties on these issues. Pittwater is a unique and iconic waterway, and we must ensure that it is preserved.

BANKSTOWN ELECTORATE DEVELOPMENTS

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) [6.39 p.m.]: I place on the parliamentary record two projects I am immensely proud of that are currently underway at Bankstown. They are the new Central Library and Knowledge Centre and the Women's and Children's Health Centre. Both will transform the heart of Bankstown's central business district. Libraries are one of our city's most important community assets and it is vital for council to provide our residents with a library and knowledge centre that will meet both their current and future needs. The project to relocate the library into a state-of-the-art complex is still on schedule to be completed by mid 2012. The new Central Library and Knowledge Centre is a major project for our community. The redevelopment is a milestone project designed to meet the current and future needs of our growing city and is destined to become the next new landmark in our region.

Bankstown is a city of progress and this multimillion-dollar development will be an important and significant feature, placing our city on the map by providing first-class community infrastructure. The new Central Library and Knowledge Centre is also part of our city's broader plans to develop the Bankstown central business district into a major regional centre. Bankstown's new Central Library and Knowledge Centre will include a large community space, improved library facilities, a cafe and an exhibition area. In addition to taking books home, visitors will be able to choose between temporarily checking out books to read in a sun-drenched outdoor area or settling down in one of a number of comfortable reading rooms located inside. It is hoped that local schools, the University of Western Sydney, TAFE New South Wales and other educational facilities within and across our region will utilise the facility, including the 300-seat theatre. The new library will be a green community facility because of a number of environmental design components, including a unique quality air system that uses the natural filtering properties of plants.

Construction on another new project, the Bankstown Women's and Children's Health Centre, is nearing completion and the centre should be open to the public next month. The new centre is a multipurpose facility that will provide the women and children of Bankstown with free access to a range of services, including medical consultations, counselling and child care, all conveniently located in one central location in the central business district. Situated across the road from a park, the facility in Jacobs Street will bring together three local existing services—the Women's Health Centre, the Occasional Childcare Centre, which specialises in caring for children with disabilities, from Restwell Street, and the very important immunisation clinic at the Women's Rest Centre in North Terrace. For many years these three important facilities have played a vital role in providing health advice and services to the Bankstown community.

I take this opportunity to pay tribute to not only the councillors and council staff for their support for and commitment to these projects but also the staff at the Women's Health Centre, including those at the immunisation clinic and those giving on-site child care, for their ongoing commitment to providing quality health for our community. I thank them for their patience during the construction period. Both initiatives will serve Bankstown's current and future generations in providing quality health services for women and children. The Central Library and Knowledge Centre, a quality piece of infrastructure that will cost close to \$19 million,

will provide a platform for lifelong learning for the entire community. All generations of Bankstown residents will be able to enjoy the new facility. The new Central Library and Knowledge Centre will put Bankstown on the map and support our region through education for many generations to come.

F3 TO M2 LINK

Mr CHRIS SPENCE (The Entrance) [6.44 p.m.]: I speak on a topic of significant importance not just to the people of my electorate but to all Central Coast and Hunter residents. I refer to the F3 to M2 orbital link, which is best described as a missing link. The missing link is an important part of the national road network. Across Sydney there are four major arterial roads that funnel their traffic onto Pennant Hills Road and then onto the F3. Silverwater Road, Woodville Road, the Cumberland Highway and the major orbital road around Sydney, the M7, all converge in one area regarded by the Federal Government as a State road. Within a stretch of less than 10 kilometres there is traffic gridlock, which includes commuters, road freight and local traffic such as mums and dads on their way home from school, day care and work.

The F3 is of particular importance to the people of the Central Coast because it is the main road used by Central Coast and Hunter residents to access Sydney. When John Howard was Prime Minister and the Labor Party was in government in New South Wales there was no cooperation from the State Government, just political games to delay action on this missing link. The then Federal Coalition Government committed \$150 million but the former State Government took no action. All planning and pre-construction work stopped and there was no action to have the project shovel ready. The Coalition promise was matched in 2007 by the Labor Party when it was in opposition federally. However, when Labor won government the games continued. Funds were promised by the Federal Labor Government in 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010. We were told, "The funds are in the National Building Program." Now the Federal Government has deferred the funding until 2015-16. I refer to Budget Paper No. 2, page 268, where it says, "National Building Program, F3 to Sydney Orbital, feasibility study deferred."

Once again the political games are being played by the Labor Party and the people of the Central Coast are the football being kicked around. The New South Wales Coalition Government knows that delivering infrastructure to the people of this State will make a significant difference in their lives. As a representative of the people of The Entrance I know that this infrastructure will have a huge positive impact on the families in my electorate, which is why I will fight for the F3 to M2 missing link. I will work with the Premier to refer the F3 to M2 missing link to Infrastructure NSW. Under this Government, Infrastructure NSW will ensure that our applications for funding to Infrastructure Australia gain the best possible outcome, which is why the Minister introduced the Infrastructure NSW Bill into the Parliament. The Government understands the importance of infrastructure to the people of the Central Coast and New South Wales. It knows that the health and safety of New South Wales road users is important; that a work-life balance is important and time with one's family is the cornerstone of a successful society.

Federal members from the Central Coast should take note: recent State election results from the Central Coast have shown the result of local members taking their electorates for granted. For too long the people of the Central Coast have been taken for granted and neglected. Now Federal Labor is neglecting them. Deborah O'Neill, Labor's representative for Robertson, is looking for the off-ramp on this issue because the Federal Labor Government has shelved the funding; for too long it has been doing 60 kilometres an hour in the right-hand lane. She sanctimoniously claims to want to work with like-minded people on the issue yet cannot get the Gillard Government to honour its commitment. Deborah O'Neill has failed to convince her colleagues in the Federal Labor Government to keep its \$150 million promise.

In contrast, Jim Lloyd, the former Liberal member, was able to deliver money from the Howard Government to widen the F3. The F3 is a Federal responsibility. Deborah O'Neill and her Labor colleagues should convince the Federal Government to honour its election commitment to deliver money to connect the F3 to the M2. Deborah O'Neill talks about building a political consensus and forming a community alliance. I highlight a few community members who have an opinion on the topic. Central Coast New South Wales Business Chamber spokesperson Daniel Farmer was reported in the *Central Coast Express Advocate* as saying, "The decision restricted the ability of the coast to attract big business." Local NRMA director Kyle Loades reported the NRMA as being "extremely disappointed". Wyong City Council understands the importance of the missing link, including three Labor councillors, who demonstrated that on 25 May 2011 by their unanimous support for a motion to reinstate the F3 link. The political consensus on the F3 to M2 missing link exists. The New South Wales Coalition Government stands with the people of The Entrance and the Central Coast on this issue. Federal members should not be worried about building a political consensus; they should be worried about building a road.

MEN'S SHEDS

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) [6.48 p.m.]: I endorse the words of the member for The Entrance. Today I speak about the great work done by Men's Sheds in New South Wales and raise the need for government support for this most worthwhile endeavour. On Saturday 18 June I had the pleasure of attending the opening of a new Men's Shed established by the Salvation Army at Bonnells Bay, Lake Macquarie. I have long been familiar with the valuable social work achieved through Men's Sheds, particularly through the involvement at Windale Men's Shed of my late father, Keith.

Dad was an intelligent, creative and practical man, who was taken with the concept and camaraderie of the Windale Men's Shed. I am also pleased to have made good friends with many of those involved at Windale, but that is the purpose of Men's Sheds. For that reason last Saturday I was pleased to be involved in the opening of a new Men's Shed at Bonnells Bay. This shed is the project of the local Salvation Army, a great institution in its own right, assisted by an army of dedicated volunteers and many sponsors.

During the event I spoke with Stuart Torrance, coordinator of the Hunter Valley Men's Shed Cluster, who informed me that the New South Wales Men's Shed Association is in need of financial assistance and that numerous representations to the former Government and to Premier O'Farrell have had no positive response. Currently more than 180 Men's Sheds are registered with the New South Wales association, with statewide membership at 14,000 and growing. There is a strong family involvement and the reasonable estimate is that 40,000 to 50,000 people in New South Wales have a close interest.

Men's Sheds in New South Wales have made an invaluable contribution to what is a recognised worldwide initiative, with a number of other countries now developing programs based on the Australian model and in partnership with the Australian Men's Shed Association. The national organisation has also developed partnerships with numerous bodies involved in health service delivery and preventative health initiatives. The importance of Men's Sheds is also acknowledged by the Commonwealth Government. Indeed, the contribution of Men's Sheds is well documented as a preventative health program. Former Men's Health Ambassador and Chair of the Australasian Men's Health Forum, Professor John Macdonald, in his annual address stated:

Men's Sheds are the jewel in the crown when it comes to men's health in Australia.

With such high level of participation in activities, Men's Sheds and their respective State associations are an ideal platform from which to launch further health initiatives. Commonwealth funding totalling \$3 million over four years under the National Male Health Policy has allowed the Australian Men's Shed Association to establish a dedicated team that provides professional advice and assistance, such as establishing and sustaining sheds, occupational health and safety, risk management and minimising insurance costs. However, that grant is for the national organisation, while the broader plan relies on State associations to contribute. The New South Wales association is currently unable to do so because of lack of funding. Other State governments have allocated resources; for example, the State organisation in Victoria was given \$5 million over three years and \$5,000 was given annually to cover the operational expenses of each shed in Tasmania.

In New South Wales some sheds have obtained individual grants through the Community Building Program, but the State association remains unfunded and relies solely on unpaid volunteers. The effort and resources of the Salvation Army have provided the new purpose-built shed at Bonnells Bay—a fabulous effort and I congratulate all those involved. However, it will take ongoing support to maintain the shed and it would help greatly if the State organisation was funded to provide statewide support and coordination. I am advised that the New South Wales Men's Shed Association is seeking New South Wales Government funding to employ two full-time State coordinators to assist the overall effectiveness of New South Wales sheds. This would help to address men's health concerns and maintain sustainable and safe facilities.

In addition, it would enable the coordinators to liaise with community groups, government agencies and external supporters to enhance the operations of sheds and expand their roles in the community. A suitable level of State funding would assist the State organisation with administration costs such as a telephone, computer, postage, stationery, training and travel costs for attending meetings. A plan of management and a detailed budget for these matters has already been developed. Also, modest funding to each shed would assist in this valuable work. I understand that funding is always critical to organisations and also to the State Government. However, this is a very proactive organisation, indeed a movement, and it would be beneficial for the State and the State Government to be involved. I believe this matter is of interest to the Minister for Healthy Lifestyles and I bring this plea for help to the attention of the Government.

PORT MACQUARIE ELECTORATE ROADS

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) [6.53 p.m.]: I speak about a very important subject that affects everyone in the Port Macquarie electorate, that is, the condition of our local roads. For too many years local councils have had an uphill battle coming to terms with deteriorating roads. Two weeks ago I conducted a tour of the southern part of my electorate taking in Harrington, Lansdowne, Coopernook and Moorland. This was prior to the recent flood event in the Manning. The condition of some roads, particularly the Coopernook to Lansdowne Road, is terrible. The road looks more like Swiss cheese than a rural road. This is in no way critical of Greater Taree City Council. A few weeks ago I met with the General Manager Gerard Jose and senior staff to talk about a range of issues including roads. Council is responsible for approximately 750 kilometres of sealed roads and 950 kilometres of unsealed roads in the local government area with a percentage of that in the Port Macquarie electorate.

Council estimates that, for the 12 worst roads in my electorate under its jurisdiction, it would cost more than \$15 million to bring them up to standard. A report from council lists these roads as being in very poor condition: Coralville Road, Hannam Vale Road, Stewarts Creek Road, West Street, Harrington Road, Beach Street, Lansdowne Road, Crowdy Head Road and Waitui Road. In length, these roads equate to just 30 kilometres. For years council has been fighting a never-ending battle to not only maintain the road network, let alone improve it. As I mentioned, weather has also played a significant role in the deterioration of the road surface.

The flooding of the Manning last week has been estimated to have caused an additional \$10 million of damage to the road network. Council is applying for natural disaster assistance funding, on top of the work I have already spoken about. Greater Taree City Council is not alone. Port Macquarie-Hastings Council has similar concerns with its road network. Again the heavy rains of last week have impacted further on an already deteriorating road network. Its bill for the flood damage is approximately \$1.9 million.

For the past couple of years council has adopted a back-to-basics program of allocating a large percentage of its available funding to improving roads. Again it needs millions of dollars to get the job done. If one simply drives around the Hastings one gains the impression that council is having difficulty making ends meet with respect to local road infrastructure. Clifton Drive, Lord Street, Hastings River Drive, Tallong Drive at Lake Cathie, the Boulevard at Dunbogan and parts of Lorne Road, Kendall, are just a few which are in a terrible condition. Additionally, some of the roads on council's rolling works program identified as needing replacement or duplication include Ocean Drive, Hastings River Drive and Houston Mitchell Drive.

Council is still trying to fully fund the replacement of Stingray Creek Bridge, which has concrete cancer. That bridge is a vital link between North Haven and Laurieton. While some of these projects have already received part funding, including a \$10 million commitment from the Liberal-Nationals prior to the election, council estimates the total cost is approximately \$52 million. Clearly those councils need funding to do these necessary roadworks. Our community deserves the right to drive on roads that do not leave one shuddering as one drives on them. To bring these roads to a standard we expect, both councils applied for a special rate variation that they would commit to roads infrastructure and both councils only received partial increases. While no-one wants to pay more in their rates, the fact is that more money is needed.

It is ironic that the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal can approve electricity price rises of approximately 18 per cent to fix aging electricity infrastructure with no community consultation, yet these councils applied for rate increases to improve aging local roads infrastructure and were required to undertake extensive consultation with their respective communities. Despite their applications the increases were rejected. Something is wrong with that process. As a community, we expect to get from point A to point B without the need to visit a chiropractor. I do not think that is too much to ask. To gain a better understanding of the condition of roads in the Port Macquarie electorate, I have extended an invitation to the Minister for Roads, the Hon. Duncan Gay, to come back to the electorate and see firsthand what locals already know—we need help to fix our local roads.

NEPEAN RIDING FOR THE DISABLED ASSOCIATION

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) [6.58 p.m.]: I inform the House of the wonderful work being carried out by the Nepean Riding for the Disabled Association. Nepean Riding for the Disabled Association is affiliated with the international voluntary organisation, Riding for the Disabled Association. There are more than 130 affiliated Riding for the Disabled Association centres in Australia, with 38 centres in New South Wales.

Sheila Cunliffe was the founder of the Nepean Riding for the Disabled Association. The association commenced at a property named Glen Allan at Regentville in March 1983 and in 1989 the group moved to Orchard Hills, where it is currently operating.

The property at Orchard Hills is approximately 27 acres and includes three paddocks, indoor-outdoor arenas, a caretaker's house and ancillary facilities. A significant amount of work, including construction and landscaping, has been carried out at the site, largely by the efforts of dedicated volunteers. The volunteers at RDA-Nepean conduct regular fundraising events to raise the money necessary to support and improve those facilities. RDA-Nepean introduces clients with disabilities to the experience of horseback riding. Hippotherapy is the technical term applied to this type of therapy. Hippotherapy literally means treatment with the help of a horse, and comes from the Greek word "hippos", meaning horse. The Greeks used horses for rehabilitating wounded soldiers in the fifth century BC; indeed, throughout history riding has been prescribed as a means of improving the mental and physical wellbeing of people with disabilities.

The movement of a walking horse is the therapy tool that physiotherapists use to improve a client's neuromotor function. The client interacts with, and actively responds to, the horse's movement. Positive effects from the movement of the horse can be seen in motor coordination, muscle tone, postural alignment, stiffness/flexibility and strength. Improvements are not restricted to the motor system as hippotherapy affects many of the body's systems. Changes are often seen in the respiratory, cognitive, sensory processing and balance, as well as speech and language production functions. These changes may be a consequence of postural and motor changes. That is the beauty of using the horse's movement as a treatment tool—impairments in many systems of the body can be addressed at the one time. It is no wonder that the varied disciplines of physiotherapy, occupational therapy, and speech and language therapy can use hippotherapy so successfully as a part of their treatment programs.

A range of research studies has been published on the therapeutic benefits of hippotherapy. However, the most noteworthy in relation to the Nepean Riding for the Disabled service is that it commenced in 1983, many years before the scientific literature began to overwhelmingly endorse hippotherapy as a legitimate treatment option. I acknowledge the incredible insight and vision of Sheila Cunliffe, the founder of Nepean Riding for the Disabled, who is passionate about serving her community. She has been a strong advocate for RDA-Nepean for more than 28 years. This selfless service to our community is even more extraordinary as I was informed just last month that she is currently recovering from a stroke.

Such is Sheila's passion and love for the positive effect of hippotherapy that she insisted on accompanying me on a tour of the facility when I recently visited it, despite her recent illness and health issues. I am extremely proud to be the member for Mulgoa and to have this organisation and its wonderful volunteers as part of my electorate. Volunteer organisations such as Nepean Riding for the Disabled play a vital role in our community. I heartily congratulate Sheila Cunliffe and RDA-Nepean President Marlene Maculskis on their wonderful passion and dedication to their clients and the clients' families in continuing to provide this vital therapy and positive experience.

SWANSEA ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr GARRY EDWARDS (Swansea) [7.02 p.m.]: My electorate of Swansea is a classic example of the lack of a coordinated approach to infrastructure by the former Labor Government. Notwithstanding that during the 16 years of unbroken Labor administrations, New South Wales achieved record receipts inter alia by way of stamp duty on real property transfers, the result of the unprecedented real property boom across the whole of New South Wales from 1997 to 2003, the only infrastructure upgrade in my electorate of Swansea was to Belmont District Hospital, whose upgrade delivered a net outcome of the closure of 14 hospital beds. That is a great result: build a new attached hospital building at a cost of several million dollars and deliver a net result to the community of a loss of 14 desperately needed hospital needs. Some 70 years ago our planners had the foresight and vision to provide for a road bypass corridor running from the Pacific Highway at Marks Point, now in the city of Lake Macquarie, to the Pacific Highway at Adamstown Heights, in the city of Newcastle.

Some 70-odd years ago planners had the foresight to appreciate that communities such as Belmont, Jewells, Floraville, Tingira Heights, Valentine, Eleebana, Warners Bay, Windale, Gateshead, Redhead, Charlestown, Kahibah and Dudley would by the late twentieth century be experiencing such traffic gridlock along stretches of the Pacific Highway that the Belmont-Charlestown bypass would be required as an essential piece of infrastructure in east Lake Macquarie. Sadly, those farsighted planners of some 70 years ago did not see that in 2009 New South Wales planners of far less vision would relinquish the Belmont to Charlestown bypass,

thus abandoning each and every one of those communities cited above, both present and future, to a less than substandard major highway and unacceptable traffic conditions. This is a traffic corridor that we as a Government must now address and attempt to reinstate.

Many people are familiar with the beautiful seaside village of Swansea, the gateway to the Hunter to the north and the Central Coast to the south, from which my electorate takes its name. Swansea Channel is the only entry artery and exit point for water to and from the Pacific Ocean into and from Lake Macquarie—Lake Macquarie being the largest saltwater lake in the Southern Hemisphere. Swansea Channel is a highly dynamic marine environment, the consequence of which is that the channel requires regular dredging so that it remains navigable, and this navigability is absolutely essential for the fleets of ocean going commercial, sport and leisure craft entering and leaving this, the largest saltwater lake in the Southern Hemisphere. This navigability is essential for the sustainability of the several marinas, yachting and sailing clubs, and the myriad small businesses established within and around the lake.

The people of Swansea and Lake Macquarie well understand the importance of the channel being navigable at all times, and it is therefore not surprising that within the Swansea and Lake Macquarie communities there was great euphoria and excitement when, on 14 March 2011, just 11 days out from the March 2011 State election, the former Labor Government, through its then lands Minister announced, with much fanfare, that the then Government had placed on order a dredge for full-time use in Swansea Channel. But, I am here to tell members that upon coming to government I, along with every other person in my electorate, was shattered when it was discovered that no dredge for Swansea Channel had ever been ordered. Not only had the dredge not been ordered but the funds for the purchase of a dredge, any dredge, had never been approved. But not only had the dredge not been ordered or the funds approved, the source of the funding for the purchase of a dredge had at no time been unequivocally identified. This is not infrastructure planning by the former corrupt Labor Government but, rather, a deliberate attempt to retain power—

Ms Noreen Hay: Point of order: Private members' statements provide members with an opportunity to speak, preferably in a positive way, about their electorates. Private members' statements should not be used as an opportunity to attack or make outrageous statements. I ask that the member be directed to concentrate—

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): Order! I have heard sufficient from the member on the point of order.

Mr Rob Stokes: To the point of order: The subject of a private member's statement can be a matter pertaining to a member's electorate raised by the member. Everything that I heard from the member was consistent with rulings pertaining to private members' statements, and I submit the member for Wollongong has not made out a point of order.

Ms Noreen Hay: Further to the point of order: The standing orders relating to private members' statements permit members to speak specifically about their own electorates. Custom has it that in making private members' statements members do not attack each other across the Chamber, but speak in a more positive vein. I ask that the member be requested to concentrate on speaking about his electorate and not attack others in this Parliament.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): Order! I have referred to the standing orders, and I am not aware of a standing order that directs me as to how members of Parliament may address their private members' statements. I therefore rule the member for Swansea in order.

Mr GARRY EDWARDS: I seek an extension of time to complete my statement.

Leave not granted.

Private members' statements concluded.

DESTINATION NSW BILL 2011

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

**COMMITTEE ON THE OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN AND THE
POLICE INTEGRITY COMMISSION**

Membership

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): I report the receipt of the following message from the Legislative Council:

The Legislative Council desires to inform the Legislative Assembly that it has this day agreed to the following resolution:

- (1) that under section 31A of the Ombudsman Act 1974, a joint committee known as the Committee on the Office of the Ombudsman and the Police Integrity Commission be appointed; and
- (2). that under section 31C (1) (a) of the Act, Ms Cusack, Mr Searle and Mrs Mitchell be appointed to serve on the committee as members of the Legislative Council.

Legislative Council
22 June 2011

DON HARWIN
President

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 7.09 p.m. until
Thursday 23 June 2011 at 10.00 a.m.**
