

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Tuesday 9 August 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.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Routine of Business

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Infrastructure NSW) [10.00 a.m.], by concurrence: Hopefully the business program that operates now will be far more indicative of the true order of activity of the House. It will indicate the order of the bills that the Government hopes to achieve. For nearly two decades that was not the case under the former Government. No real effort was made to ensure that legislation was listed in the order in which it hoped to deal with it. We are seeking to ensure that members are familiar with what will be occurring during the day. I have had requests from members of the Opposition and Government members to explain the meaning of the business program and state whether it is indicative or final.

I draw the attention of members to the words at the top of the business program which states, "This is the Government's anticipated daily business program and is a guide only for members. It is subject to change. Members should liaise with their party Whips for final confirmation and non-party members should liaise with the office of the Leader of the House". This Government will make far more effort than was made in the past two decades to ensure that the business of the House is conducted in an orderly fashion but the exigencies of Parliament and its daily activities mean that there will have to be changes. Whilst we are making every effort to make such changes throughout the daily activities of this Parliament, members should still be alert as to which matters will or will not be dealt with.

CLEAN COAL ADMINISTRATION AMENDMENT BILL 2011

Agreement in Principle

Debate resumed from 3 August 2011.

Mr RICHARD AMERY (Mount Druitt) [10.03 a.m.]: I do not lead for the Opposition in debate on the Clean Coal Administration Amendment Bill 2011, which has as its objects:

- (a) to rename the Act as the *Coal Innovation Administration Act 2008*,
- (b) to restructure the Clean Coal Council and rename it as Coal Innovation NSW,
- (c) to rename the Clean Coal Fund as the Coal Innovation NSW Fund,
- (d) to update certain terminology in the Act,
- (e) to make other amendments of a minor or consequential nature (including providing for savings and transitional matters).

In recent years the management of coal has been discussed in the public arena, in particular, in relation to climate change, the role of coal in electricity generation, the importance of coal as an export item for New South Wales, and its substantial investment in job creation in the regions. There are diverse opinions about the impact of coal production on the environment. We must be balanced and realistic in our perception of coal. Some left-wing political organisations think that banning coal and outlawing its production are achievable in the short term, but that is not realistic. Making coal production more efficient, environmentally sensitive and friendly is the way to go. That will not occur in my lifetime; it will take decades before alternative power and generation sources replace coal use not only in Australia but also around the world.

A great challenge for this generation is the administration of coal and how to make it more environmentally friendly. This bill will rename organisations and ensure that coal production in this State is

more environmentally sensitive and friendly, which will make it more acceptable as an electricity generator. The member for Liverpool and shadow Minister will make a substantive contribution to debate on this bill on behalf of the Opposition, we will have further discussions later today and a number of Opposition members will speak in debate on this bill.

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Parliamentary Secretary) [10.07 a.m.]: I support the Clean Coal Administration Amendment Bill 2011 and observe that it makes a number of small yet significant changes to a short yet significant principal Act—significant because it provides the legislative basis for funding research efforts into reducing greenhouse gas emissions from burning coal, which is the largest single source of anthropocentric contributions to the release of carbon dioxide emissions into the atmosphere. I will focus on three issues that set the context for our research efforts in reducing emissions from coal use. Coal is finite, coal is polluting and coal is a principal source of global electricity generation. Those three facts must provide the basis for any regulatory regime governing the use of coal and research into the use of coal.

Coal is finite. I think all members accept arguments about peak oil but what is not widely understood is that coal is also finite and non-renewable, and it is being depleted very quickly. According to current projections, my three young children may live to see the exhaustion of the economic demonstrated resource of black coal in Australia. Within 90 years, at 2008 production levels, the Australian Energy Resource Assessment predicts that we will use up our reserves of black coal. At current rates of production, the World Energy Council predicts that we will exhaust global coal reserves within 150 years. A point that must be made is that once we consume global coal—a compound that took 250 million years to create—there is nowhere else to get it. As the famous evocative title to Kenneth Boulding's essay "Spaceship Earth" summarised, "This is the only planet that we are aware of where life can be found and, therefore, the only place where somatic energy sources can be found".

Coal is polluting. Coal not only is burning the largest source of anthropocentric emissions of carbon dioxide but also is releasing large emissions of other greenhouse gases, such as nitrous oxide and black soot, and other nasties like mercury and sulphides. These first two facts—that coal is finite and polluting—suggest that we must stop burning coal immediately. However, unfortunately, these first two facts must be balanced against the third reality relating to coal use; that is, burning coal provides more than 40 per cent of the world's electricity generation. In New South Wales, the ubiquitous supply of black coal near our major population centres means that we are even more reliant on coal burning for electricity generation.

The relationship of these three facts about coal use means that while we must now break our reliance on coal, our addiction can only realistically be broken incrementally, and gradually, while we expand our energy mix to encourage the exploitation of renewable resources as quickly as possible and position ourselves to benefit from technological advances in photovoltaic, solar thermal, biomass, wave, tidal, ocean, wind and geothermal energy, as well as exploring existing opportunities to enhance hydrothermal electricity generation wherever possible. I noted the member for Mount Druitt in his brief contribution said that these resources would not be able to provide electricity generation in any meaningful way during his lifetime. I wish the member for Mount Druitt a long and fruitful life and I am sure that if he enjoys a long and fruitful life he will see those renewable energy resources making a real, meaningful and major contribution to this State's energy mix.

We also know that coal will continue to be part of the global energy mix. In Australia, the Commonwealth Government projects that coal will continue to dominate Australia's energy generation, while globally coal is projected to account for around 30 per cent of world primary energy demand in 2030. It is therefore absolutely imperative, as Sir Nicholas Stern observed in his famous 2006 report to the United Kingdom Government, to invest in research to increase efficiency and reduce emissions from coal burning. We must demand that the energy and resources industry engages in an effective and coordinated research effort. As Ben McNeil pointed out in his excellent book, *The Clean Industrial Revolution*, the energy and resources sectors have traditionally been the world's worst investors in research and development compared to other sectors.

In the case of the coal industry, McNeil calculates that about 0.3 per cent of the production value of coal in Australia is invested in research, while in comparison he suggests that large pharmaceutical companies invest an average of 14 per cent of their annual revenue on research and development. With this analysis as a guide, we need to ensure that coal companies make a proper investment in research to develop efficient emission controls and combustion technologies. Knowing that coal is finite and fast depleting, we must ensure that every hunk of coal that is used is used deliberately and consciously, and research is crucial to ensure this usage is as efficient as possible. We must be transparent with the public about the second reality—that coal is

polluting. It makes no more sense to say that coal is clean than to say that dirt is clean. The former Labor Government was constantly pilloried for its focus on spin, and terming this legislation "Clean Coal" is a classic example. I refer to an article by Kent Garber entitled, "Why making coal cleaner will take years". In relation to the definition of clean coal, he says:

It would be helpful if everyone were using the same definition. The term "**clean coal**", though alliteratively pleasing, is far from straightforward. Besides CO₂, **coal** plants emit mercury, particulate matter, nitrogen oxides, and sulfur dioxides. What doesn't go into the air often ends up in the ground as fly ash ... So, it's not just CO₂ that's problematic. In fact, in the early 1990s, **clean coal** referred almost exclusively to efforts aimed at curbing nitrogen and sulfur pollution. Today, **clean coal** has morphed to mean **coal** from a plant that doesn't emit CO₂. And it doesn't exist yet.

That is why the change in terminology in the bill to "low-emission coal" is more than simple semantics. It is about truth in legislation and intent. The final fact about coal is the ongoing dependence of our nation and our world on coal burning for electricity generation. New South Wales not only depends on coal for electricity generation; it also depends on coal for export dollars. Australia has massive deposits of black coal with total demonstrated reserves of more than one million petajoules and we export vast quantities—around 9,000 petajoules every year, more than twice as much as any other energy export. Therefore, it is arguable that we have a duty to research improvements not only in efficiency and emissions reductions in using coal for generation but also across the whole process of coal use—from exploration to mining to generation, wherever that generation happens to be.

We have limited carbon dioxide storage capacity in New South Wales, so directing research dollars into just this aspect of coal use is not directly relevant to local conditions. We should, however, support research into the issue of fugitive emissions from coalmining, as well as coal burning. Therefore, I ask the Minister in his reply to indicate whether consideration might be given to an amendment to clarify that the legislation will allow for consideration of funding for research projects that look at emissions during coalmining—those fugitive emissions—as well as during the generation of coal, to ensure that there is clarity about what the proposed low emissions coal fund can be used for.

As Paul Cleary pointed out in his recent article, "Too Much Luck: The Mining Boom and Australia's Future"—the member for Liverpool has been a fan of Paul Cleary's work in other debates—every regulator in this country has a clear duty to ensure that our non-renewable resources are deployed with extreme caution, recognising the need to change to an electricity sector based on renewables as quickly as possible. This is a precious fund and we need to ensure it is deployed carefully and strategically so that every last bit of efficiency can be eked out of every piece of coal that is burnt.

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) [10.15 a.m.]: I lead for the Opposition in this Chamber in debate on the Clean Coal Administration Amendment Bill 2011. I am happy to indicate that the Opposition does not oppose this piece of legislation. The shadow Minister with carriage of the matter is the Hon. Steve Whan in the other place. The object of this bill is to amend the Clean Coal Administration Act in a number of ways. It proposes to rename the Act as the Coal Innovation Administration Act; to restructure the Clean Coal Council and rename it Coal Innovation NSW; to rename the Clean Coal Fund as the Coal Innovation NSW Fund; and to update certain terminology in the Act and make other amendments of a minor or inconsequential nature.

The Clean Coal Administration Act established the Clean Coal Council and Clean Coal Fund. The role of the council under that legislation was to provide advice and make recommendations to the Government on the provision of funding for research and development projects. In addition, the council was also to provide advice on development and implementation of low emissions technologies. The council's aim was to promote new technologies to other research institutions, industry and the general public. It could also support innovation efforts by directing funds to the demonstration, commercialisation and promotion of new technology. It was also to play a role in identifying opportunities for public and private sector involvement in research projects.

The bill makes a number of changes. It renames the Act as the Coal Innovation Administration Act and restructures the Clean Coal Council and renames it Coal Innovation NSW. The body will now consist of two ministerially appointed members from the Government and two from industry rather than five from the Government and five from industry as is currently the case with the Clean Coal Council, up to a further four members chosen and appointed by the Minister rather than an unlimited number of such members as is currently the case, and an independent person rather than a member appointed by the Minister as chairperson.

The bill also renames the Clean Coal Fund as the Coal Innovation NSW Fund and, as I indicated earlier in reading out the objects of the bill, updates some terminology and makes some other minor or inconsequential

amendments. In a sense the guts of the bill is about removing the old members of the Clean Coal Council, reducing them in number and reappointing people favoured by the Government. As I indicated, the Opposition does not oppose the bill. One interesting possible consequence of those changes is that the coal industry representatives could be just two out of nine, which seems a little odd given the emphasis on coal in the fund. I would be interested in the Minister's response to that, although we recognise that the Government has the right to appoint its own representatives to this body. Clearly, it is an area of considerably important research.

In a sense the real issue here is not the bill and how it is restructured but what happens after this and what the council does. That is something this side of the House will take a very direct and clear interest in. I was going to say it is common ground but it is blatantly obvious that the vast majority of electricity generation in this State comes from coal. That will not change dramatically in the near future so if there is to be an attempt to deal with issues of climate change reducing emission levels is critical in relation to what we do with coal. Some good work has been done to date. I remember looking at carbon capture techniques at Lake Munmorrah last year. There is also a range of initiatives in different places. However, it is critical that that emphasis be maintained.

I do not particularly want to buy into the semantic argument about what we call it which was raised by the member for Pittwater. If I were to make any comment in response to him I would say that my concern about not calling it clean coal is that that might reflect a walking away from the need to reduce emissions levels. The reality is that it does not matter what it is called; the important issue is what happens.

I agree with the member for Pittwater that one of the things that deserves a great deal of emphasis is fugitive emissions from both operating and decommissioned coalmines. There is some scope for research into that area. I do not have the figures in front of me, but I recall that the amount of fugitive emissions coming from decommissioned coalmines is surprisingly high and much higher than one would have thought. There would appear to be scope for remedial action in that area. I was involved in discussions in that area and work was being done on it prior to 26 March. It should be a topic of continuing interest and effort. Apart from that, as I said, the Opposition does not oppose the bill.

Ms ROBYN PARKER (Maitland—Minister for the Environment, and Minister for Heritage) [10.21 a.m.]: I support the Clean Coal Administration Amendment Bill 2011. I do so as Minister for the Environment but also in support of my colleague the Hon. Chris Hartcher, Parliamentary Secretary for Renewable Energy, and this Government's policy direction in this area. The term "clean coal" is a misnomer and the Government is addressing that by renaming the council and the fund. The aim is to acknowledge that greenhouse gas emissions from coal exist and that a fund be established to focus on developing new and innovative technologies to reduce them. Mention has been made of capturing fugitive emissions. A great deal of work must be done to provide more renewable energy and this Government is committed to improving past efforts. Research and other work are being done on capturing greenhouse gas emissions from coal and promoting new industries and technologies so that we can eventually move to a post-coal environment.

Research and development projects are funded via a levy collected from electricity generators. This bill changes the name of that fund to the Coal Innovation NSW Fund to reflect its transformation. This legislation provides the legislative basis for the funding of research and development into technologies designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from mining and industry. Amending the Act will ensure that it is more efficient and effective and that the language reflects the current research and development priorities. The bill also changes any reference to "clean coal" to "low emissions coal". In addition, it reduces the number of ministerial appointments on the council and provides for the appointment of a chair independent of the membership. These amendments will lead to a reduction in the membership to make the council more efficient and to ensure that the terminology is accurate. The bill also indicates the direction in which this Government is heading.

The Coal Innovation NSW Fund has been provided with \$100 million from the Climate Change Fund for the four years from 2009-10 to 2012-13. There is no doubt that New South Wales is heavily dependent on coal for power generation; in fact, more than 90 per cent of our power is generated from coal. Although the Government remains committed to the development of renewable energy sources, there is an ongoing need for the development of new technologies to reduce emissions. As the member for Maitland and coming from the Hunter region, like my colleague the member for Cessnock I know that coal is a major economic driver not only in the Hunter but also in other areas of New South Wales. However, coal is a source of greenhouse gas emissions and it is important that we continue to investigate ways of reducing emissions and funding and promoting the development of new and innovative technologies to reduce them.

From the Environment portfolio perspective we have continued to implement initiatives in collaboration with other agencies to manage dust, particle emissions from coalmines and so on. Today

I announced the Dust Stop program, which will be implemented in coalmines across the State. The program is based on recommendations from the independent "International Emissions from Coal Mining" report commissioned by the Office of Environment and Heritage. The report looked into dust suppression techniques used by 54 operational coalmines in New South Wales and then benchmarked them against local and international best practice.

It was found that measures such as preventing wind erosion from exposed areas, suppression of dust on coal haul roads and strict monitoring of weather conditions before blasting can reduce particle emissions from coalmines by almost 50 per cent. This program is part of the New South Wales Government's commitment to improving air quality and reducing the environmental impact of mining operations. From today, the Office of Environment and Heritage will be systematically placing mines on legally binding pollution reduction programs that require them to assess their current operations against best management practice and to determine the most effective ways to reduce significantly their onsite dust emissions.

Many coalmines have already adopted elements of best practice and I acknowledge that numerous coalmine operators are trying very hard to address this issue. However, there is more room for improvement and this program will go a long way towards helping coalmines in this State to achieve lasting and measurable results for both the environment and their local communities. An initial group of nine mines has been issued with pollution reduction programs and by April 2012 it is expected that all 68 coalmines in this State will be participating in the program and ensuring that they meet world's best practice dust suppression standards. The first nine mines have been chosen for their geographic and operational diversity, and they include the Mount Arthur, Liddell and Bengalla mines in the Hunter Valley.

The O'Farrell Government continues to balance environmental outcomes and the needs of the coalmining industry and it is committed to moving the industry to being more responsible and proactive. In the 12 months to 31 March 2011, the Office of Environment and Heritage undertook nearly 200 inspections of coalmines in New South Wales and, despite the political upheavals and changes, staff have continued inspecting coalmines and have conducted a joint compliance and audit program involving the Department of Planning and Infrastructure and the Department of Primary Industries. Under this Government's new structure we are all working hard together to achieve balanced outcomes across the industry, our portfolios and the environment.

To give communities, mine operators and regulators better information about air quality, the Government has established three air quality monitoring sites in the Upper Hunter and the program is on track to be completed by the end of 2011. When it is completed, 14 monitoring sites will provide real-time air quality data that will be available to the community on the website of the Office of Environment and Heritage. That is consistent with this Government's commitment to transparency and openness and its ability to publish real-time information.

An international study of best practice coalmining has also been completed identifying cost-effective ways of reducing particle emissions. Mine operators will be required to undertake site-specific best management practice reviews and to determine the best approach to improving air quality and then to implement the most effective measures to reduce the creation of dust. The O'Farrell Government takes seriously the job of protecting the health and amenity of local communities. That why it has, for example, put in place a strategic land-use policy covering a number of portfolio areas. It is also ensuring that the community has the best information available and that it can enjoy the advantages that come from mining activity while minimising its impact on residents and the local environment.

I support the changes and look forward to the research, especially with renewable energy and how we can capture future emissions. It is important to have an environment that supports renewable energy and our coal industry—one that understands that while ensuring we have the best coalmining environment we need to capture carbon emissions and eventually move to a different environment. I support these amendments because they balance environmental outcomes and sustainable businesses.

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse—Parliamentary Secretary) [10.30 a.m.]: I support the Clean Coal Administration Bill 2011. As previous members have said, the bill makes a number of important amendments to the Clean Coal Administration Act by renaming the Act as the Coal Innovation Administration Act, restructuring and renaming the Clean Coal Council as Coal Innovation NSW, renaming the Clean Coal Fund as the Coal Innovation NSW Fund, and updating terminology in the Act to reflect current terminology on developments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from burning coal. Renaming the council and the fund better reflect their important innovative purpose. I shall refer to three components in the bill. The first is the important

governance changes proposed under the Act. These changes reflect the O'Farrell Government's commitment to a purposeful and streamlined approach focusing on governance skills in various organisations. I shall examine also the important role of research in renewable energies and in reducing carbon emissions from coal burning.

The original Act established the Clean Coal Council and the Clean Coal Fund. The role of the council is important and the bill makes no changes to its operations. The council's role is to provide advice and make recommendations to the Government on funding for research and development projects. Through the Clean Coal Fund the New South Wales Government supports world-class research and development projects for lower emissions technology. The council provides advice to government on developments and implementation of low emission technologies; promotes new technologies to other research institutions, industry and the general public; supports innovation efforts by directing funds for the demonstration, commercialisation and promotion of new technologies; and identifies opportunities for the public and private sector in innovative areas to be involved in research projects in New South Wales, nationally and internationally.

Why do we need this legislation and research and development into low emissions coal? The simple fact of the matter is that New South Wales derives 90 per cent of its electricity from coal-fired generators. Currently, 63 million tonnes of greenhouse gas are emitted annually from burning coal. The New South Wales Government understands the benefits of renewable and alternative sources of energy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. New South Wales already provides energy from renewable sources through solar, wind, biomass, landfill gas and hydroelectricity sources, and we are developing energy from geothermal sources. In 2010 solar and wind-based energy contributed just 3.8 per cent to energy generation in New South Wales.

Neither wind nor solar power is available continually for the required baseload power energy source of New South Wales. Baseload energy powers our hospitals, street lights, schools, offices and the economy. Indeed, our work in this Chamber would grind to a halt if we did not have baseload coal-fired electricity generation. Unlike the Federal Government's misguided approach to carbon emissions, particularly in the light of international market uncertainty about pursuing the carbon tax, the New South Wales Government believes we need to work towards reducing emissions from coalmining and combustion to allow us to manage the economic impact and grow our economy.

Innovation is essential and work on renewable energy is ongoing through the council; it is well supported by the New South Wales Government and should continue. In the meantime, we need to do what this Act promotes, that is, make every effort to reduce coal emissions—another issue about which I am passionate. Our universities and research sector come to the fore in this area and are top class. New South Wales has more universities undertaking this kind of research than any other State or Territory. Our Excellence in Research Australia results, known as the ERA, indicate that New South Wales has more universities in the top half of research ratings than any other State, producing world-class or better research across all research clusters. Indeed, the 2009 higher education research data collection shows that New South Wales universities attract 30 per cent of the nation's total research funding.

Recently, a consortium led by four top Sydney universities won bids to host the Centre for International Finance and Regulation in competition with universities from the other States. New South Wales can mix it with the best. Indeed, these top-class universities are working to develop new emissions capture and storage technologies as well as a range of complementary technological innovations to support our move from baseload coal power generation to more innovative renewable sources. We have to support this work. We need to extend from basic research and development to demonstration and commercialisation of new technologies. This is why this Act again is important. Through the council and the fund the Government is committed to supporting innovative research and development solutions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from burning coal for energy. We cannot underestimate the importance of this work.

Clearly, the former Clean Coal Council and the Clean Coal Fund have critical roles in enabling this groundbreaking technology to reach full potential. Their roles are focused on innovation. The Government promotes this innovation by seeking to reflect the innovative purpose by renaming the council and the fund. Projects currently funded by the council are making a significant contribution to the development of low emissions technology nationally and internationally. The fund supports 11 projects, at least in part, three of which have matching Commonwealth funding, which demonstrates their inherent value. More importantly, several projects have either matched funding or significant financial contribution from the industry. One example is the 3½ year innovative and research project involving the University of Newcastle, of which the member for Newcastle would be very proud, and the GreenMag Group. The project has received \$3 million in funding and will develop and optimise a promising method of disposing of carbon dioxide gas emitted from New South Wales coal-fired power stations.

This mineral carbonation process takes advantage of natural processes whereby carbon dioxide is stored permanently in rocks. The process accelerates and mimics natural processes through using heat. The key advantage is that carbon dioxide is stored permanently in the rocks. This cutting-edge project is world class and a world first in the building and operation of a mineral carbonation pilot plant. The pilot work will be supported by further laboratory work to optimise and demonstrate the technical and economic feasibility of two variations on the mineral carbonation process. This is a great story about collaboration between the private sector, the universities and funding from the Clean Coal Fund. I shall now refer briefly to governance, which is incredibly important. This Government is committed to organisation accountability, honesty and, most importantly, transparency.

The Government is keen to streamline governance to better reflect the purpose of organisations, to make governance flexible and to focus on skills. For example, changes have been made to the governance of the new Local Health District Boards. The proposed amendments will ensure that the council to be established under the Act will continue to be effective. It will bring together representatives from the coal industry, government and related disciplines such as research institutions. The Act currently provides for the council to have five government and five industry members, and for the Minister to appoint an unspecified number of members who have qualifications and experience relevant to the functions of the council and for the chair to be appointed from council membership.

The bill will reduce that membership from the present unlimited number, which is unsustainable, to a maximum of nine members. The council will then be more streamlined and efficient and will deliver more effective recommendations and advice on low-emissions technology. Government and industry committee representatives will be reduced to two in each sector. Industry representatives will continue to be nominated by the Australian Coal Association and NSW Minerals Council. Under the bill the responsible Minister may appoint up to four members with qualifications and experience relevant to the council's function. The Minister will also appoint an independent chair skilled and able to make decisions above petty politics—an objective in the provision of leadership that should be supported.

In conclusion, Coal Innovation NSW will continue to fund cutting-edge research and development in industry and to provide technology to ensure that coal combustion emissions are significantly reduced. Emission reductions will benefit not only New South Wales and Australia but also our international trading partners. Excitingly, our trading partners may also have the opportunity to use new technologies developed here in New South Wales. The amendments will ensure that legislation for funding and development of low-emission technology remains relevant, transparent, accountable, up-to-date and guided by those with the skills and experience to produce results. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Hawkesbury—Parliamentary Secretary) [10.42 p.m.]: In this House of democracy it gives me a great deal of hope finally to hear some honesty in the debate surrounding coal-fired power stations and coal-produced energy. The first aspect of that honesty, as stated in the object of the bill, is to rename the Act as the Coal Innovation Administration Act as opposed to the Clean Coal Administration Amendment Bill 2011, because the very name is incorrect. As my good friend the Parliamentary Secretary for Renewable Energy and member for Pittwater correctly stated, it is no more a falsehood to speak about clean coal than it is to speak about clean dirt. Both statements would be wrong, misleading and deceptive. Clean coal produces pollution; it cannot be clean. However, it does form, and will continue to do so for a long time, the basis of this country's economic stability. Whether or not we want to accept it, this country has an amazing ability to produce cheap power and Australia will continue to use and sell its coal resource for many years to come.

It is time to state honestly that Australia cannot give up the economic stability provided by our coal resources. For many years people have washed over this issue and said that we should be embarrassed by our use of coal. Looking back at the 140 years since the Industrial Revolution, with technological advancement we no longer produce as much pollution as we did. The same technology that gave us electronic fuel injection in our cars and removed sulphur from our fuels has enabled us to produce more energy from burning coal now than ever before. For example, the Eraring Power Station on the Central Coast burns far more effectively than the Munmorah Power Station. Munmorah Power Station, which is very old, has provision for gas-power production and it is hoped to take Munmorah off the grid in the future because it produces far more pollution than Eraring.

Eraring Power Station was built with far better technology than Munmorah but it is also extremely old. It was being built when I was an apprentice boilermaker in 1976. I remember visiting the Malesco factory at Yennora to see firsthand the cutting-edge technology being used in the construction materials for Eraring Power

Station. We have not seen improved technology in building power stations that burn coal for a long time; we have preferred natural gas. Natural gas is a move forward but it costs the country more when we revert to using other forms of energy. The pollution produced by coal should not be ignored, but the money derived from coal royalties is invested in research and development to formulate better technologies so that one day we do not have to use coal. Sadly, that will be a long time into the future. Coal produces 93 per cent of Australia's energy and we will still be using it when the children of today are talking to their children about technology. We can pat ourselves on the back for the renewable energies of solar and wind-powered technology, but neither solar nor wind power can provide baseload power—it cannot be done. Baseload power is produced through the use of coal-generating power stations. It is currently the only baseload power produced in Australia.

During the last term of government I was a member of the Standing Committee on Natural Resource Management (Climate Change). As a committee member I was privileged to travel around the country to witness new technology. For example, I travelled to the CSIRO at Newcastle to learn about new solar-thermal technology. Solar-thermal technology is clean. But whilst it uses a small amount of gas and a lot of solar power it can produce baseload power. Are we embracing that technology? Are we moving to using solar-thermal power? No, we are not. Honesty needs to be brought back into this debate. If governments really wanted to embrace some form of new technology we would be using some form of solar-thermal technology now. Happily some solar-thermal technology is being utilised. James McGregor, one of the people undertaking that research, will be proud of the implementation of that solar-thermal technology, even if it is only in a very small way.

This sound technology can be provided to rural areas. In the central west of this State lies a wealth of natural gas pipelines that could easily implement solar-thermal technology, and baseload power supplied to the smaller suburbs could be fed back into the grid. Another interesting visit that we paid whilst I was on the Natural Resources and Climate Change Committee was to the Otway Basin in Victoria. In the Otway Basin in Victoria, on a cattle farm, is where governments of all persuasions around this country are currently investing huge amounts of money to sequester carbon dioxide back into the ground. To give members some idea of the cost of this technology; it has cost some \$50 million to sequester 100,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide back into an old methane seam in the Otway Basin. That is \$50 million to sequester 100,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide into an old methane gas seam.

Let me give members an idea of how the figure relates in a cost-benefit analysis. The Eraring Power Station alone produces five million tonnes of carbon dioxide in any given year. If members want to do some of the comparative calculations they will find it will never be viable to sequester carbon dioxide into the ground. That costing is only the sequestration of the raw form of carbon dioxide; it does not include the cost of withdrawing the carbon dioxide out of coal. The only way that can happen is to gasify the coal, the gas is then washed and carbon dioxide is extracted. We witnessed that technology being undertaken at Monash University in Melbourne. The carbon dioxide is extracted from the gas. It is an expensive process. Once the carbon dioxide is extracted it then needs to be transported to a seam and then sequestered into the ground. It will never be viable the way we are doing it at the moment. However, it gives people a good feeling that they are doing something on behalf of our environment and our economy.

I can say quite firmly, what they are doing to our economy is ruining it, and what they are doing in relation to our finances is wasting money, but it does give them a good feeling. It is about time that we got some honesty back into this debate. I note the Treasurer of New South Wales is sitting in the Chair. The Treasurer of New South Wales will be spending some sleepless nights as we approach September. He will be going through his books and using his abacus attempting to discover exactly where the money is going to come from to provide for health, to discover exactly where the money will come from to provide for roads, and where the money will come for my electorate's north west rail link. The Treasurer will be struggling to come to terms with that.

The Treasurer will be looking at this pool of money that the former New South Wales Government set aside, looking at all those new clean and green schemes to make everybody feel good. As the Treasurer will know—getting some honesty back into the debate—making people feel good does not cut the mustard when it comes to a budget. We will look closely at the way that we spend money on behalf of the people of New South Wales.

Yes, let us look at further research. Yes, let us look at further technology in terms of implementing and eventually getting cleaner energy production for this country. Let us not be embarrassed by the fact that we are burning coal. I am happy and proud to say it. I am happy to stand up on behalf of everyone around the country and say they need not be ashamed this morning. They can wake up and walk outside and be proud of the fact

that they are Australian and that 93 per cent of the power in their home is created by coal-fired generation. When turning on a light, turning on an air conditioner, turning on a heater, be proud of the fact that we are actually burning that filthy, rotten, stinky coal. It is dreadful. But we know we have a mass of it in this country.

Mr Nathan Rees: Point of order. I had not realised that "carbon pride" had been registered as a political party.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): Order! There is no point of order. The member for Toongabbie will resist taking spurious points of order.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: I am happy to take that on board. It is a fact that we should not be embarrassed. We have a great wealth. I pose this question: Can members imagine a country like China, if it were sitting on a massive wealth of coal, being embarrassed about the fact that it was sitting on that coal? Would China not be saying, "We are glad we have that, now we do not have to buy it from anybody else, and we will keep burning that sucker until we improve the lot of our country—until everybody reaches the prosperity that they want to reach in China."

Mr Jamie Parker: So what happens right now?

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: The fact of the matter is it is not a finite resource. I am happy to take that interjection on board. As I have said before: Should we just burn it and completely ignore the fact that by doing so we would be burning our country? No, we should not. We should utilise the resource that we have and put funds back into research and development to ensure that we improve the technology. Before the member for Balmain came in here I spoke about solar and thermal technology. I think solar and thermal technology is simple. Together with natural gas resources we could be implementing solar and thermal technology as a power source in rural areas. I stand here today and speak as one of these carbon emitting Liberal capitalists.

I am probably the only politician in this country who can stand here with my hand on my heart because I live in a sustainable home. I do not use one drop of Sydney water because I capture every drop. I have never used Sydney water. I live on tank water. I drive a sustainable vehicle. My vehicle is not as sustainable as the pushbike the member for Toongabbie rides throughout my electorate, but it is a hybrid vehicle. I have not used petrol for the past 30 years, choosing to use natural gas. My last quarterly electricity bill was \$429. That is a pretty reasonable electricity bill when the household includes a 22-year-old daughter who has 45-minute showers. We capture enough rain water to keep her bathed. If she were clocking the same amount in electricity my power bills would be going through the roof.

The simple fact of the matter is that there are sustainable ways to live and I have always been a true environmentalist. I do believe that we should not be embarrassed about the fact we use coal. We should not waste money on looking at these furrphies such as clean coal and geosequestration, but rather put that money into research and innovation to develop better technology. We should not be embarrassed by the fact that we are turning on a light switch and that we are burning coal. We should acknowledge that many people around this country who are employed in the coal industry, in the mining industry and in the coal-fired power stations would lose their job if we were to shrink back and say we will accept the carbon tax being imposed by the Federal Government.

That Federal Government will rue the day it brought that policy to the table. I think every person in the Labor Party now knows that because every person in Australia now knows it, and the polls out today show that the Federal Government has a 28 per cent or 29 per cent approval rating, which indicates that people are certainly not happy that they are being embarrassed into thinking that they should not be using electricity. We should be proud of the fact. We should be proud of this country and proud of the power we use.

We should be using the income we derive from the coal industry for further research into and development of cleaner power generation.. It may not happen today, it may not happen next week, but Australia should work towards that goal. We did not start polluting this country last week, we started a long time ago, and we will gradually improve in the future. We will have a beautiful clean world for our children to enjoy.

Mr TROY GRANT (Dubbo—Parliamentary Secretary) [10.48 a.m.]: I support the Clean Coal Administration Amendment Bill 2011. As the member for Dubbo I do not come from a traditional coal heartland, but we do have in my electorate an emerging coal exploration and coal production industry. This bill is very important. I do not intend to rehash the words of the Treasurer or the Minister for Resources and Energy

on this issue. They have clearly outlined that the Clean Coal Administration Act 2008 provides the legislative basis for funding research and development into the technology to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from mining and industry. This bill seeks to rename the council, the fund and the Act, and amend the council membership to improve governance and update language in the Act to reflect the council's functions.

Coming from an emerging coal area I think this legislation is extremely timely and I welcome its introduction because it will ensure that as we move forward in the coal industry we rebut—I will not do it as passionately as the member for Hawkesbury did—some of the myths surrounding the coal industry and separate the perception from the reality concerning the contribution that coal does make to our great State and to our country. We are open to and I welcome any exploration into renewable energies. The fundamental fact is that we do rely on coal. It provides 90 per cent of our baseload power and it is absolutely essential to the continuing functionality of all the regional communities in this State.

The current renewable energy options are simply not affordable or sustainable. So we cannot ignore what is the essence of our power supply and our greatest, most successful natural resource. As I said, coming from an emerging coal area, I welcome this bill because it is an opportunity to develop coal reserves to our area, notably through the Cobbora mine, which has been widely reported on in the press. The Cobbora mine was part of the diabolical electricity sale. I commend the Treasurer for his attempts to get to the bottom of that dud deal in terms of the potential liabilities and financial jeopardy that the State and the taxpayers are exposed to under the electricity contracts. We were dumbfounded by the electricity sale. As residents of a regional area—and in particular Dubbo—we are excited about the Cobbora mine becoming operational.

My community clearly recognises that it is not the Government's job to mine but to ensure that the functionality and costs of the mine are sustainable. The mine should not be a burden on the community; it should be an asset. The Cobbora mine will bring enormous job opportunities to regional New South Wales, particularly in and around the Dubbo electorate. This bill is an opportunity to deliver on much of what the Government is trying to do, which is to reinvigorate regional New South Wales. It will be a key component in shoring up our coal-based electricity supply. However, as the Treasurer discovered recently, the deal to make this all happen is covered in mud, spider webs and all sorts of horrible things. The people of Dubbo and I commend the Treasurer for having his eye on the ball. He is well aware of the issues that confront him.

When the Cobbora mine comes on line—it is simply a matter of when, not whether it will come on line—it needs a strong mechanism behind it to ensure that its operations can utilise the best innovations in the coal sector, and we must ensure that research and development is funded to make coal more acceptable to the community and to dispel some of the myths surrounding it. As the previous speaker noted, the Government recognises that there is no such thing as clean coal. This bill properly reflects the need to change so that we can look at coal innovations. It provides a framework for the delivery of funding for research and development to improve the coal sector and for that funding to be more targeted. The Government's general theme is to tidy up some of the hip-hop and skip scotch work of the previous Government in delivering services.

The bill will make the coal industry more efficient and effective as it reflects current language and the research and development priorities required in the coal sector. The research and development projects, which are funded by a levy collected from electricity generators, need to be better directed. I believe that the bill will help to facilitate that efficiency as it will ensure that the Coal Innovation NSW is more focused and has more productive and reflective outcomes. So Dubbo is now on the map in terms of coal. Clearly, we welcome the arrival of the coal industry in our area. We welcome also the opportunity to ensure that every post can be a winner in relation to the industry and that efforts are made to improve operations, governance and all things related to coal. We believe that this bill will achieve that outcome. I congratulate the Minister for Resources and Energy and the Treasurer. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) [11.04 a.m.]: As many speakers have said, the Clean Coal Administration Amendment Bill highlights an interesting change in attitude towards so-called clean coal and demonstrates the need for the Government and the State to look to a future not based purely on coal but on renewables, sustainability and a low-carbon future. Other speakers have noted that the main focus of the bill is the name. It changes the name of the Clean Coal Council and the Clean Coal Fund to Coal Innovation NSW and the Coal Innovation NSW Fund respectively. It is important to recognise what the words "clean coal" mean. "Clean coal" was part of the public relations campaign push by the coal industry to claim that coal does not have emissions, it can be clean and it can be a long-term resource for the future.

I am glad that the Government has acknowledged, as has the scientific community, that clean coal does not exist: clean coal cannot happen. Indeed, the public relations campaign pushed by the coal industry has

failed. It has failed to the extent that even a Coalition Government has recognised that clean coal does not exist. To me—and I think to many people in New South Wales—it is the beginning of an understanding that, while coal is an important energy resource for New South Wales at present, there is much more that the Government can and must do not only to reduce our carbon footprint but also to develop jobs and the job-rich green industries that we need to drive our State economy and to ensure that we have a strong energy future moving into the next century.

While we acknowledge that the coal industry has lost its public relations battle to claim that coal is clean, we recognise that there is another battle about carbon geosequestration. As the member for Hawkesbury and other speakers said, carbon geosequestration is completely unviable. Hundreds of millions of dollars have been spent on that technology for very little outcome. I acknowledge the contribution of the member for Hawkesbury. I congratulate him on taking a range of personal steps to reduce his impact on the environment and the climate. It is positive that he raised the issue of solar thermal technology. I will spend a few minutes on solar thermal in the context of coal because there is a claim, which has been made several times, that baseload power cannot be provided by renewable resources.

The member for Hawkesbury highlighted that baseload power can be provided by renewable resources. We know that New South Wales can be a leader in reducing the burden of climate change. We can generate jobs and protect households from rising coal and electricity prices. Many people talk about the carbon tax and the huge increases in electricity prices. That is not because of the carbon tax. Why have there been enormous increases in electricity prices? They have occurred because of the need to renew infrastructure and the increase in the price of coal. Coal is a finite resource and as the amount of coal reduces, not only over the term of this Parliament but also over future generations, the price of coal will increase.

Electricity bills have increased by 35 per cent, but that has absolutely nothing to do with carbon pricing and the carbon tax. A small component of that increase is due to the renewable solar bonus scheme, but the lion's share has come from the \$15 billion plus that is required to renew our ancient technology, which is coal-fired power stations, and infrastructure. So how do we protect local communities against future increases in electricity prices and reduce the cost of living pressures on local communities? We do that by investing in renewable energy.

The Greens took a policy on solar thermal to the last election. The member for Hawkesbury raised this issue. We believe we can kickstart the transition to renewable energy in New South Wales by building baseload solar thermal power stations with heat storage in the Central West. We are great supporters of the Central West; it is a wonderful part of New South Wales. Much like the O'Farrell Government, we believe in the effectiveness of bonds. The O'Farrell Government has talked about Waratah bonds. The Greens took to the election what we call green infrastructure bonds. We believe that we can harness the energy of the sun to power steam turbines, which would provide reliable zero-emission baseload electricity 24 hours a day using heat storage technologies.

We have looked at the details of such a proposal. We know that household power bills will be protected in the future by reducing the State's exposure to international coal prices. On future modelling, coal prices in the next decade are expected to double. That resource will increase in cost. Protecting people from electricity increases to support local business and our growing industry productivity means having effective electricity pricing. Coal does not provide such protection. Following on the comments of the member for Hawkesbury, I want to talk about how baseload power can be delivered by solar thermal facilities. In Spain, California, the United Arab Emirates and other countries throughout the world baseload power is generated using solar technology. The model proposed by The Greens would create about 4,500 jobs at its peak, with additional jobs if the mirrors and other components for solar thermal are created in Australia.

Including operations and maintenance, three solar thermal plants—which in our view is the number of plants required—would create 1,900 new and ongoing jobs. Our modelling, which is on our website, is based on a 200-megawatt utility-scale grid-connected base-load solar thermal power station. It can be paid for using green bonds that raise revenue from the sale of the electricity, renewable energy certificates and other green energy products. One power plant would cost approximately \$2.1 billion to build. In relation to the funding model for this type of technology, the Government could issue green infrastructure bonds, as we call them, to the value of around \$525 million for each of the four years of construction. We expect that the second and third plants would cost significantly less as the technology matures and State experience is accumulated. The lower cost will enable them to show greater economic benefit.

Compared with a coal-fired power station of the same size, a 200-megawatt solar thermal plant would have a \$180 million-a-year advantage. That is an important point: In comparison with a 200 megawatt coal-fired

facility a solar thermal facility would have a \$180 million-a-year advantage. The saving is a result of operational costs in terms of inputs, the sale of the renewable energy certificates and not having to pay a carbon price, which the Federal Government proposes to introduce. In relation to the modelling of the structure, there is sufficient revenue to service the interest and repay the capital on the green infrastructure bonds required to finance the facility. Our modelling shows a return rate of 7.5 per cent over 30 years, which is generous for a return on bonds.

In our view the plants should be fully publicly owned and operated. The technology exists to build such a plant. In the United States of America and other countries baseload solar thermal is being developed that could deliver solar thermal technology in New South Wales. With the construction of solar thermal plants the State Government could make an incredible difference in managing electricity in the future. The Greens hope to be able to work with the Government not only to deal with energy issues in the future, such as coal, but also to invest in a sustainable way in a jobs-rich facility that will see New South Wales lead the country in the generation of electricity.

The Government made the right decision in its approach to solar energy. All of us were delighted when the Government changed its position on the Solar Bonus Scheme feed-in tariff. However, more work needs to be done in this area. The Government had a wobbly start on the energy issue, but it made the right decision when it reversed its original policy announcement. I hope it takes the opportunity to change not only the name of the Act but also the direction of the development of a renewable energy future for New South Wales. I was disappointed when the Minister said that wind and solar are not able to provide reliable baseload power. It is true that at the moment they are not because there is not significant investment in this area.

Because of the uncertainty that has been injected into the solar industry sector in New South Wales, it is not surprising that the community and business sector are reluctant to invest. I call on the Government to seriously investigate the issue of solar thermal energy and look at the development of low-cost electricity generation that will protect consumers and businesses from significantly increasing electricity prices, as coal prices are set to double in the next 10 years. I trust that this is the beginning of the Government's recognising the battle we have had for over 10 years with the coal industry spin. Ten years ago the coal industry said we could have clean coal. It said that if we spent a few billion dollars we would have clean coal. Ten years later we realise that is a fallacy. It will not happen and it is wasted money.

We now are moving to other forms of innovation that may deliver some benefits. However, we know that renewable energy is the future for this State and this country. If governments address this issue in a proactive way we will have the type of innovative State that all of us want where business and households are supported in their ventures with stable electricity prices and a low carbon economy. I thank the Minister for introducing this bill. Because of the small element of change in it, we will not oppose it. The Greens look forward to the Government's seriously addressing the issue of future electricity generation in this State.

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) [11.15 a.m.]: I support the Coal Innovation Amendment Bill 2011, which renames the Clean Coal Administration Act. Burning coal without adding to global carbon dioxide levels is a major technological challenge, and it is being addressed. The most promising technology involves using coal to make hydrogen from water then burying the resultant carbon dioxide by-product and burning the hydrogen. The greatest challenge is bringing the cost down sufficiently for this technology to compete with other power sources on the basis of near-zero emissions for baseload power. Advanced technologies such as integrated gasification combined cycle and pressurised fluidised bed combustion enable higher thermal efficiencies—up to 50 per cent in the future.

Gasification avoids burning coal altogether. With integrated gasification combined cycle systems steam and hot pressurised air or oxygen combine with coal in a reaction that forces carbon molecules apart. The resulting syngas, a mixture of carbon monoxide and hydrogen, is then cleaned and burned in a gas turbine to make electricity. The heat energy from the gas turbine also powers a steam turbine and has the potential to reach fuel efficiency of 50 per cent. Manipulating the coal burn can reduce emissions of sulphur dioxide, nitrogen oxides and particulates. This is achieved by spraying flue gas with limestone and water to remove sulphur dioxide, restricting oxygen to reduce nitrogen oxides and creating an electrical field to charge particles and capture particulates on collection plates.

One potentially groundbreaking technique being supported by the current Clean Coal Fund seeks a new way to produce pure oxygen to sustain a more efficient coal burn. The power requirements of this technique are estimated to be about 26 per cent of conventional air separation. This would radically reduce cost and remove

one of the biggest hurdles for carbon capture technology. Another cost-cutting strategy is to increase the efficiency of the steam engines and gas turbines converting heat to energy. This is called thermal efficiency and every 1 per cent increase in thermal efficiency results in a 2 per cent to 3 per cent decrease in greenhouse gas emissions. Research is also underway that aims to reduce the industry's emissions before coal is even removed from the earth. This project promises to reduce the methane diluted in high volumes of ventilation air escaping from underground coalmines. This would be achieved by heating the air to about 1,000 degrees and converting almost all of the methane to carbon dioxide and water.

The development of new technologies is addressing this problem so that the world's enormous resources of coal can be utilised for future generations while minimising the contribution to global warming. Much of the challenge is in commercialising the technology so that coal use remains economically competitive, despite the cost of achieving low and eventually near-zero emissions. Coal is a fossil fuel composed primarily of carbons and hydrocarbons. Its ingredients are used in the manufacture of plastics, tar and fertilisers. A coal derivative, a solidified carbon called coke, melts iron ore and reduces it to create steel. But most coal—92 per cent of the United States supply—goes into power production. Electric companies and businesses with power plants burn coal to make the steam that turns turbines and generates electricity.

The Clean Coal Administration Amendment Bill will provide important reforms to change the structure of the New South Wales Clean Coal Council, reducing membership and improving governance. It will make the Act more efficient and effective and ensure that its language accurately reflects the current research and development it supports. Membership will be reduced from five industry and five government members to two members from each sector. Previously unlimited ministerial appointees will be reduced to a maximum of four and the appointment of a chair independent of the membership will bring the total council numbers down to nine. This reduction from the current council of 15 or larger will streamline the recommendations and help deliver funding to projects sooner and identify opportunities for public and private sector involvement in research projects.

Changing the name and language of the Act is necessary to reflect its current priorities. The term "clean coal" suggests that coal can be burned in a way that produces no emissions at all. In reality the purpose of the Act is to reduce coal emissions as much as scientifically possible. For this reason the amendment will change all references to "clean coal" to "low emissions coal". The new names—Coal Innovation NSW and the Coal Innovation NSW Fund—clearly communicate the intention to promote and foster innovation. This legislation and the technological advances it supports are particularly relevant to my electorate of Heathcote, as coalmining has long been the life-blood of several communities there. The industry has more than 100 years of history in the Helensburgh area alone. Many who depend on this vital source of employment have faced terrible uncertainty in recent times. The entire coal industry has been demonised by certain political forces and the carbon tax has cast a dark shadow over its future.

Helensburgh has been involved in coalmining for more than 120 years. I read in a local history book recently that coal was so easy to get out of my electorate that when steam trains were heading south the engineers used to jump off the trains, dig the coal out of the side of the cliff and throw it onto the trains. There are 2,500 jobs directly linked to coalmining and hundreds of auxiliary jobs in my electorate. The \$23 per tonne tax will impose a new annual bill of \$1,450 million, but this figure will increase yearly as energy demand grows. This will affect not only those working directly in the industry and their families but also the network of other businesses that could not exist without coalmining. Only by adequately supporting coal innovation can we secure these livelihoods while moving to a clean, practical and sustainable future for power generation.

Currently more than 90 per cent of New South Wales power comes from coal and recoverable coal reserves, a total of over 12 billion tonnes. Shutting down this industry will not immediately achieve low emissions power generation; it will thrust New South Wales into darkness. Last year solar and wind energy generation provided just 3.8 per cent of the State's power needs. Neither of these alternatives is continually available and cannot provide reliable baseload power. Over time the output of renewable energy sources will increase but must be supported with research. This cannot happen in darkness. It cannot happen without coal-fired power.

To continue to meet our growing power demands while maintaining the economy we must work with the coal industry, not against it, to reduce emissions from the main production methods we have today. I have briefly mentioned some of the technologies currently being developed, but with adequate support and funding new methods and techniques will emerge. Under the bill, the Coal Innovation NSW Fund will provide that support, but research and development work in this field is incredibly expensive. The coal industry has committed \$1 billion over 10 years to this research, with \$400 million allocated to New South Wales.

The Federal Government has contributed \$50 million to New South Wales through a national low emissions coal initiative and the New South Wales Government has committed \$100 million over four years to the fund. The fund is currently supporting 11 projects, three of which have been matched with Federal funding and others have been matched or supported by the industry. Our universities and research institutes are at the frontier of this field. We must continue to nurture this vital work to maintain this position. Low emissions coal technology is a necessary cornerstone of future power generation. We can seize this opportunity to lead the world in its development.

I support the Clean Coal Administration Amendment Bill, which will ensure that low emissions coal technology is supported by clear and relevant legislation. This is crucial for New South Wales and especially for my electorate of Heathcote. It is simple: clean coal will mean jobs, jobs, jobs. Coal is the lifeblood of the Heathcote electorate. We need investment in clean coal burning technologies, concentrating on getting more out of the resource by burning it cleaner and hotter.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) [11.26 a.m.]: I speak in support of the Clean Coal Administration Amendment Bill 2011, which renames the Clean Coal Administration Act the Coal Innovation Administration Act and reforms various aspects of the Act to provide for improved governance. The electorate of Myall Lakes does not have a coalmine but it adjoins the area of Gloucester in the upper Hunter, which does have coalmines. Further exploration is being carried out in the Gloucester area but, importantly, considerable exploration is being undertaken in the Manning Great Lakes area, and more is proposed. This is of concern to all residents in the electorate of Myall Lakes because, like everyone, we are concerned about the impact of mining on the environment, including waterways. This bill will assist the industry to take us through to the next 100 years. Before the innovations of renewable energy come on line we will rely on coal for our energy. The object of the bill is to amend the Clean Coal Administration Act 2008 as follows:

- (a) to rename the Act as the *Coal Innovation Administration Act 2008*,
- (b) to restructure the Clean Coal Council and rename it as Coal Innovation NSW,
- (c) to rename the Clean Coal Fund as the Coal Innovation NSW Fund,
- (d) to update certain terminology in the Act,
- (e) to make other amendments of a minor or consequential nature ...

The bill will amend the structure of the Clean Coal Council to reduce its membership from five industry and five government members to two members from each sector. It will also reduce the number of ministerial appointees, which was previously unlimited, to up to four members, and will provide for the appointment of a chair independent of the membership, making a total council of up to nine. The Clean Coal Council will be renamed Coal Innovation Council NSW and the Clean Coal Fund will be renamed Coal Innovation NSW Fund. In addition, the bill will change the name of the Act to the Coal Innovation Administration Act to reflect the work that it supports. It will also change all references in the Act from clean coal to low emissions coal.

New South Wales is heavily dependent on coal for power generation and 90 per cent of our power comes from coal. Though the Government remains committed to the development of renewable energy sources, there is an ongoing need for the development of new technologies to reduce emissions. However, there is not going to be a sudden switch from coal power generation and to renewables; there will be a transition period. It will take many years to change from virtually a totally coal-based industry to renewables. Therefore, in the interim we need to look at how we can reduce coal emissions. We need to look at innovative development and research in order to make that change.

The term "clean coal" contradicts the purpose of the council and the fund, which is to acknowledge greenhouse gas emissions from coal and to fund and promote the development of new and innovative technologies to reduce them. Research and development projects are funded via a levy collected from electricity generators. Existing projects include the Delta Electricity carbon capture and storage project, various geotechnical studies and the Newcastle Institute for Energy and Resources carbon mineralisation project. The existing council has a membership of 15—potentially larger—and to improve governance a reduced membership of nine is proposed. Amending the Act will ensure that it is more efficient and effective and that the language reflects current research and development priorities.

In the Manning Valley and in the Great Lakes area we are concerned about greenhouse gas emissions, but we also recognise that coalmining has been going on for 200 years and that this State relies upon that

industry. Even though there is no mining in my electorate of Myall Lakes, we benefit from that industry in the same way as do all people in New South Wales. Therefore, we have to balance protecting and improving the coal industry and the energy that it produces with protecting our environment. This legislation goes some way towards doing that. Its large membership made the Clean Coal Council unwieldy. This bill reduces the size of the council and makes its governance crisper.

The member for Balmain said that the Clean Coal Administration Act and the Clean Coal Fund were part of a campaign by the mining industry. It is interesting to note that the legislation we are amending was introduced by The Greens' coalition partner, the Labor Party. The member for Balmain asked why electricity prices are increasing. It is because The Greens' coalition partner, the Labor Party, controlled the industry for 16 years and for the past 10 years or more raped and pillaged the electricity distributors. It took funds from the distributors, which stopped them maintaining their infrastructure and investing in new technology and research to improve the industry. But on 26 March there was a change of government, and we must now deal with the booby traps left by the Labor Party.

The member for Balmain spoke about The Greens policy. Only mad people listen to The Greens policy. He spoke about solar and steam technologies. Those things will take years to implement. In the meantime, in New South Wales we rely on coal-powered generation and we must do everything we can to improve that technology to make it clean and more efficient. The member for Balmain spoke about the Solar Bonus Scheme. The great thing about the Solar Bonus Scheme is that it shows that this Government is listening to the people. Because we listen to the people and because we engage with the community, we decided to leave the Solar Bonus Scheme unchanged.

Unlike the Opposition, this Government will continue to listen to the people. The Federal Government is introducing a carbon tax. Bob Brown and his deputy Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, are extremely keen to have a carbon tax, but they do not understand that the overwhelming majority of people do not want it. The Federal Government is not listening—I think the latest poll shows that its popularity is running at 28 per cent. This State Government has engaged the community. We speak to the people and we listen to them all the time. That is why after 26 March Coalition members have occupied the benches on this side of the House and most of the benches opposite. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr ANDREW ROHAN (Smithfield) [11.35 a.m.]: I am delighted to support the Clean Coal Administration Amendment Bill 2011 because the proposed amendments are necessary to make the legislation reflect more accurately the functions and operation of the Act. Some time ago as a young geologist I was responsible for implementing coal exploration programs in New South Wales, Queensland and South Australia. Therefore, I know a little about the coal industry in Australia, the contribution coal makes to Australia and the development of clean coal technology. Clean Coal technology basically entails the capture and removal of carbon dioxide emitted from coal during the burning process and its storage underground in geological formations safely and permanently. As other members have stated in their contributions to debate on the bill—at this point I make special mention of my good friend the member for Hawkesbury—there is no such thing as clean coal. Saying "clean coal" is like saying "clean dirt".

The Clean Coal Administration Act 2008 provided the legislative basis for the funding of research and the development of technologies designed to reduce the effects of gas emissions generated from mining and industry, particularly electricity generators. The Act established the Clean Coal Council and the Clean Coal Fund to distribute funds received through the Clean Coal Levy imposed on electricity distributors throughout the State. The council's task is to make recommendations to the Minister on the funding of projects designed to reduce gas emissions from electricity generators. New South Wales has vast coal resources, including those in the Hunter and the Illawarra, and is heavily dependent on coal. More than 90 per cent of our energy requirements are met by coal-powered generators.

The State's oil and gas resources are scarce so it has to import most of what it needs in hydrocarbons from other States such as Queensland and South Australia. Although New South Wales will continue to be dependent on coal-powered generation for some time, the Government remains committed to the development of renewable energy resources such as solar technology. Research and development has identified a number of technologies available to the industry, including carbon capture and storage, carbon mineralisation and ocean storage. These technologies employ methods of capturing carbon dioxide and other emitted gases and storing them safely, either permanently or for long periods, in order to stop them entering the atmosphere.

Carbon capture and storage involves capturing these emitted gases, separating them and compressing the carbon dioxide into a liquid state and injecting it into deep geological formations and depleted gas fields.

Carbon mineralisation involves injecting carbon dioxide into rocks such as magnesium silicates and calcium silicates to produce magnesium carbonate and calcium carbonate rocks, which will stay permanently within the earth. Although these technologies are not a final solution for carbon dioxide reduction, they provide a short-term solution for gas storage until more desirable and economical solutions are devised.

Efficient carbon storage and capture projects can reduce gases by up to 80 per cent to 90 per cent compared with plants without this technology. However, capturing and compressing carbon dioxide requires energy and as such it adds up to 25 per cent to 40 per cent extra to costs. Such technologies are expensive to develop and administer. However, the aim is to make coal as a fuel resource free or low in gas emissions—a cost offset by benefits of social and environmental impacts. The term "clean coal" has been incorrectly used for a number of years in dealing with technologies specifically developed to reduce gas emissions produced by coal-powered generators. It might give the impression to the public that clean coal physically exists, or that there exists coal of such a high quality that it emits less or negligible gases when burned.

The reality is that all types of coal generate gases, although at different rates and of different kinds depending on the quality of coal. In fact, the term "clean coal" contradicts the purpose of the council and the funds allocated to promote the development of new and innovative technologies to reduce such gases. The Clean Coal Levy is currently collected from generators, including projects such as the Delta Electricity carbon capture storage project, various geotechnical studies and the Newcastle Institute for Energy and Resources carbon mineralisation project. The Clean Coal Council has 15 members. To make it more effective and efficient and to improve its governance it is proposed to reduce its membership to nine.

The Clean Coal Administration Amendment Bill 2011 renames the Act the Coal Innovation Administration Act and reforms various aspects of the Act to provide meaningful applications and improved governance. The amended structure of the Clean Coal Council will include reducing membership from five industry and five Government members to two members from each sector, reducing previously unlimited ministerial appointees to up to four, and providing for the appointment of a chair independent of the membership, thus taking council membership up to nine.

I put on record my support for the coalminers of Newcastle. I understand that Lee Rhiannon issued a media release today calling for a complete shutdown of the coal industry in Newcastle, and has linked the Australian coal industry to starving children in Africa. Coalminers are the hardest workers in our country and the coal industry is vital to the strength of our economy and our nation. I support the coalminers of this State and I support the role that coal plays in our economy. I support changing the names of the Clean Coal Council to Coal Innovation NSW and the Clean Coal Fund to the Coal Innovation NSW Fund to reflect the true nature of those organisations' objectives and operations. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith) [11.43 a.m.]: I will make a short contribution to debate on the Clean Coal Administration Amendment Bill 2011. As we have heard from a number of speakers, the objects of the bill are to rename the Clean Coal Administration Act 2008 the Coal Innovation Administration Act 2008, restructure the Clean Coal Council and rename it Coal Innovation NSW, rename the Clean Coal Fund as the Coal Innovation NSW Fund, and update certain terminology within the Act. This is a good opportunity for members to acknowledge the contribution that the coal industry makes to this State, to highlight the fact that the industry needs to be part of the State's economic future and to discuss the role that the Government can play in investing in alternative energy sources. That is effectively what this bill is about. It is about levying coal producers and coal companies to provide funds for the introduction of innovative, new energy sources so that we can continue to power the State.

New South Wales is heavily dependent on coal for its power generation. More than 90 per cent of our power comes from coal. However, the New South Wales Government remains committed to the development of renewable energy resources, and there is an ongoing need to develop new technologies to reduce coal emissions, particularly in relation to the coal industry. As we have heard from a number of other speakers, the term "clean coal" is a misnomer so we are updating the bill to reflect what is essentially accepted within the community. The purpose of the council and the fund is to acknowledge greenhouse gas emissions from coal and to fund and promote the development of new, innovative technologies to reduce them.

Research and development projects are funded via a levy collected from the electricity generators. Existing projects include the Delta Electricity carbon capture and storage project, various geotechnical studies and the Newcastle Institute for Energy and Resources carbon mineralisation project. The council currently has a

membership of 15, which may increase. The Act will also allow for a reduction in the number of members to improve the governance of that body. The amendments ensure that the Act contains more efficient and effective language and also encourages research, innovation and development priorities in the coal industry.

A number of speakers also raised the issue of the impact of the proposed carbon tax on New South Wales. We have heard a number of times in this House—and I am sure we will continue to hear it—about the negative impacts of a carbon tax on this State. The introduction of Federal Labor's carbon tax at \$23 a tonne, which is \$13 more than New Zealand's rate, is going to generate over the next decade billions of dollars more than any other fund. Compared with Europe, this is clearly excessive. Under the Federal Government's carbon tax New South Wales energy industries will face an annual bill of \$1.45 billion.

This means increasing prices and costs for people who can least afford that at present. This debate presents an interesting opportunity to discuss some of the things that have been said about the impact of the carbon tax in New South Wales. Recently I was drawn to an article by Greg Sheridan in the *Australian* of 21 July in which former Premier Morris Iemma talked about the carbon tax and its impact on the State. He said that The Greens have wielded an excessive influence over the Government's policies, pointing to the \$10 million Clean Energy Fund that excludes carbon capture and storage. He went on to say:

We should always be standing shoulder to shoulder with steelworkers and miners and factory workers before we stand shoulder to shoulder with the likes of Bob Brown and Christine Milne.

That is a good example of a former Premier defending the workers in his State. This is also a good opportunity for all members to hear how State governments have found a new way to invest in innovation and in funds that can provide clean, renewable energy resources without hacking to death the economies of the States. That is a message that must be rammed home loud and clear to those Federal members of Parliament who continually shove down our throats the idea that the carbon tax will be good for us. It is clearly demonstrated by this very Parliament that, regardless of which side of politics members are on, we can invest effectively and appropriately in renewable resources and reduce our dependency on coal without taxing the life out of everyone in this State.

Families all over this State are trying to figure out how they will cope with rising electricity prices and increased cost of living pressures. They want to see that the Government representing them—regardless of its political persuasion—is thinking about innovative ways of investing in the future of this State, and not just taxing the life out of them. The bill makes only a small alteration by changing the name of the Act, but it shows that this Parliament is focused on investing in new energy.

It is focused on innovation within the industry—something we should all discuss more often. We should talk not about taxing people regularly but about energy efficiency and innovation in the sector. This bill is clearly a step in the right direction. I encourage members to continue to talk to their constituents about the types of things that Parliaments across this Federation are doing to invest in alternative energy sources. That will provide a pathway and a clear direction for the Federal Government to invest in those sources also.

I doubt that we will see it happen in Canberra, but today we witnessed the member for Balmain, a member of The Greens, and the member for Hawkesbury, who sits on this side of the Chamber, suggest solar thermal power as a means of providing base-load capacity. That raises the possibility of taking a bipartisan approach to the provision of more sustainable and efficient levels of energy production in this State. But the Federal Government has adopted a blinkered approach—members are blinded by politics and do not consider these innovative practices. There is complete focus on the carbon tax, which will continue to drive upward pressure on prices. The Federal Government is doing absolutely nothing to examine all the options around alternative energy sources.

Morris Iemma said that, and we hear it regularly from Federal Government members. The fact that we have a \$10 billion Clean Energy Fund that does not include carbon capture is an absolute disgrace. It sends a clear message to the Australian public that the carbon tax out of Canberra is nothing but a political joke because the Federal Government will not consider any options that will deliver carbon abatement at a lower cost. We are reaching only for the highest-cost option, which means every single Australian will pay. I acknowledge that the Minister for Resources and Energy clearly understands the issues around the coal industry.

Mr Chris Hartcher: Let's talk about him.

Mr STUART AYRES: We will not talk about him too much, but we recognise that innovation is absolutely critical. The name change in this bill sends a clear signal to industry operators that this Government

supports innovation within the coal sector, reducing emissions and carbon abatement to provide a sound economic foundation for growth in this State. This bill is a step in the right direction, and I commend it to the House.

Mr CHRIS HARTCHER (Terrigal—Minister for Resources and Energy, Special Minister of State, and Minister for the Central Coast) [11.52 a.m.], in reply: I thank the many members who have contributed to debate on the Clean Coal Administration Amendment Bill 2011. This is a small bill, but coal is a major issue and anything relating to it is therefore of great significance. Many years ago, when I was a much younger member of this place, the former member for Ashfield, Paul Whelan—he was then Leader of the House and I was shadow Leader of the House—was organising the House program. I remember he said, "We are going to bring on a coalmining bill", and I said "We haven't got any speakers." He replied, "Don't worry. We've got lots of speakers; anything to do with coal is always of great interest to the Labor Party."

Mr Nathan Rees: Come on.

Mr CHRIS HARTCHER: No, I am not going to be provoked by you, Nathan. I am going to be nice today.

Ms Anna Watson: Do you know how?

Mr CHRIS HARTCHER: I am trying, so help me out. I thank the member for Mount Druitt, the member for Pittwater—the Parliamentary Secretary for Renewable Energy—the member for Liverpool, the member for Vacluse, the member for Hawkesbury, the member for Dubbo, the member for Balmain, the member for Heathcote, the member for Smithfield, the member for Myall Lakes, and the Minister for the Environment for their thoughtful contributions to this debate. The purpose of the Clean Coal Administration Amendment Bill 2011 is to acknowledge the fact that there is no such thing as clean coal and to accept that we all have a responsibility, no matter what our political persuasion or background, to work in our community to minimise or to eliminate carbon dioxide emissions. That is a huge issue. I am not a climate change sceptic; I believe humans are contributing to climate change. Of course, the rate of that contribution will always be debated but it seems clear that it is a national and an international issue.

I commend the work being done in other States and by Minister Ferguson, whom I regard as a fine Minister, in Canberra. We all acknowledge the crucial interdependence between energy and the environment. The issue that we must address is how to balance our responsibilities towards the environment with ensuring a reliable supply of electricity at an affordable cost. In that respect, I especially thank the Minister for the Environment for her contribution to the debate. I do not intend to go through the presentations of individual members because essentially they all said that the environment is important and that we have a responsibility towards it, and acknowledged that 90 per cent of our electricity presently comes from coal. We are, to use an American term, a "coal State". Until we have satisfactory alternative sources of renewable energy we must continue to acknowledge our dependence on coal.

I thank the member for Balmain for behaving responsibly, but the extraordinary statement by a former member of the Legislative Council in the Federal Parliament yesterday that coal exports from Newcastle are responsible for the famine in Somalia only goes to show the total absurdity of the arguments that are often advanced when discussing this issue. I will not honour her with any more dissertations on the absurdities that she uttered in Canberra—which were like so many of her absurd utterances in this Parliament. I thank the member for Pittwater for drafting the amendment, which on careful consideration is most appropriate. It was his idea. He is an excellent Parliamentary Secretary. I thank all members for their contributions to the debate, and I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill agreed to in principle.

Consideration in detail requested by Mr Chris Hartcher.

Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 and 2 agreed to.

Mr CHRIS HARTCHER (Terrigal—Minister for Resources and Energy, Special Minister of State, and Minister for the Central Coast) [11.58 a.m.]: I move Government amendment on sheet C2011-065:

Page 3, schedule 1[4], line 18. Insert "extraction, preparation or" before "use".

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) [11.59 a.m.]: The Opposition does not oppose the amendment. I will be charitable and not point out that the Government has had to amend its own bill.

Amendment agreed to.

Schedule 1 as amended agreed to.

Consideration in detail concluded.

Passing of the Bill

Motion by Mr Chris Hartcher agreed to:

That this bill be now passed.

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

AUSTRALIAN JOCKEY AND SYDNEY TURF CLUBS MERGER AMENDMENT BILL 2011

Agreement in Principle

Debate resumed from 3 August 2011.

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) [11.59 a.m.]: I lead for the Opposition in debate on the Australian Jockey and Sydney Turf Clubs Merger Amendment Bill 2011. The Hon. Steve Whan in the other place has responsibility for this legislation as the shadow Minister. I indicate that the Opposition supports the bill. The objects of the bill are to dissolve the existing trust and create a new corporation to be called the Randwick Racecourse Trust; to provide for the new trust to have three trustees and a modern corporate governance structure; to transfer Randwick racecourse to the new trust and enable the trust to exercise the functions of the lessor of the racecourse; to require the new trust to obtain the approval of the Minister before it consents to the use of Randwick racecourse for any activity that the lessee of the racecourse would otherwise not be permitted to conduct or allow another person to conduct, and to provide for the withdrawal of such consents; and to make provision for matters of a savings or transitional nature.

We are pleased to support this bill on the basis that it is a fairly minor but desirable reform that comes on the back of major and significant structural changes to racing permitted by the previous Government. The bill changes the way that trustees are appointed. At present the Governor appoints trustees who hold office until they die, resign, cease to reside in the State or become incapable of acting as trustees—that is, they are appointed for life. It is hard to argue in the contemporary world that life appointments are terribly sensible.

Mr George Souris: There is only one left, I think.

Mr PAUL LYNCH: That is probably right. As I say, it is very difficult to argue in this day and age that there should be lifetime appointments. Historically, of course, it comes from a time far removed, back in the nineteenth century. As I understand the history, there was a Crown land grant in the 1960s and at that point Governors appointed trustees for life. The principle of appointment for life seems not to have a lot of merit in the contemporary world. I note optimistically that the current members will be able to be reappointed under the new arrangements. There are other consequential changes in relation to the proposed structure.

As I understand what is proposed, the rules and regulations of the structure will be similar to those that apply to other Crown land reserve trusts. A removal provision has been included that enables a trustee to be

removed from office at the Minister's discretion and there are other amendments relating to providing trustees with guidance in the conduct of the business and requiring trustees to disclose direct and indirect pecuniary interests. The Opposition is happy to support the bill. It seems a sensible way of bringing something into the twenty-first century.

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith) [12.03 p.m.]: I will make a short contribution to the Australian Jockey and Sydney Turf Clubs Merger Amendment Bill 2011. On 15 June 1863 the then Governor of New South Wales, the Rt Hon. Sir John Young, on behalf of the Crown, granted the land now comprising Randwick racecourse on trust to three trustees: the Hon. Edward Deas Thomson, Companion of the Bath, Richard Jones of Sydney, Esquire, and William Bede Dalley of Sydney, Esquire. The purposes of the grant of the Crown land were, first, for the establishment of a racecourse for the conduct of horse races under the direction of the then Australian Jockey Club; secondly, as a training ground for the training of horses intended to be raced; thirdly, as a cricket ground; fourthly, for the erection of butts or targets for rifle shooting; and, fifthly, but not least, for any other public amusement or purpose.

Under the terms of the original grant, the appointment of the trustees and their successors was until such time as they died, resigned, ceased to reside in the Colony of New South Wales, or became incapable of acting in the role of trustee. These arrangements were formalised by the Australian Jockey Club Act 1873, which authorised the trustees to grant a lease of the racecourse to the Australian Jockey Club for an annual rental of one peppercorn. This was done in recognition of the Australian Jockey Club's then role of principal club or controlling body for thoroughbred racing in New South Wales.

While the legislation has since been updated and major changes have occurred regarding the control and regulation of thoroughbred racing in New South Wales, the role of the Randwick Racecourse Trust and the appointment of the trustees have essentially remained unaltered. The main responsibilities of the trust remain the granting of leases to the Australian Turf Club, which is the newly established metropolitan race club as a result of the merger of the Australian Jockey Club and the Sydney Turf Club, and subject to that lease to give consent to additional activities including subleases. Other than this the role of the trust is essentially ceremonial.

The current arrangements regarding the term of office of a trustee will be replaced by more modern, practical conditions which apply to other Crown land reserve trusts and will include matters such as bankruptcy, mental incapacitation and conviction for a criminal offence. The office of trustee will continue to be an honorary part-time position but the existing convention of life tenure will be replaced by a ministerial appointment for a fixed term, which includes the appointment of a chairperson. The appointment of a chairperson is to provide leadership and a point of contact for the Government.

The tenure of a trustee will be for a period of up to five years for the chairperson and of up to four years for other members, as determined by the Minister. Trustees will be eligible for reappointment at the expiry of their term of office. In addition, a removal provision is proposed which will enable the Minister to remove a trustee from office at the Minister's discretion. These amendments bring the arrangements for the administration of the Crown land up to modern standards of practice and will assist with maintaining Randwick racecourse's position as a premier venue for thoroughbred racing and public events into the future.

The bill continues the work of reform in the racing industry across New South Wales. It tightens up some of the trustee arrangements that exist at Randwick Racecourse following the merger of the two clubs and it sends a very clear signal to the racing industry in this State that the O'Farrell Government is a strong supporter of this industry. It also indicates there is an opportunity for the industry to continue to work with the Government to enable the industry to progress. The work done by the Australian Jockey Club and the Sydney Turf Club throughout the merger has been very successful. We are about to begin an important period in the racing industry with the spring carnival.

I take this opportunity to urge members of the Australian Turf Club to consult the Minister as they start to develop plans for Randwick racecourse. This Minister has a solid understanding of what is taking place in the racing industry. In Opposition he worked well with the previous Minister and that has allowed for a smooth transition in Government. I encourage representatives of the Australian Turf Club to work closely with this Government. There are a number of members of the Government who are strong supporters of the industry and that will ensure a strong voice in the Government. I reiterate that the turf club should carry on a strong dialogue with the Minister as plans are developed for improving Randwick racecourse and racing in this State. He is here to support the industry, as are plenty of members of this Government. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) [12.10 p.m.]: The Opposition is pleased to support the Australian Jockey and Sydney Turf Clubs Merger Amendment Bill. It does so noting that this minor reform comes on the back of major and significant structural changes implemented by the Labor Government. The bill deals with the tenure and appointment of Royal Randwick racecourse trustees in accordance with modern practice, including replacing life tenure with fixed terms. The bill dissolves the existing three-member trust and replaces it with a new three-member honorary trust with a chairperson and two members appointed by the Minister responsible for racing. The role of the chairperson will be to provide leadership and to be a principal point of contact for the Government. The Opposition has no objection to these amendments and agrees with the principle that appointments should not be made for life.

Of course, it also acknowledges the hard work of and contribution made by the current three trustees and their predecessors. This reform comes on the back of a significant and at times difficult reform process that has enabled racing in Sydney to be well prepared for the long term. The former Minister, Kevin Greene, achieved two significant reform objectives in the past 18 months: first, implementing the merger of the Australian Jockey Club and the Sydney Turf Club; and, secondly, providing government financial assistance for racing. On 22 July 2010 the former Government announced that it would assist the racing industry with a funding package of up to \$174 million on the condition that the Australian Jockey Club and the Sydney Turf Club merge their operations. The announcement of the initiative was made jointly with the chairpersons and chief executive officers of the two clubs and the governing body, Racing NSW, who all supported the merger.

The aim of the merger was to provide for the future viability of Sydney racing by introducing efficiencies and modern corporate governance. The former Government acknowledged that the racing industry needed assistance to implement the merger and it provided support both financially and within a best practice statutory framework. The intention was to make Sydney racing as attractive as possible to club members and the public and financially competitive for racing industry participants. The Labor Government identified a funding package of \$174 million in recognition of the need to provide assistance for infrastructure as seed investment for future business growth. The former Government acknowledged the value of the racing industry to the State economy and that the current financial environment works against the industry in securing funding for infrastructure improvements.

The funding package was dependent upon the merger proceeding and the adoption of real reforms to improve the bottom line and to achieve future viability. The funding package comprises two parts. The first part is a \$24 million grant for specific improvements at Rosehill Gardens. The second part is access to a funding stream from the new simulated racing game, Trackside, which will support a \$150 million loan. The proceeds of that loan are to be dedicated to improvements at Randwick racecourse. The \$150 million loan is to be administered by Racing NSW and it will become available only after the merger has been completed and after the execution of agreements between the Government, Racing NSW, Tabcorp and the race club or clubs. The Labor Government's reporting and supervision requirements in the agreements will ensure that funds are expended on dedicated matters and that there is appropriate accountability and reporting.

Other Australian States face similar issues in ensuring the viability of their racing industry. Queensland has already implemented reforms and others such as Victoria have commissioned investigations about the best reforms to implement and how to remain competitive. These reforms were essential to secure the future of the New South Wales racing industry, which is one of our biggest industries and a major employer and contributor to the New South Wales economy. I am proud that the Labor Government delivered those reforms because racing is a very important contributor to New South Wales and also to the area that I represent.

Mr BRUCE NOTLEY-SMITH (Coogee) [12.15 p.m.]: I commend the Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Hospitality and Racing, and Minister for the Arts for introducing the Australian Jockey and Sydney Turf Clubs Merger Amendment Bill 2011, which corrects defects in the guidelines for the custodianship of Royal Randwick racecourse. This legislation will be welcomed in my electorate, which is home to the racecourse. The main responsibilities of the Randwick Racecourse Trust are to grant leases to the Australian Turf Club and, subject to that lease, to give consent to additional activities, including subleases.

The Act provides inadequate control of the decision-making of the trustees in respect of giving consent for additional activities. The life tenure provisions would exacerbate this situation if the trustees were to make a decision that may grant a sublease for a commercial purpose that would have the effect of alienating the use of significant Crown land. The bill requires the trust to seek the Minister's approval prior to giving consent to the use of the racecourse for additional activities. In addition, the trust will be required to withdraw its consent to

any additional activity at the direction of the Minister. The trustees will also be required to disclose any direct or indirect pecuniary interest in a matter being considered by the trust. This is the minimum degree of transparency that should be demanded of trustees.

The bill also contains a general prohibition on the trust selling, mortgaging or otherwise disposing of any of the land or buildings that form part of Royal Randwick without the consent of the Minister. Without such provisions the Minister has little control over decision-making in respect of the possible commercial use of Crown land at Royal Randwick. The Crown land at the racecourse is of immense value to my constituents as well as to the people of New South Wales as a venue for world-class racing and training facilities and major public events. I am sure that my constituents are breathing a collective sigh of relief that these important changes are being made to protect this valuable Crown land.

In February 1992, on visiting Randwick racecourse to open the Paddock Grandstand, Queen Elizabeth II conferred the title "royal" on the venue in recognition of its standing as the headquarters of thoroughbred racing in this State. Randwick racecourse is a major employer and contributor to both the local and State economies. The facility has hosted, and will continue to host, many major public events, including rock concerts, festivals and conferences. However, its principal role as the home of thoroughbred racing must be protected.

Most recently, the racecourse was the venue of choice for World Youth Day events—which I was happy to attend—and it has been the venue for a number of Papal masses. It is imperative that this unique public asset continue to be maintained as a premier racing complex and as a quality venue for public recreation, entertainment and cultural events. The proposed amendments will not disturb the terms of the current 99-year lease of the racecourse to the Australian Turf Club and are in keeping with the intent of the original 1860s grant. They are also in line with the administration of other Crown reserves for the public benefit. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Hawkesbury—Parliamentary Secretary) [12.18 p.m.]: It gives me great pleasure once again to participate in a debate on behalf of the thoroughbred racing industry—in this case a debate on the Australian Jockey and Sydney Turf Clubs Merger Amendment Bill 2011. As I have said previously, the New South Wales racing industry makes a significant economic and employment contribution to this State. It is vital not only to the communities around Royal Randwick but also across New South Wales and, indeed, Australia. The racing industry employs about 50,000 full-time and part-time workers across New South Wales. I did not know until I read the notes provided to me by the Minister that the industry contributes \$1 billion annually to this State's economy. That is extraordinary.

The Australian Jockey Club has substantial training and stabling facilities at Randwick to support many trainers and various staff, including apprentice jockeys, stablehands and trackwork riders. The new member for Coogee mentioned the Queen naming the racecourse Royal Randwick many years ago. On racing days the club also supports many ancillary professionals, such as veterinarians, farriers, horse dentists and those working on the gates, in catering, and float drivers. The thoroughbred racing industry supports an immense web of people. The Australian Racing Forensic Laboratory, which provides drug testing services to all three racing codes in New South Wales, Australia and internationally, also is located at the racecourse.

The land on which all these facilities are situated is Crown land. That means it is owned by the public of New South Wales. It is important that these racing facilities are maintained and developed for the public and the racing industry generally. To achieve this, administration of the Crown land at Randwick should be modern and best practice standard. Metropolitan racing is the showpiece of New South Wales thoroughbred racing and the pinnacle of racing is represented at Royal Randwick and Rosehill Gardens racecourses. Warwick Farm racecourse also should be included for its black-type races, especially for its prize money, public enjoyment and excellent national and international reputation.

A strong Sydney metropolitan racing sector ensures the future viability of all New South Wales racing and has flow-on benefits to the country and provincial sectors of this industry, which I have raised in previous debates. Racehorse owners and industry participants aspire to winning a major metropolitan race and the graduation of horses from country to provincial to metropolitan racing works best if the top tier works at optimal level. The proposed amendments will ensure that Royal Randwick racecourse remains the iconic home of thoroughbred racing and that the Crown lands are administered to benefit the racing industry and the people of New South Wales. I thank the Minister for providing those notes to me.

I understand the angst of some of the Australian Jockey Club guard, and I am happy to state that as the custodians of this land we provide leadership on behalf of this State, and the public, through the Government, should have major input as to what happens to this Crown land. That is exactly what the bill will allow. Past suggestions that the property would be subjected to massive residential developments are not appropriate or fitting. I am sure the member for Coogee would have questions about any proposed residential development. Racing commentator and personality Ken Callander yesterday stated that no government of any political persuasion would support any residential development on the racecourse land. Royal Randwick is and should remain a facility for racing.

On many occasions I have stated how proud and honoured I was to be an Australian Jockey Club registered thoroughbred racing trainer and participant in the industry from 1985 to 2005. Obtaining an accredited Australian Jockey Club trainer's licence is no small feat: a vast degree of experience within the industry is required and one must have served a long "apprenticeship" with another trainer or someone else within the industry. I was closely associated with the thoroughbred racing industry through my father, Alan Williams, who sadly has passed away, and my uncle Trevor Dolman. They both trained exemplary horses across New South Wales. From early childhood I spent time with them experiencing every aspect of thoroughbred training: breaking-in, pretraining, floating, breeding, owning and ultimately training. It was a proud day when I received my thoroughbred racing trainer's licence in 1985.

I held that licence until 2005, when politics and representative duties were going to restrict my training of thoroughbred racehorses. As no-one else in my family was participating in the industry at that time, I was somewhat aggrieved to hand in my trainer's licence. My father often would say, "Every dog has its day." Today I will have mine. In 2005 I requested of the Australian Jockey Club the opportunity to continue to hold my trainer's licence although I would no longer be training horses. I was not afforded the opportunity. The Australian Jockey Club powerbrokers, who may be following closely the passage of this bill through this House of democracy, should take on board that I was unhappy to have to hand in my trainer's licence.

All the insurances and costs associated with a trainer's licence total some \$2,000 annually, which anyone would agree is a ridiculous amount to pay and not be actively training horses. I would have thought a nominal fee could have been assigned to a non-training licence, especially since I had trained horses for two decades and had been involved in the industry all my life. It would not be too much to expect the Australian Jockey Club to apply a nominal fee to enable me to continue to hold my trainer's licence. It is an honour to be a registered horse trainer because across Australia only a few thousand people aspire to the heights of a few thoroughbred training accolades.

Mr Ryan Park: A special fee for just your licence; the Ray Williams membership.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: I am happy to take on board an interjection from someone who has limited knowledge of the racing industry. Between 1997 and 2007—we know which party was in power in that period—52 per cent or 1,100 New South Wales provincial and country trainers were lost to the industry. That happened because of the failure of the hacks involved as racing Ministers who preferred to sit and sip their chardonnay at Randwick and Rosehill rather than go to country areas to find out how tough things were for those trainers. Things were so tough that country participants were eating the paint off the walls, to use a familiar colloquial expression. When we travelled to places such as royal Bathurst, as we called it in those days—

Mr Ryan Park: Royal Kembla?

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: And royal Kembla, where my father won the 1977 Illawarra Cup with the great old galloper Fast Beat. Trainers received what was called a \$60 float rebate for travelling to country racecourses. Some trainers without a cent in their pockets would pick up the \$60 rebate so they could have a pie for lunch, put petrol in their car and take their horse back home. That certainly is doing it tough. Country and provincial trainers were doing it tough because the prize money had been milked and leached. Prize money for the elite black-type races at the top end of town was increasing while it diminished at bush tracks.

The Brown review was on the table when I came to this Parliament in 2007 and we had a debate. The Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Hospitality and Racing, the member for Upper Hunter at that time, took it upon himself to speak to those involved at a senior level in the racing industry to ascertain the problems. He then spoke with the Minister for Gaming and Racing at the time—I think it was Graham West. After that debate the country and provincial areas received a much greater return. The role played by Minister Souris on behalf of

the racing industry whilst in Opposition should never be forgotten. Minister Souris knows this industry intimately. Today he presents another amendment to give a little more control over what we own. It will also give a little more say as to how racing finances are to be administered and as to how the land is to be developed, which will be to the benefit of all of New South Wales,

Recently my attention was drawn to a race meeting held in the wonderful electorate of Wagga Wagga, an electorate ably represented by that wonderful representative Mr Daryl Maguire. My eye was caught by something very rare. It was an eight- or nine-card program and in some races 16 horses—probably 12 runners with four emergency runners—had been nominated. In racing, betting turnover is capitalised when 11 or more runners are in a race. So to see a meeting with anything up to 16 runners in a field took me back to the glory days of the mid 1980s, when an enormous number of horses were in the industry, but that started to decline from 1997 to 2007, when 52 per cent of the trainers were lost.

I am more than happy to gloat. In 2005 I said that my family no longer had a participant in the racing industry, but I should correct that. My sister is now in full ownership of a horse named In High Spirits, trained by Donnie Robb at Wyong. I place on record that last week In High Spirits headed to Forbes as a strong favourite. It won by four lengths on the bit with G. Ryan, a great country rider, on top. Full credit goes to Donnie Robb for turning the horse out in perfect order. It ran second in a Newcastle trial, but last week In High Spirits jumped away, travelled no worse than third to the corner, kicked clear and put four lengths in. My brother-in-law will be concerned as to the price at his next meeting. I congratulate my sister Janine, who is still a participant on behalf of the Williams family.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) [12.33 p.m.]: I support the Australian Jockey and Sydney Turf Clubs Merger Amendment Bill 2011. I pay tribute to the significant knowledge and experience of the Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Hospitality and Racing and member for Upper Hunter. When he was the Minister for Gaming and Racing I had the pleasure of seeing him at the Taree racecourse. Minister Souris has taken the time to visit country racetracks to find out what is happening in the industry. Horseracing has been a significant pastime in New South Wales since early colonial days. The use of land at Randwick for racing dates back to 1833 when, in June of that year, Surveyor-General Sir Thomas Mitchell laid out a course for a private race between two horses. The rough Sandy Course, as it was known, fell into disuse when racing in Sydney centred on a new racecourse at Homebush in the 1840s.

In 1860 regular meetings for horseracing returned to Randwick. In 1863 Randwick became the home of thoroughbred racing in New South Wales with the grant of Crown land by the Governor for the permanent establishment of a racecourse and public amusement. Several of Australia's most prestigious races are held at Royal Randwick racecourse, including the time-honoured Australian Jockey Club Derby, the highly coveted Doncaster Mile in autumn and the Epsom Handicap in spring. Horseracing is extremely important not only to Sydney but also to country and regional New South Wales. I spoke of the history of rugby in the recent debate on the Library Amendment Bill. In my research for that debate I referred to newspapers dating back to 1893 and found that just prior to 1893 a major flood in the Manning Valley wiped out all the historical records, including the newspapers. The Manning Valley comprises the commercial centres of Taree and Wingham as well as numerous villages such as Tinonee, Nabiac, Dyers Crossing, Burrell Creek, Rocks Crossing and others.

Interestingly, in those days every village had a rugby team, a cricket team, its own version of a Stawell Gift and a racecourse. Today one drives a truck from Gosford to a Sydney racecourse. In those days it was a big effort to transport horses from one village to another. Racing played an essential part even in those early days in country towns that were doing it tough scraping a living off the land. I was formerly a trustee of the Bushland racecourse at Taree and whilst I was a trustee that racecourse was lucky enough to become one of the six regional racecourses of New South Wales. We also built, with the assistance of the country racing fund, one of the best patron facilities in regional New South Wales. Don Hopkins of Taree, who is on the country racing board, has played an integral part in country racing over the years—no doubt he will continue to do so in the future.

Regional New South Wales hosts more races, has more horses and employs more people in the racing industry than does the city. Country racing needed help in the past but it did not get it. The O'Farrell Government will help country racing get its share of TAB funding to lift the prize money offered for country races. Whether an owner, trainer or jockey is based in the city, on the provincial circuit or in the bush, the chance to win a Derby, Doncaster or Epsom at Royal Randwick racecourse is something to which all aspire. I have seen the elation on the faces of country people with an interest in a horse that has won a race in Sydney.

The opportunity to progress through the ranks and succeed at a metropolitan race meeting at Randwick, Rosehill, Canterbury or Warwick Farm is vital for the future viability of the racing industry. We need a strong metropolitan racing sector.

The venue is also home to many of Australia's major horse trainers and provides a unique setting for the training of horses in the centre of Australia's largest city. Royal Randwick racecourse sits neatly in the configuration of Sydney's major Crown land open spaces and places of public enjoyment: The Sydney Cricket Ground, the Sydney Sports Ground, and Moore Park and Centennial Park, all of which were set aside for the public benefit. The people of New South Wales have a very valuable asset in Royal Randwick racecourse. The proposed amendments will ensure that the Crown land at Randwick continues to serve as a venue for first-class horse racing and training and for major public events well in to the future. I commend the Australian Jockey and Sydney Turf Clubs Merger Amendment Bill 2011 to the House.

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) [12.41 p.m.]: I speak on the Australian Jockey and Sydney Turf Clubs Merger Amendment Bill 2011. The main purpose of this bill is to replace the life-term tenure provisions for Randwick racecourse trustees and to provide the trust with a modern governance structure. It will dissolve the existing three-member trust and replace it with a new three-member honorary trust of a chairperson and two members. The term will be a maximum of eight years overall, with terms of up to five years for the chairperson and up to four years for a member. The trust must seek the approval of the Minister before consenting to additional activities, including subleases at the racecourse, and generally prohibit the sale or disposal of land or buildings at the racecourse by the trust without ministerial approval.

This is the issue I will address briefly in my contribution. Members may know that Harold Park Paceway is in my electorate. Over the years a lot of racing took place at the paceway and there were many excited winners and disappointed losers. The fate of that facility is something that has occupied the minds of my constituents for some time. The paceway is to be developed with more than 1,200 new dwellings, which is a significant residential development. While the redevelopment was supported by many people—including me to a certain extent—the density of the development is very concerning to the community.

Unfortunately, I have very little experience in how to manage these sites. These types of facilities are often eyed-off by the development industry and others for their potential rather than for the good of the community as a whole, which means that ultimately they are not used as they were intended, as sporting facilities for the public to visit where they can put down a few dollars and enjoy a day at the races. We have heard about the role that Minister Souris has played, and we have heard Government members congratulate him on a job well done. I am sure Minister Souris has put a lot of effort into this issue. Proposed new section 27D paragraph (1) of the Australian Jockey and Sydney Turf Clubs Merger Amendment Bill 2011, states:

The Trust may not, without the consent of the Minister, sell, mortgage or otherwise dispose of any of the land or buildings that form part of Randwick Racecourse.

I think that is an issue that members should focus on. While the majority of the bill is positive—dealing with the archaic rules and the modernisation of the governance structure—the future of the site depends on how the Minister exercises his or her power in the future. The previous process followed for the development of this site has been quite controversial. The Greens have very serious concerns about the redevelopment of the racecourse, including the demolition of the Heritage Teahouse and the QE2 Grandstand, and the alienation of public land around the racecourse. I note the member for Coogee spoke on the bill. It has been a concern for local people that a lot of land around the site that may have been described as ancillary or not critical to the running of the facility has been alienated, which is something I would like Minister Souris and future Ministers to consider.

The Greens acknowledge that this is public land. Crown land in Sydney is under pressure, particularly from the development industry, to be alienated from its original purpose. The former Government made many poor decisions in relation to Crown land. The process that determined public infrastructure and Crown land use lacked transparency, accountability and openness. The Greens have argued that it should not be only the Minister who signs off on the proposed sale of Crown land, or other lands. The former Minister signed off on the demolition of the Heritage Teahouse on the paceway site, which The Greens thought was a disgraceful decision. The Greens submit that while the Minister can play a role, Parliament should have a role also when it is proposed to sell off Crown land of a significant value.

Potentially my colleagues in the other place will address this matter by way of amendments to ensure that we protect Crown land and defend public assets rather than have them sold off by a Government eyeing

windfall benefits and enthralled by the development industry. I appreciate that Minister Souris has worked hard to deal with these archaic terms, like lifetime tenure, which is something that is not acceptable in a modern governance structure. I encourage the Government to work closely with the new trust. I hope that this Government will not see fit to support the sale or disposal of any land at the Randwick racecourse. That Crown land was dedicated for the purpose for which it is used. We heard the member for Lake Macquarie talk about the history of the site, which should be protected. The Government has spoken about the poor record of the former Government, and I concur with that. I note that new section 27D paragraph (2) states:

The Minister may grant consent under subsection (1) to the sale mortgage or other disposal of land or a building only if the Minister is satisfied that the sale, mortgage or disposal of the land or building will neither:
(a) affect, to any significant degree...

In my mind "any significant degree" is an important addition to this bill. I trust the Minister will make positive decisions about Randwick racecourse generally and the future of this site. I thank the Minister for introducing the bill and for ensuring that the two organisations have modern-day governance structures. I look forward to many years of racing on the site and for that land to be protected for many generations.

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON (Camden) [12.48 p.m.]: I speak to the Australian Jockey and Sydney Turf Clubs Merger Amendment Bill 2011. Australians love their sport, especially horseracing. Each year during the spring and autumn racing carnivals the nation and the world stop to witness the richest two-year-old horserace, the Golden Slipper, and of course the most famous race in the world, the Melbourne Cup, during the spring carnival in Victoria. I will speak about our most famous and revered racecourses in New South Wales, Randwick and Rosehill, formally run by the Australian Jockey Club and the Sydney Turf Club respectively and now run by the same entity, the Australian Turf Club.

The bill proposes an amendment to replace the life tenure provisions for Randwick racecourse trustees. In 1863 the Randwick land was granted by the Crown to trustees representing the Australian Jockey Club for an annual rental of one black peppercorn "payable on demand", a rental that has never been collected. In 1873 the Australian Jockey Club Act confirmed the club tenure of Randwick racecourse and in 1900 the Australian Jockey Club register with rules and regulations of New South Wales Racing was first issued. In 1883, work was begun on Rosehill racecourse on a portion of a grant to John Macarthur. In 1885, Rosehill racecourse was finished at a cost of £17,000. That same year, the first race meeting was held.

My electorate of Camden was also pioneered by John and Elizabeth Macarthur and to this day the name is synonymous with the area. Camden is also well known for its affiliation with the equine industry. We have many horse stud properties. A Melbourne Cup winner, Chester, is buried on a property in Kirkham. Camelot, the most famous homestead in Camden, featured in the beginning of the iconic film *Australia* starring Nicole Kidman and Hugh Jackman and was built by James White—who owned Chester—with the winnings from Chester's triumph in the 1877 Melbourne Cup. The Inglis family still operate their cattle sales yards in the town and we have our Bicentennial Equestrian Park.

The site was part of a grant to the people by John Macarthur in 1805. His daughter donated a parcel of land to the Crown in 1882. The site was dedicated as Bicentennial Park in 1988, and in June 1994 the land was transferred from the Department of Planning to Camden Council. In 1999 Bicentennial Park was dedicated as an equestrian facility inclusive of passive recreational areas for the community of Camden. I had removed part of my speech for the sake of brevity. However, after enduring the contribution of the member for Hawkesbury for 15 minutes, I will indulge.

The equestrian facilities include camp drafting, cross-country, dressage, eventing, polocrosse, pony club, rodeo, show jumping and recreational riding. Each weekend the park hosts about 1,000 people competing in various horse events. With the wonderful steerage and management of the committee, the park has grown to be the jewel in the crown of Camden and beyond. I thank members for their indulgence. I return to the bill. The first Autumn Australian Jockey Club Derby was run at Randwick in 1979 and won by Dulcify. The first Golden Slipper was run in 1957 and won by Todman. These racecourses are steeped in history, producing probably one of our most famous trainers, Tommy Smith. That tradition is still carried on today by his daughter, Gai Waterhouse, from the famous Tulloch Lodge, named after the horse Tulloch, which was purchased as a yearling in 1956 at the Trentham Yearling Sales for 750 guineas by T. J. Smith.

Tulloch, an equine immortal, had a very successful history at Randwick and Rosehill racecourses, famously winning the 1957 Australian Jockey Club Derby, beating Prince Darius by six lengths and in the process breaking the track record that had been held by Phar Lap since 1929. After another equine immortal,

Kingston Town, won a third Cox Plate, the great T. J. Smith said he could not believe how lucky he was as he thought that he would get only one Tulloch in a lifetime. I draw the attention of members to the Moonee Valley Cox Plate tie I am wearing today in recognition of the bill.

[*Interruption*]

I thank the member for Liverpool. The member for Hornsby pointed out that it is the worst tie he has seen. Clearly, there is no accounting for taste. As with Tulloch's Australian Jockey Club Derby, some of racing's greatest memories have been in this three-year-old classic held at Randwick: Phar Lap in 1929, Tulloch in 1957, Kingston Town in 1980, Bonecrusher in 1986—probably the derby of the century where he just edged out Our Waverly Star in a classic—and Octagonal in 1996, one of the best three-year-old fields to run, just edging out Saintry, Filante and Nothin' Leica Dane. I could go on forever with the history of these famous racecourses but today's debate is about the Australian Jockey and Sydney Turf Clubs Merger Amendment Bill 2011.

The bill will ensure that management of the Crown land at Randwick is in keeping with modern practice and community expectation. Currently, the Randwick Racecourse Trust is appointed by the Governor and holds office until he or she dies, resigns, ceases to reside in the State or becomes incapable of acting as a trustee. This arrangement was part of the original grant of Crown land in 1863. The Minister responsible for racing—he is a wonderful Minister—will have the power to appoint a new three-member honorary trust with a chairperson and two members. This fixed term will be for a maximum of eight years overall, with the chairperson having up to a five-year term and a member up to a four-year term, which will be determined by the Minister.

Included in the bill is the ability for the Minister to remove a trustee from office for matters such as bankruptcy, mental incapacity and conviction of a criminal offence. This is only bringing into line the practices already applied to other Crown land reserve trusts. For the first time, similar to members of this House, trustees will be required to disclose direct or indirect pecuniary interests that may need to be considered by the trust. Randwick racecourse is a unique public asset so close to our beautiful city. It is recognised as the headquarters of thoroughbred racing and the home of many leading trainers. This bill ensures that for any additional activities on the racecourse, other than horseracing, the Minister will have to give approval prior to the trust giving consent.

The proposed amendments in this bill do not affect the arrangements under the current 99-year lease, which expires in 2097, to the Australian Turf Club for racing and other associated activities at Randwick racecourse. With its new lease until 2097, Randwick racecourse has another lifetime and more of providing the much-loved sport of horseracing. Each year interest in the sport of kings increases and the people of New South Wales will be assured, with this bill, that the good management of this wonderful complex will be in their best interests. I commend this bill to the House.

Mr GEORGE SOURIS (Upper Hunter—Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Hospitality and Racing, and Minister for the Arts) [12.56 p.m.], in reply: I am delighted to reply to debate on the Australian Jockey and Sydney Turf Clubs Merger Amendment Bill 2011. At the outset I thank and congratulate all speakers who contributed to the debate: the member for Liverpool, the member for Penrith, the member for Shellharbour, the member for Coogee, the member for Hawkesbury, the member for Myall Lakes, the member for Balmain and the member for Camden. The contributions, particularly those by my parliamentary colleagues in the Liberal-Nationals, have been made from the heart, with passion, and from a perspective of being stakeholders in one form or another, whether it be as a trustee of a country racecourse, a part owner or a former trainer.

The contributions of the member for Penrith, the member for Coogee, the member for Hawkesbury, the member for Myall Lakes and the member for Camden have come from, as it were, within the industry. I am delighted that I heard their contributions. I now realise that there is a much greater pool of understanding of racing matters within the Coalition than I previously thought, and I am delighted that that is the case. The value of the Randwick racecourse lands is significant to the people of New South Wales: They are a centre of excellence for the racing and training of thoroughbred race horses and a hub for major public events such as concerts and festivals. Randwick racecourse is located in metropolitan Sydney, but it represents the headquarters of thoroughbred racing in New South Wales, with country and provisional class horses graduating to race in the city.

The best-practice administration of Crown land at Randwick racecourse is, therefore, of benefit to the whole of the State and its racing industry, including regional New South Wales. I believe that the trust is the

only remaining life-tenured trust in New South Wales, and to that extent the bill modernises the practices that are involved. In response to comments, one feature of this bill is to ensure a greater level of protection for the government of the day and the people of New South Wales in terms of the potential alienation of Crown land. The ability to lease and/or sublease the Crown lands already exists among the trustees, and has done so since 1863. The bill will require further consent of the government of the day to any potential application or suggestion of a sublease or lease.

The bill does not completely exclude such activities because they may be necessary in the conduct of or as an adjunct to racing at Randwick—for example, to facilitate a light rail service. The potential uses must be directly related to the conduct of racing at Randwick racecourse. This bill increases the protections for the people of New South Wales and ensures the future of Randwick racecourse. These measures will provide an appropriate level of control over any future commercial use of the lands to ensure they continue to be used primarily as a racecourse. While Randwick racecourse is well known to the public as the premier venue for the racing and training of thoroughbred horses, it also serves as a community events centre that provides facilities for small and large events such as conventions, concerts and music festivals.

Randwick racecourse was the host of the highly successful 2008 World Youth Day celebrations, which attracted hundreds of thousands of people from within Australia and all over the world. The provisions contained in the bill will ensure that this unique public asset will continue to operate in the future as the iconic home to Australian racing and the focus for community events to the benefit of the public. I thank past and present trustees, particularly the current trustees, the Hon. Paul Whelan, Mr Ken Murray and the Hon. Wayne Haylen, for the service they have provided to Randwick Racecourse Trust. As the bill provides, they remain eligible for future appointment.

I also place on record my appreciation for the work of the Office of Liquor, Gaming and Racing, in particular, Mr Greg Semmler and Mr Brendan Stone. From within my ministerial office I also thank Mr Frank Marzic for his work in undertaking various consultations and assisting in the development, drafting and passage of the bill. As has been expressed by the member representing the shadow Minister in another place, the Opposition supports the bill. Once again, I thank all members who contributed to debate on this bill. 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.

GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING BILL 2011

Agreement in Principle

Debate resumed from 8 August 2011.

Mr BRYAN DOYLE (Campbelltown) [1.02 p.m.]: It gives me great pleasure to speak in support of the Government Advertising Bill 2011. The Government was elected to restore accountability and trust in government. We are returning governance to government. This bill will regulate government advertising in a way that has not been done in the history of New South Wales. It will provide guidelines for government advertising campaigns and other material that could influence support for a political party. It will prohibit government advertising campaigns that are simply self-serving. It will require a cost-benefit analysis of government advertising campaigns. Importantly, it will require the political party in power, the government of the day, to pay for any advertising that does not meet the standards set out in the bill. In accordance with the principles of good governance, government advertising will be open to review by the Auditor-General.

As the member for Riverstone noted, it is significant that this bill has been presented by the party in power. We have championed this cause for many years. I draw the attention of the House to the Banning

Political Advertising (Make Labor Pay) Bill 2006. The name says it all. It was an attempt to bring accountability to the then Labor Government. Labor members did not adopt the bill and they are still dithering on the issue. They said that they will move amendments in the other place. I say: Name them; tell us now the proposed amendments. They should participate in and be part of the process for better government. They are content to hide and, no doubt, they will announce the proposed amendments in the other place. They may be reflecting on their history and that is the reason they are taking so much time to consider the bill. Over the past 16 years the previous Labor Government wasted \$1.3 billion on government advertising.

Dr Geoff Lee: How much?

Mr BRYAN DOYLE: Over \$1.3 billion. That represents \$1 billion of lost infrastructure for New South Wales. The people of Campbelltown, the opal of the south-west, know the lost opportunities for infrastructure from that wasted \$1 billion. They know the loss of the on-off South West Rail Link and the failure to provide proper roads and train services. All those opportunities were lost as a result of the \$1 billion wasted by the previous Government over 16 years of darkness. I reflect on the absolutely cracker campaigns run by the former Government. Some of them were bottlers. Who can forget the We Mean Business campaign? The former Government spent a lot of money on that campaign, but that did not really mean they were in business. Who can forget the State Plan advertising campaign? The former Government had a plan to plan. We were drip-fed the Water for Life campaign because it was caught short on water. Who can forget the State Infrastructure Plan campaign—if only it had one?

Mr Stephen Bromhead: They have had planned announcements.

Mr BRYAN DOYLE: The former Government had planned announcements. Who can forget the CityRail Service Improvements campaign? If there had been improvements we would have known about them. The Government is introducing this bill at a time when the Federal Government is spending an inordinate amount of taxpayers' money—

Dr Geoff Lee: They are spending \$25 million.

Mr BRYAN DOYLE: The Federal Government is spending an unbelievable \$25 million on promoting a carbon tax that no-one wants. The Prime Minister told us that we would never have a carbon tax under a Government led by her.

Mr Stephen Bromhead: Lies.

Mr BRYAN DOYLE: I note the interjection from the member for Myall Lakes that the Prime Minister lied. It would seem that she does not really lead the Government, so she may have been telling the truth. Perhaps she is being dictated to by others. Under the Government Advertising Bill 2011 such a waste of money would not occur. This bill means a return to good governance. It means getting on with the job and making a real difference for the people of New South Wales. It means spending the money on infrastructure. Yesterday the House dealt with the Restart NSW Fund Bill. The Government is restoring government process to serve the people of New South Wales. Never again will the State be faced with \$1 billion worth of lost opportunities, as Labor squandered on spin doctors. Labor members talked but there was never any action. The Government Advertising Bill 2011 will ensure good governance for New South Wales.

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) [1.09 p.m.]: I speak on behalf of the Greens in debate on the Government Advertising Bill 2011. The Greens consider this bill to be a significant improvement—

Mr Darren Webber: Hear! Hear!

Mr JAMIE PARKER: I do not get too many commendations from the member for Wyong, so I acknowledge his interjection. The Greens consider this bill to be a significant improvement that prohibits government advertising that influences, directly or indirectly, support for a political party. This bill provides for the creation of government advertising guidelines based on existing guidelines. This bill will require an advertising compliance certificate to be issued by the head of a government agency before advertising commences. Advertising must be certified as compliant with the Act and government guidelines.

The bill requires a cost-benefit analysis of any campaign spending over \$1 million and a peer review of spending over \$50,000. The governing party must pay the advertising costs if the advertising campaign breaches

prohibitions on political advertising. The Greens support this bill as a vital safeguard against a repeat of the former Government's abuse of government funds through advertising which benefited a particular political party. We shared the outrage of both the Liberal-Nationals Coalition and the public over what we saw as an abuse of taxpayer funds.

Mr Stephen Bromhead: Sixteen years of it.

Mr JAMIE PARKER: Yes, 16 years of it. However, The Greens are concerned that the bill does not go far enough and that it fails to measure up to the Premier's public comments in this area before he was elected. We note that the introduction of this bill follows legislation that the Premier previously introduced in June 2007 as Leader of the Opposition that aimed also to impose restrictions on government advertising. The bill that is currently before the Parliament is significantly weaker than the 2007 legislation, having been stripped of most of its powerful elements—significantly, in relation to independence.

As opposed to the 2007 bill proposed by the current Premier of New South Wales, this bill does not require that the cost-benefit and peer review of advertising should be carried out by someone independent of the public service. In 2007, when the Premier introduced this bill, The Greens were very supportive of it and we believe that elements such as this, which required someone independent of the public service to undertake the peer review, are a positive step forward. We are disappointed that the Government has not seen fit to incorporate such a significant idea as that introduced by the Minister in 2007 to be introduced into this bill in 2011.

The Government Advertising Bill requires government advertising campaigns to be approved by the head of a government agency. The Premier claims that such a person is not subject to ministerial direction, but The Greens argue that the decision is still being made by a public servant who ultimately is accountable to the Minister. That is why we believe that the Premier's original bill, which required that the cost benefit and peer review of advertising should be carried out by someone independent of the public service, is a good provision—a provision that should be implemented by this Government. The bill also provides that if a campaign is found to breach the guidelines, the cost of that campaign will be charged to the political party or parties that are in government. Again, this provision has the potential to provide a strong and essential restriction on the ability of the Government to abuse advertising.

However, the current bill gives responsibility for taking action to the same head of agency who was responsible for approving the campaign in the first place. The previous bill introduced by the Premier in 2007 gave much greater powers to the independent Auditor-General, who would have had to review any campaign spending over \$200,000 and who would have had the power to make an order to have an inappropriate campaign stopped. We strongly support the provisions introduced by the Premier in 2007. The Greens were strongly supportive of approach of the Liberal-Nationals Coalition to accountability and transparency. The Liberal-Nationals Coalition, in conjunction with The Greens and other members in this place, fought very hard to promote accountability and openness by the former Government. We have now seen the sorry impact of a closed and unaccountable Government, its impact on, and the perceptions of governance and corruption in, the local community.

Mr Stephen Bromhead: You are the guys who supported Labor when they were in government.

Mr JAMIE PARKER: I respond to the interjection of the member for Myall Lakes who said that we supported Labor. The Greens support Labor when it does some good things and we support the Liberal-Nationals Coalition when it does some good things. The Greens support the bill because this Government is doing something positive. On that basis I am glad to be highlighting the positive elements in this bill. However, as is my role, I have examined the 2007 bill that was moved by the Premier and I inform members that that is a better bill. I therefore encourage the Premier to look back at his excellent proposals in 2007 and to implement those proposals in 2011.

During the State election campaign the Liberal-Nationals Coalition promised to "introduce legislation to require approval of the Auditor-General for advertising campaigns". That statement is to be found on the website of the Liberal-Nationals Coalition, archived by the National Library of Australia in March 2011. While this bill allows for the Auditor-General to embark upon an annual audit of one or more government agencies, it does not require the Auditor-General to approve all advertising campaigns, as the Liberal-Nationals Coalition promised prior to the election. The Greens believe that the Auditor-General should be given the responsibility for the approval of any government advertising campaign.

We think that takes the head of government agencies out of the equation, it gets rid of any perception that there is ministerial control or discretion over that head of agency, and it complies with the intent of the Premier's 2007 bill. We think it is about good governance and we support the Premier's 2007 proposal. We recognise that the proposal by the Liberal-Nationals Coalition to "introduce legislation to require approval by the Auditor-General for advertising campaigns" is not fully satisfied by the 2011 bill. This bill will enable the Auditor-General to embark on the annual audit but it does not satisfy the requirement that was put forward strongly in the 2007 bill that the Auditor-General rather than a public servant was accountable to the Minister and he or she should follow through on these issues.

As a result The Greens will be introducing amendments to the legislation in the upper House. Our view, which was echoed by Premier O'Farrell in 2007, is that the Auditor-General should be required to review and approve any advertising campaign that spends over \$200,000. We should allow complaints to be lodged with the Auditor-General regarding an advertising campaign breaching the guidelines; we should give the Auditor-General responsibility for determining breaches of guidelines to the Act; and we should give the Auditor-General the power to carry out cost recovery. In conclusion, The Greens support this legislation. We recognise that this Government does not have a very high bar to get over.

Dr Geoff Lee: Sit down.

Mr JAMIE PARKER: I will now say some good things about Government members, so they should listen to my contribution. This Government does not have a very high bar to get over. The level of accountability and openness of the former Government was not that high, which means this Government, which has 69 members, has a fantastic opportunity to act in a statesmanlike way—in a way that demonstrates it has the integrity reflected in this legislation. It is important to reflect on the 2007 bill that was introduced by the Premier to see what we can do to implement a vital measure that will enhance our democracy and that we trust will reduce the abuse of government resources. I commend the bill to the house. However, I foreshadow that The Greens will be moving amendments in the upper House.

Mr CHRIS SPENCE (The Entrance) [1.18 p.m.]: I support the Government Advertising Bill 2011. I applaud the Premier for introducing this bill which is in line with the commitment of the Liberal-Nationals Coalition before the election to restore accountability, integrity and transparency to the government of New South Wales—something about which Opposition members would not know anything. After hearing that Labor intends to move amendments to this bill in the upper House, the only part of the bill to which they might want to move amendments would be the part that prohibits government advertising campaigns and other material that could influence support from a political party. It is the intention of Labor to move amendments to change that—to exempt the Labor Party so that it can continue to do what it has done for the past 16 years.

Mr Bryan Doyle: They won't be in power for a long time.

Mr CHRIS SPENCE: That is true; Opposition members will not be in power for a long time and they do not deserve to be in power. They deserve to be exactly where they are after the tsunami on 26 March. Advertising is a part of our everyday lives, be it radio, newspapers, television, billboards, magazines or the internet. But just as the companies or businesses that spend valuable dollars on advertising are held to account for every dollar they spend, so too should government be held accountable to the people of New South Wales for every dollar it spends on advertising. The taxpayers of New South Wales are sick and tired of political parties using government funds to promote themselves and their policies, as Labor did in New South Wales for the past 16 years. Let us look at Federal Labor's carbon tax and let us be honest: it is a carbon tax, not a carbon price. Recently full-page advertisements appeared in all our newspapers on the Central Coast. An advertisement in the Central Coast *Express Advocate* on 5 August 2011, headed "What a carbon tax will mean for you", stated:

A carbon price isn't a tax paid directly by householders or small businesses—it's a charge paid by only around 500 companies.

It goes on to state:

But we recognise they may pass some of these costs on.

What a joke. We are looking at a carbon tax on 500 companies that will be passed on to every taxpayer in this country, including New South Wales and my area of the Central Coast. This tax is absolutely absurd. Recently the three Labor members of Parliament on the Central Coast took out full-page advertisements in the Central Coast *Express Advocate*—again, paid for by taxpayers. I quote from the *Australian* on 29 July 2011:

Labor MPs are running advertising promoting the carbon tax using taxpayer dollars and blending their own spin with the federal government's supposedly non-political and non-partisan Clean Energy Future campaign.

Three MPs in Labor-held electorates on the NSW central coast feature in a four-page advertising lift-out in the Central Coast Express Advocate this week with their faces prominently displayed on the cover page alongside a map of Australia with the words, "Clean Energy Future".

It is four pages of garbage. The *Australian* continued:

Although the MP who authorised the advertisement, Craig Thomson, who holds the marginal seat of Dobell, claimed there was no use of the CEF logo, what appears is very close in theme; the government CEF website features as its logo a stylised map of Australia with the same words.

Also like the CEF website—the address of which is prominent on the front page of the ALP advertisement—it has a map of the world with the countries supposedly acting on climate change.

The advertisement uses lines of argument very similar to those on the CEF website, including dollar figures on "help for pensioners" and "investment in clean energy".

A spokeswoman for Coalition climate action spokesman Greg Hunt last night attacked the advertisement as a piggyback of the taxpayer-funded CEF campaign.

Mr Robert Furolo: Point of order: Standing Order 76 states, "The member speaking shall be relevant to the subject matter of the debate".

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! I believe the member for The Entrance is referring to advertising that was done in the last election, and is therefore being relevant.

Mr Robert Furolo: The member for The Entrance is referring to Federal advertising, which is not the subject of this debate; it is about State Government advertising.

Mr Andrew Cornwell: It's advertising. Sit down.

Mr Robert Furolo: It is quite outside the leave of the bill. Mr Acting-Speaker, I ask you to direct the member for The Entrance to return to the leave of the bill.

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

Mr CHRIS SPENCE: Certainly. This bill relates to government advertising and the Federal Labor Government is a government. The *Australian* continued:

"This just confirms that this \$25 million government advertising campaign is nothing more than a political stunt for local Labor MPs who know their communities don't want this carbon tax," she said.

Mr Thomson said he had thought up the idea in conjunction with fellow ALP central coast MPs Jill Hall and Deb O'Neill, and they had pooled some of their parliamentary printing and communications entitlements to pay for the advertisement.

Back on 4 December 2006, when the Iemma Government was in power, the *Daily Telegraph* stated:

The State Government is spending millions of dollars of taxpayers' money on political advertisements masquerading as community messages.

Voters are being bombarded with a television campaigning spruiking everything from nursing recruitment to roadworks safety and the State Plan.

The taxpayer-funded ads promote Labor by highlighting the Iemma Government's achievements.

What achievements? I do not know what those achievements were. The *Daily Telegraph* continued:

During Labor's 12-year reign, it has racked up \$1 billion on ads it claims are for the good of the community.

Mr Dominic Perrottet: How much?

Mr CHRIS SPENCE: One billion dollars. The *Daily Telegraph* also stated:

Almost \$20 million was spent in the first three months of this financial year and with four months until the election that figure is expected to triple.

And triple it probably did, because every time an election came up the State Labor Government went out and spent millions upon millions of taxpayer funds. In the 2007 election, government spending increased by

21 per cent compared with the year before. Coincidentally, government expenditure spiked every time an election was around the corner. The former Labor Government spent \$100 million a year on advertising over its 16 years in office. New South Wales became the seventh biggest advertiser in the country, with an annual advertising expenditure bigger than McDonald's and the Commonwealth Bank combined.

A classic example of Labor's spin over substance was in the financial year ending June 2010 when the Department of Premier and Cabinet spent \$398,282 advertising the Sydney International FIFA Fan Fest at Darling Harbour whilst spending only \$30,079 advertising its online Jobs Network. The Labor Party is meant to stand up for the workers, but members of the Labor Party go to the soccer more than they go to their own Jobs Network. Also, \$16.5 million was spent in government advertising of NSW Lotteries—curiously in the same year that NSW Lotteries was flogged off to Tatts Group Limited, perhaps sold in order to bolster funds ahead of an election.

Adding to the history of Labor's spin over substance, as part of the 2008 mini-budget, former New South Wales Treasurer Eric Roozendaal said that the Government would slash spending on government advertising by a quarter, saving \$31 million a year. The former New South Wales Labor Government never met that target and government advertising increased by 6 per cent to \$105 million in 2009-10—funnily enough, as another election approached. It is no wonder that the Hon. John Watkins and Anthony Chisholm, State Secretary of the Queensland branch of the Australian Labor Party, recommended ethics education for all Labor members of Parliament.

Advertising by governments and their agencies is essential when it is in the community's best interests. A great example of this can be found in the advertisements of the Roads and Traffic Authority relating to the wearing of seatbelts and its advice to people not to rush to get to a location under the guise of the old saying, "Better late than never." The Minister for Roads and Ports issued a media release congratulating the Roads and Traffic Authority on its "Don't Rush" campaign and announcing that the advertisements would be supplied to the Federation of Bosnia to help reduce its incidence of accidents and to increase the awareness of drivers to the need to wear seatbelts. In essence this is exactly what government advertising should be: informing the community about initiatives that benefit them, not initiatives that benefit governments or a political party.

Opposition leader John Robertson said that the Labor Party would never win another election unless he could rebuild the public's trust in the New South Wales Labor Party. Here is another opportunity for him to do so, but New South Wales Labor and John Robertson once again will fail by trying to move amendments to this bill. It is deplorable that the Australian Labor Party had 16 years to initiate legislation such as this and it did not bother. The Australian Labor Party never held itself to account over 16 years, but on 26 March this year the people of New South Wales held it to account. I commend the bill to the House.

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta) [1.27 p.m.]: I speak in debate on the Government Advertising Bill 2011 and commend the Premier for introducing this bill and for the Liberal-Nationals Government's commitment to the 100 Day Action Plan. The Premier is doing what he said he would do within a short time frame. By its very nature government advertising is contentious. As the member for The Entrance just said, what do we spend the money on? Is it value for money? Does it represent an open and transparent policy where we give the people of New South Wales good value for money?

Advertising is important because we need to advertise important safety education services and make public health announcements—the sorts of things that benefit the public. Advertising can be a cost-effective tool to disseminate information to many people. It is important to introduce legislation such as this because current guidelines are only an expression of policy. This legislation will enforce compliance with a range of measures but it will also introduce some new measures to enable the Government to review the procedures relating to advertising and ensure that everything is fair and in place. This bill will not stop the valuable dissemination of community information and education about services or public health announcements. Advertising is a valuable tool. Coming from a marketing background I am aware that advertising is a way to disseminate information and that it influences people.

Pursuant to standing and sessional orders business interrupted and set down as an order of the day for a later hour.

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

QUESTION TIME

[*Question time commenced at 2.20 p.m.*]

INFRASTRUCTURE NSW

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: I direct my question to the Premier.

[*Interruption*]

The Leader of the House lost his job yesterday. I do not know who will be next over there.

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind members that interjections are disorderly at all times. This is an atrocious start to question time. I was unable to hear the question asked by the Leader of the Opposition. I ask him to repeat it.

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: I have not yet asked it, Madam Speaker. In light of the Premier's pre-election commitment to remove political interests from infrastructure decisions, why has he allowed Infrastructure NSW directors Nick Greiner and Max Moore-Wilton to be used as Liberal Party fundraisers at a recent \$165 a-head dinner?

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: I again ask the Labor Party not to judge the Government by the lack of standards it set over the past 16 years. Only yesterday I had the opportunity to advise the House that those standards have continued to take a downward trend. At the Labor Party conference on 9 and 10 July the Labor party charged \$2,500 a head for people to meet shadow Ministers and to meet one-on-one with chiefs of staff and policy advisers—something that I never knew about under the former Government.

[*Interruption*]

No, I will not take it further. I made enough of it yesterday, but I thank the props offered by those on my front bench. The fact is that no matter what I do I cannot hide the fact that Nick Greiner is a member of the Liberal Party. After all, he is only one of three people to ever win government from Opposition on behalf of the Liberal Party. Modesty prevents me from saying who the third one was.

[*Interruption*]

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: The last time I looked at the rule book, I found that being a member of a political party is not illegal. As much as I sometimes think being a member of The Greens should be an offence, it is not. People over the age of 18, and younger if we are talking about the youth wing of a political party, will choose for themselves whether to join a political party. I expect the directors of Infrastructure NSW, whether they be public service directors such as the heads of Treasury or the Department of Infrastructure and Planning and so on or private sector directors, to focus fully on the task at hand, and that is overcoming the infrastructure backlog left to this Government by the members opposite, and I expect them to do that without regard to politics. I point out to members opposite that there would have been no need to establish Infrastructure NSW if it were not for their antics over the past 16 years. They announced project after project and released plan after plan with great fanfare for the media in time for every election.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order—

Mr Brad Hazzard: You don't like the answer.

Mr Michael Daley: The problem is that there has not been one.

The SPEAKER: Order! I would like to hear the point of order. The Leader of the House will come to order.

Mr Michael Daley: I refer to Standing Order 129. The Premier might not like the question, but he must answer it. It was very simple. He said he was going to remove political interests—

The SPEAKER: Order! I have heard the point of order and I understand it.

Mr Michael Daley: And now he has two members of the independent board tainted by attending a Liberal Party fundraiser.

The SPEAKER: Order! I understand the point of order. The member for Maroubra will resume his seat. The Premier has answered the question.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: I am glad you were paying attention, Madam Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Indeed I was. The Premier has the call.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: Members opposite announced plan after plan and made promise after promise, but what did New South Wales get? It got zip, nada, nothing. That is why this Government has inherited an infrastructure backlog. I will pick up on the point of order raised by the member for Maroubra. I said I would remove the politics from Infrastructure NSW. I invite members opposite to point to anything that Infrastructure NSW has recommended or produced to the Government that is like the Rozelle metro, which was formulated on the back of an envelope and for which taxpayers will continue to pay \$500 million but which will result in not one centimetre of track being laid. I will finish where I started: Members opposite should not judge the Government by their standards. As we saw yesterday, they have no ethics, no spine—

[Interruption]

It is fantastic to see the member for Kogarah back in the Chamber. I have been missing her. She can tell the students in the gallery how not to deal with the police. When the police ask them to do something, they should obey police instructions. They should not take their lead from the member for Kogarah.

Ms Linda Burney: Point of order: I would like the Premier to stop winking at me.

The SPEAKER: Order! That is not a point of order.

Ms Linda Burney: It is not very attractive.

The SPEAKER: Order! I cannot hear the point of order.

Ms Linda Burney: The problem is that they are still running the show, not you.

The SPEAKER: Order! That is not a point of order.

Mr Barry O'Farrell: To the point of order: If the member for Canterbury is offended by my eye, I withdraw. However, it has been a long time since I have winked at a woman other than my wife.

The SPEAKER: Order! Point taken. It is disorderly for people in the gallery to cheer, clap or make any noise in response to members' contributions.

BARANGAROO DEVELOPMENT

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: My question is directed to the Premier. What has been the response to the Government's review of the Barangaroo development?

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: That is a very good question from the member for Cronulla, who, like the member for Pittwater, is committed to open and transparent planning in this State. I point out to the students in the gallery that if the Speaker reminds them of someone, it is a teacher, because that is what she was before she was elected to Parliament. It is fair to say that the response to the Government's release of the review of Barangaroo, which has put the project back on track, has been positive. As I said yesterday, Barangaroo is a great project. It has the potential to be one of the great waterfront projects or redevelopments anywhere in the world. However, as the Sussex-Penn review found, it has been bedevilled, at the very least, by perceived conflicts of interest, it has lacked transparency and, as I said yesterday, it has led to a breakdown of trust with key groups such as the City of Sydney.

It comes as no surprise that the reaction to the review has been overwhelmingly positive. I have a statement from former Prime Minister Paul Keating and, no, it is not the one that mentions the Leader of the Opposition. It is unusually headed "Paul Keating congratulates O'Farrell Government on Barangaroo". It points out that Barangaroo is a once in 200-year opportunity to return the land on the western side of the Sydney central business district to the public. He applauds the recommendation to move the cruise ship terminal to White Bay and repeats his view that the proposed headland park will give Sydney two great public parks: the Botanic Gardens to the east and Barangaroo to the west. One group that was sidelined from Barangaroo by the former Labor Government was the City of Sydney, a key stakeholder in the project.

Ms Kristina Keneally: How can he welcome that?

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: Was that Banquo's ghost I could hear, Madam Speaker?

The SPEAKER: Order! No, it was the member for Heffron. I call the member for Wakehurst to order.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: So I was pleased to see the comment by the Lord Mayor that this was an opportunity to rebuild trust with the community. As the Lord Mayor said:

The City of Sydney has always supported this important development going ahead but we had very real concerns about consultation, communication and transparency—all issues this review confirmed as needing to be addressed.

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: The Lord Mayor went on to support our plans to put together an integrated transport plan for the site and to ask for a peer review of the contamination issue at Barangaroo. As the Lord Mayor said:

This will go a long way to restoring public confidence in the process.

The National Trust has applauded our pledge to create an inclusive Barangaroo planning process and supports our moves to relocate the hotel off the water. The review was also welcomed by business groups. The Sydney Business Chamber said the changes announced yesterday were a clear signal that Sydney is open for business again. Those responses sum up the feelings of those people who were sick of the delays, the arrogance and the infighting that occurred when Labor was running this project.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Heffron and the member for Wagga Wagga will come to order.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: Patricia Forsythe of the Sydney Business Chamber says:

It is now time to get on with the job of delivering the last major precinct of Sydney's CBD.

That is what we are going to do: get on with the job. The developer of the site, Lend Lease, said it was on track to begin work on the first commercial tower before the end of the year. In a sign of the goodwill that we are creating around the project, Lend Lease has indicated it will enter into talks with the Government on the relocation of the hotel.

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: The Managing Director of Lend Lease said:

We look forward to starting construction and continuing to work collaboratively with Government to deliver a great outcome for Sydney.

I even agree with the member for Heffron, who said the review found exactly what she expected. It found what I expected too: that, under Labor, the project was wracked with conflicts of interest, that stakeholders lost faith, and that planning approval for the hotel was at the very least questionable. We are going to restore confidence in the project. We are going to get Sydney moving again.

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: And we are going to do that with the support of the business community, the community at large and stakeholders like the City of Sydney, who under Labor and under the former Premier lost complete confidence in the way in which this significant \$6 billion project was being delivered for the population of this State.

RAIL PRIVATISATION

Ms SONIA HORNERY: My question is directed to the Minister for Transport. Given Infrastructure NSW Chief Executive Officer Paul Broad's preference for Jeff Kennett-style privatisation of rail services, will the Minister rule out privatising or outsourcing any part of New South Wales rail services?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: We have made our view on that issue very clear, and the short answer is yes. But I want to know why no-one on the Opposition frontbench dares to ask me a question about public transport. Labor ran the State for 16 years, and none of them have the guts to ask me a question about public transport. In fact, the member who asked the question was very dignified during a debate we had on public transport; it was about the Glendale interchange. She actually said on record that she accepts that the Labor Party lost its way on public transport. I commend her for that, because no-one else on that side of the House accepts what a mess they made of public transport. I do not want to bore the House by again going through Labor's record, but it promised 12 different rail lines. How many did it deliver? None of them. I have been through the list before, so I will not bore the House by doing that again. What I thought I would do instead is go through all the public transport plans they announced and never delivered. We had about a dozen of them over 16 years. Labor announced the Action for Transport Plan in November 1998. Did they ever deliver that plan? No.

Ms Carmel Tebbutt: Point of order: My point of order relates to relevance. The question was very specific. What we are hearing from the Minister is the same speech that we have heard about 10 times. I ask that the Minister be drawn back to the question.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister answered the question in the first three seconds of her response. The Minister is quite entitled to continue to speak.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I had answered the question. But I think it is important to highlight for the benefit of members of the public what a joke Labor members are when it comes to public transport. As I have said, Labor did not deliver its Action for Transport Plan. In September 1999 they announced the Action for Bikes Plan 2010. Did they deliver that plan? No.

Ms Cherie Burton: Point of order: The Minister said she had finished answering the question. Now she is just babbling on. If the Minister has answered the question, she should resume her seat and let us get on with question time.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister has answered the question, and is absolutely entitled to talk about relevant matters for the remainder of her response.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I have answered the question, but members' interjections gave me time to think about the Leader of the Opposition's wanting to privatise the prisons. Do members recall that? He sent a letter to the administrative committee of the Labor Party asking them to change their policy because he wanted to privatise prisons. So perhaps the member for Wallsend should direct a question to her leader and ask him what he thinks about privatisation. But I digress. We know Labor did not deliver the Action for Transport Plan 2010 and we know they did not deliver the Action for Bikes Plan 2010.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Did they deliver the Metropolitan Rail Expansion Program, which they announced in June 2005? No. Did they deliver the New South Wales Metropolitan Strategy, public transport aspect, which they re-announced in December 2005? No.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! This had better not be a spurious point of order. If it is the same point of order, I will not be amused. What is the member's point of order?

Mr Michael Daley: Speaker Murray ruled, as reported at page 5135 of *Parliamentary Debates*, that a Minister should not seek interjections. For a member to seek to do so was ruled disorderly by the former Speaker.

Mr Brad Hazzard: To the point of order: An Opposition member asked the question and wants an answer, and the member should have that answer now. Speaker Ellis, Speaker Rizzoli and other occupants of the Chair have ruled that a Minister can answer a question as the Minister sees fit. An Opposition member has asked the question, and Opposition members should listen to the answer.

The SPEAKER: Order! That is the way I have ruled. The Minister has the call.

Mrs Barbara Perry: Point of order: Madam Speaker, I did not hear your ruling. What was your ruling?

The SPEAKER: Order! My ruling was that I had previously ruled on that point, and that the Minister was entitled to continue her answer in any way she sees fit. The Minister has answered the question and is continuing to be relevant to the question asked.

Mrs Barbara Perry: I wish to raise a further point of order.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Madam Speaker, there is plenty more to go, but I will save it for another day.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is so much noise in the Chamber it is difficult for members to take a point of order or for members to hear me when I rule on a point of order. Members will pay attention to Ministers when they are answering questions, rather than jump up 10 seconds into a Minister's answer and suggest that the Minister is not answering the question, when in fact the Minister has answered the question.

Mr Andrew Fraser: Point of order: Madam Speaker, I wish to draw your attention to Standing Order 52, which provides that a Minister is entitled to respond without interruption. I put it to you, Madam Speaker, that the points of order coming from Opposition members at the moment are being taken to interrupt the Minister because Opposition members do not like the answer. Although the question was answered, interruptions are such that Ministers are invited to respond to them.

Mr Michael Daley: Madam Speaker—

The SPEAKER: Order! I will rule on the point of order. If I feel that points of order are becoming spurious, I will use my authority under the standing orders to stop the clock. I warn members of the Opposition that that would not set a good precedent. I warn them to be very careful when taking points of order. I will listen to all of them, and I will be fair, but they should not take spurious points of order.

Dr Andrew McDonald: Point of order: Standing Order 52 reads: "When a member is speaking other members shall not converse or make any noise or disturbance." Standing Order 52 is not about taking points of order.

The SPEAKER: Order! I have not read that standing order. Members will listen to the Minister in silence.

Mr Barry O'Farrell: To the point of order: Does Standing Order 52 include winking?

Mrs Barbara Perry: Further to the point of order: My point of order was not spurious. My point of order was in relation to what the member for Macquarie Fields said about previous rulings from the Chair as to interjections being encouraged by the Minister. I did not hear the Speaker's ruling. Is the Speaker going to change previous rulings in that regard?

The SPEAKER: Order! I will not change my ruling.

EDUCATION CURRICULUM

Mr JOHN WILLIAMS: My question is to the Minister for Education—I apologise for the short notice. What is the Government doing to ensure that New South Wales has a quality curriculum for kindergarten to year 10 students?

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI: I thank the member for his question. He is forgiven for the short notice. As the Minister for Education I recognise the students from Bomaderry, Albion Park, Kiama and Smiths Hill high schools, Marist College Kogarah and St Luke's Grammar School in the gallery today. I wish year 10 students all the best in the School Certificate examination this year. Those year 10 students have the dubious honour of being the last year 10 cohorts in New South Wales to sit that examination. That is another terrific reform by the O'Farrell Government to modernise the education system of this State. That brings me to the question of the member for Murray-Darling about the national curriculum. Earlier today I announced the postponement of the implementation of the national curriculum by the New South Wales Government until 2014.

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

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI: This is on the back of advice from the Board of Studies and after extensive consultation with stakeholders. Today I met with the New South Wales Public Education Alliance, which is made up of the NSW Teachers Federation, the NSW Federation of Parents and Citizens Associations, the NSW Primary Principals' Association, the NSW Secondary Principals' Council and the NSW Public School Principals Forum. I have met previously with the Association of Independent Schools, the Catholic Education Commission, the Independent Education Union and numerous other education stakeholders. They are almost unanimous in their desire to see the implementation of the national curriculum postponed in New South Wales. This Government remains committed to a national curriculum but wants it to be done properly. New South Wales has a world-class education system and a world-class curriculum. What replaces the existing New South Wales curriculum has to be at least as good as what is presently in place and the Government is not confident that what is currently on the table meets that very high standard.

The advice I received today from the Board of Studies was twofold. First, there are still content issues in the proposed national curriculum to be resolved—if all States agree, the curriculum is due to be signed off in October. Second, there is the implementation cost of the national curriculum around the professional development of our teachers. New South Wales has more than 100,000 teachers in both the public education system and the non-government system and those teachers need to be trained in the national curriculum. A document cannot be prepared and sent to those 100,000 teachers in the expectation that that will maintain the high standard of quality education we have come to expect in New South Wales. Teachers need to be trained and that training will cost a substantial amount of money.

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

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI: At the last ministerial council meeting I mounted a very strong argument to the Commonwealth and I asked it to make a contribution to that professional development. To this stage that request has gone unanswered. It is estimated it will cost in the vicinity of \$80 million for the implementation of the national curriculum.

[*Interruption*]

All those opposite do is to interject. They have no interest in quality education in New South Wales.

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

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI: Earlier today I was asked a question in a media conference about the Commonwealth Government's response and why this decision has been made. I was given advice from the Board of Studies today and the announcement has been made today. I made the point that the number one reason for the decision was to ensure that New South Wales students continue to have a first-class education system. Politics are an absolute distant last. Yes, there is a Federal Labor Government in Canberra and a Liberal-Nationals New South Wales State Government but that has nothing to do with it. We supported the comments made by the previous State Government when it said it would not support the national curriculum until the Board of Studies had approved it. The O'Farrell Government has taken the identical position. That is the announcement that has been made. The Board of Studies is a first-class organisation and it has given independent advice to this Government and to previous governments. Nothing improves student performance more than quality teachers. By arguing for the money the Government is supporting that— [*Time expired.*]

Mr Barry O'Farrell: You hate people talking about teachers, don't you?

Ms Linda Burney: Why do you pick on women? A little pattern is emerging here, Barry.

NORTH WEST RAIL LINK

Ms LINDA BURNEY: I direct my question to the Minister for Transport. In light of the Minister's recent statements in this House about the progress of the North West Rail Link, when can Infrastructure NSW expect to receive information on the route and costings?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Madam Speaker, I think the member for Canterbury has got me on this one. She has got me because I admit that the Government is getting on with the job of building the North West Rail Link and I do not apologise for that for one second.

Mrs Barbara Perry: Point of order: There is a ruling about addressing remarks through the Chair. I ask that the Minister be directed to address her remarks through the Chair.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will direct her comments through the Chair.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I do believe I said "Madam Speaker" before I commenced. The member opposite needs to listen a bit more carefully. As I said, those opposite have got me on this one. The Government is getting on with the job of building the North West Rail Link and we have made no secret of the fact that we are getting on with the job. I make no apologies for doing that. The Government is getting on with the job of building this vital rail link, which will transform the lives of the people of the north-west. I thank all members from the north-west for their representations on this issue. I am pleased to report that the Department of Transport and Infrastructure NSW have met a number of times over recent weeks. They met yesterday and will meet again today—

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: —and they will meet again many times in the future.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Call me old-fashioned but I am proud to be part of a government—

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: He is the only one who does not support this project. Get on board this train. Your campaign director supports this project.

[Interruption]

Call me old-fashioned but I am proud to be part of a government that is doing what it said it would do. I imagine it is not a notion that those on the other side are familiar with because they have never built anything. Labor members announced things and wasted money but never built anything because they did not know what was involved. I wear it as a badge of honour that the O'Farrell Government is powering ahead with building this 23-kilometre rail link in the north-west. I am delighted to have the opportunity to talk again about this project in the House. The Leader of the Opposition squirms when I talk about the project because we can revisit what his council said last month. The council unanimously voted to support the priority construction—these are the words his council used about the north-west rail line. One councillor sensible enough to recognise the importance of getting on with the job of delivering the rail link as quickly as possible is Councillor Stephen Barli, who is still well known to the Leader of the Opposition.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Councillor Barli, who was the campaign manager for the Leader of the Opposition for the March election, supports this rail line. The only person in New South Wales who does not support the rail line is the Leader of the Opposition.

Ms Linda Burney: Point of order: My point of order is relevance. When can Infrastructure NSW expect to receive information—

The SPEAKER: Order! I do not need the question repeated.

[*Interruption*]

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Canterbury will resume her seat. The answer is relevant. The Minister has the call.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I intended to talk more about the project, as I have done many times in the House, but the member's interjection has caused me to reflect on Labor's record. If members opposite continue to interject I will continue to refer to their record. Let me remind members that State Labor first promised the link in 1998 and said it would be built by 2010. That is what Labor promised.

[*Interruption*]

The member for Canterbury asked the question so members opposite should listen to the answer. In 2005 the Labor Government decided to delay the project. Then in February 2008 Labor axed it again but the next month decided the project was good after all. A few months later it was off again. If members opposite keep interjecting I will keep referring to Labor's record.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: The Government is getting on with the job. We are excited about this project. We have already called for tenders, and more than 700 people have visited the community information centre. [*Time expired.*]

CARBON TAX

Mr ANDREW GEE: My question is directed to the Deputy Premier, Minister for Trade and Investment, and Minister for Regional Infrastructure and Services. What is the New South Wales Government doing to protect the public from a carbon tax? Is the Deputy Premier aware of any other policy positions?

Mr ANDREW STONER: I thank the member for that good question. Once again I note that the heads of members opposite go down when this topic is raised. The New South Wales Government's position is crystal clear: with the recent global economic turmoil, the last thing this State needs is a carbon tax. We opposed the tax before the election, and we were elected with a bit of a mandate. Contrast that with members opposite. We cannot get a straight answer from the Leader of the Opposition. Thankfully, whenever he speaks, whether it is in shadow Cabinet or caucus, or to select groups, it always dribbles from those who want to take his job. I picked up today's *Daily Telegraph*—

Dr Andrew McDonald: Point of order: It is disorderly to wave newspapers and props around. I ask him to remove it from the table.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Deputy Premier is entitled to refer to a quote or from an article in the *Daily Telegraph*.

Mr John Robertson: Have you seen his prop?

The SPEAKER: Order! I have ruled on the point of order.

Mr ANDREW STONER: It is not a prop. I am simply referring to the *Daily Telegraph*, in which the Leader of the Opposition finally seemed to have something to say about the carbon tax. Of course, he made his comments to his shadow Cabinet and caucus behind closed doors. He said they will never publicly hear him—

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: Yesterday in question time there was a discussion about Standing Order 73. You invoked it on both sides of the House. I ask you to invoke it now.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Deputy Premier has the call. I remind him that personal attacks on members are not acceptable.

Mr ANDREW STONER: I was merely referring to an article in today's paper. We have been waiting for months, since 3 April, which was the last time the Leader of the Opposition said anything about the carbon tax—

Mr Richard Amery: The world is not flat.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Mount Druitt and the Leader of the House to order.

Mr ANDREW STONER: We have been waiting for the Leader of the Opposition to reveal his position, and an article in the *Daily Telegraph* basically states that he will not publicly support a carbon tax and Julia Gillard has completely mishandled the issue.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! I hope it is not a spurious point of order.

Mr Michael Daley: I believe you ruled on this course of discourse not more than 55 seconds ago.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Maroubra is correct. I remind the Deputy Premier to be mindful of my previous ruling.

Mr ANDREW STONER: Few issues are of more import to the economy and jobs in New South Wales, and the people of New South Wales want to know where one half of the equation in politics in New South Wales stands. Basically, the Leader of the Opposition told his shadow Cabinet and caucus that he supports the carbon tax but he will not do so publicly. I give him the opportunity now. Does the Leader of the Opposition support the carbon tax? He is shaking his head. Is that yes or no?

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: The Deputy Premier has flouted your ruling on two occasions. I believe you said not more than a minute ago that you were warning the Deputy Premier. How many warnings will you give the Deputy Premier?

The SPEAKER: Order! I warn the Deputy Premier that if he continues to flout my ruling I will ask him to resume his seat and I will move on to the next question.

Mr ANDREW STONER: There have been various positions on the Opposition benches. We want to know where Labor stands.

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

Mr ANDREW STONER: On 1 March the former Labor leader, the member for Heffron, told the *Australian* that she had no qualms about the carbon tax. The shadow Minister for the Environment and just about everybody else, including Luke Foley, also supports the carbon tax. Last week in this House we debated a motion to oppose the carbon tax. In that debate the member for Marrickville said that she supports the carbon tax. However, the member for Wollongong was missing in action. She did not turn up for the vote; nor did the member for Kogarah. We do not know whether she was abstaining or just being lazy, as usual.

NORTH WEST RAIL LINK

Mr RICHARD AMERY: My question is addressed to the Minister for Transport.

Mr Barry O'Farrell: Steam trains don't operate anymore.

Mr RICHARD AMERY: I now turn to the second part of the question. Has Infrastructure Australia still not received a submission on the North West Rail Link because the New South Wales Government has failed to come up with a route or detailed costings for the project?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I thank the member for his question, which provides me with an opportunity to continue my answer to a previous question.

Ms Linda Burney: You're not that good at it.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Members opposite have the hide to ask about transport plans and infrastructure programs. Earlier in response to a question on public transport I reminded the House that the Leader of the Opposition and other Labor members have written to me. Under Labor, 416 daily rail services and

1,500 weekly bus services were axed. Yet members opposite still write to me and put questions on notice about those matters. What is worse, the Labor Government announced plan after plan, submission after submission, and delivered nothing. Labor wasted millions of dollars—\$500 million on the Rozelle metro, \$100 million on the Tcard; the list goes on—and delivered nothing. As I outlined to the House in a previous answer, they failed to plan. The Action for Transport Plan 2010 never happened. The Action for Bikes Plan 2010 did not happen.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: The metropolitan railway commissions program did not happen. The New South Wales metropolitan strategy did not happen. The New South Wales State Plan in 2006, full of public transport priorities, did not happen. The State infrastructure strategy did not happen. The New South Wales State Plan 2009 did not happen. The metropolitan plan 2010 did not happen. I know that the previous government is very embarrassed about its record, as it should be, but we want to outline all we are doing in public transport.

Ms Anna Watson: Point of Order: The Minister doesn't understand the point.

The SPEAKER: Order! I have heard the point of order. The Minister is being relevant. I call the member for Shellharbour to order for the second time.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I was about to articulate all of our achievements and plans but because of the interjection I will refer to the fact that Labor was in Government for 16 years when Infrastructure Australia was doling out money for public transport in New South Wales, but how much did this State get? New South Wales got zero dollars for public transport. In fact the Labor Government did get money for a feasibility study for the North West Metro; it was about \$90 million, but it handed back about \$80 million because it did not have its plans in order. The previous Government was unable to secure \$1 of Federal funding for any projects in New South Wales and as a result this State has an infrastructure backlog because of Labor's incompetence.

I do want to use this opportunity to talk about the many things we are doing in public transport—things that Labor could never imagine doing. I am pleased to reiterate that we have established an integrated transport authority to make sure planning is done across all lines of public transport. As part of that we announced six new divisions, including a customer experience division. Can members believe that after 16 years of Labor there was no-one in public transport looking after the customer experience? Members opposite were so removed from public transport that they did not care what the community was doing. Not only have we announced our plans for an integrated transport authority; we have also announced that part of that will make sure our State has a comprehensive transport master plan.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: We will have a comprehensive plan to deliver the projects this State desperately needs. I am pleased to say that this Government will deliver where Labor failed. We will deliver 12 rail lines, the north west rail line and the south west rail line. We will make sure that bus, train and ferry service axed by Labor are reinstated. Labor members should hang their heads in shame when it comes to public transport. Members opposite can ask all the questions they like. They will get more of the answers they do not want to hear.

CARBON TAX

Mr CHRIS SPENCE: My question is directed to the Minister for Resources and Energy, Special Minister of State and the Minister for the Central Coast. What is the latest information available on the impact of the carbon tax and the Leader of the Opposition's silence on this issue?

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: I draw your attention to a ruling of the past Chair which you will find on page 327 of the consolidated rulings. The ruling says the Premier is not responsible for actions of the Leader of the Opposition. Questions dealing with or concerning him are out of order. In accordance with that ruling I ask you to rule at least as much of that part of the question that contravenes the standing order out of order.

Mr CHRIS HARTCHER: That is not a point of order. What he is pointing to is a ruling, and rulings come and go depending on how good the Speaker is.

The SPEAKER: Order! Points of order relating to questions are dealt with generally in standing order 128. I will allow the question because it absolutely falls within standing order 128.

Mr CHRIS HARTCHER: This is a great question. First, I thank the member for The Entrance for his outstanding contribution to the Central Coast and the electorate of The Entrance. I congratulate him on his 17.4 per cent swing on 26 March, a brilliant result, because the Labor supporters tried their best to stop it and they failed. It is also a good question because I can talk about the Leader of the Opposition and his silence on this issue. Last Friday the Leader of the Opposition stated that he was opposed to the carbon tax. On Monday at the caucus meeting he said that he would not go out publicly and support the carbon tax. That was reported in that excellent paper the *Daily Telegraph* last night and last night it was online. Was there a response from the Leader of the Opposition? No. This morning the *Daily Telegraph* appeared. Was there a response? No.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: You sat the Deputy Premier down earlier today for doing exactly that which the Minister is doing right now. For consistency's sake I ask you to sit him down as well.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will return to the leave of the question. I will have no hesitation in sitting him down if he does not do so.

Mr CHRIS HARTCHER: I appreciate that but the question was about the Leader of the Opposition's silence.

The SPEAKER: Order! The question related to the impacts of the carbon tax.

Mr CHRIS HARTCHER: Thank you to the member for Maroubra. What was your margin? About 1 per cent or close thereto? So this morning there was nothing on the radio but at lunch time the Leader of the Opposition—

[*Interruption*]

The SPEAKER: Order! I will not tolerate this behaviour.

Mr Michael Daley: No. You ruled in my favour. Just tell me this is the last time you are going to tolerate ruling in my favour, is that correct?

The SPEAKER: Order! I am continuing to listen and I have warned the Minister for a second time about answering the question. I will decide whether to sit him down, not the member for Maroubra.

Mr Michael Daley: He continues to breach the standing orders.

Mr CHRIS HARTCHER: I am answering the question, which is about the Leader of the Opposition's response. The Leader of the Opposition gave a press conference at Wynyard station to talk about trains. So he has had all night and all morning but he has nothing to say. They had to chase him down to Wynyard station to get a response on the carbon price. He scurried. With due respect to members of the press gallery, just as we see on the 6.30 reports the media running down the corridors with the television cameras trying to get a story, that was the Leader of the Opposition doging and avoiding any commitment about the carbon tax. Only one member can hold her head high and that is the member for Wollongong. Let us hear it for the member for Wollongong. She stood up for the steelworkers and the people of Wollongong, yet the former head of Unions New South Wales has nothing to say about 31,000 thousand jobs—

Mr RICHARD AMERY (Mount Druitt) [3.09 p.m.]: I move:

That the Minister for Resources and Energy, Special Minister of State, and Minister for the Central Coast be not further heard.

Question put.

The House divided.

Ayes, 19

Mr Barr
Ms Burney
Ms Burton
Mr Daley
Mr Furolo
Ms Hay
Ms Hornery

Ms Keneally
Mr Lalich
Mr Lynch
Dr McDonald
Ms Mihailuk
Mrs Perry
Mr Rees

Mr Robertson
Ms Tebbutt
Ms Watson
Tellers,
Mr Amery
Mr Park

Noes, 72

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

Question resolved in the negative.

Motion that the member be not further heard negated.

[*Business interrupted.*]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders: Members' Speaking Time

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Infrastructure NSW) [3.16 p.m.]: I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to permit the speaking time of the member for Terrigal to be extended by an additional five minutes.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) [3.16 p.m.]: Consider the absurdity of this motion.

Mr Brad Hazzard: Madam Speaker, I ask that you put the question. This is not a standing order.

The SPEAKER: Order! Unfortunately it is not debatable.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: I am allowed to speak to the motion.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member may speak for five minutes. Members will come to order.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: Madam Speaker, yesterday, by way of points of order and several contributions of yours not prompted by points of order, a considered discourse occurred relating to Standing Order 73. You reminded the House that personal reflections, whether they are inherent in the body of a question or in the answer of a Minister, are out of order. I took that very point of order on a number of occasions today. On each occasion you upheld my point of order.

[*Interruption*]

The SPEAKER: I am listening to the argument and debate, but I warn the shadow Leader of the House that he should speak to the motion to suspend standing and sessional orders. Members will come to order.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: I am, Madam Speaker, the Minister flouted your ruling on a number of occasions. You acknowledged that and warned him. This motion has been moved, first, to reward the Minister for flouting your ruling; and, secondly, to extend his time to flout your ruling further. That is an absurdity. All members of the Opposition are asking for is a modicum of impartiality from you.

Mr Brad Hazzard: Point of order: The member for Maroubra doth protest too much. He has the most to win by taking the current Leader of the Opposition's job. Essentially he is putting that argument.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the House will resume his seat.

Mr Brad Hazzard: He has not cited a standing order. I ask you to put the motion to the House.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Maroubra has a further two minutes and 37 seconds, if he wishes to use it.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: I have concluded my remarks.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Infrastructure NSW) [3.19 p.m.], in reply: The Government is entitled to move to suspend standing and sessional orders at any point.

The SPEAKER: That is correct.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: Clearly, the member for Maroubra has the most to win from this. This is about highlighting. He thinks it is about hiding what he said in his party room. He has made sure that it has been highlighted. The world now knows that the member for Maroubra is duplicitous: he will say one thing inside and another thing outside.

Ms Cherie Burton: Point of order: That is completely irrelevant to the suspension motion. It has nothing to do with it at all.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will return to the leave of the motion to suspend standing and sessional orders.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: I simply ask that the motion be put.

Question—That the motion be agreed to—put.

The House divided.

Ayes, 68

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

Noes, 22

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

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Motion agreed to.

QUESTION TIME**CARBON TAX**

[Business resumed.]

The SPEAKER: Order! I ask the member for The Entrance to read the question again.

Mr CHRIS SPENCE: My question is directed to the Minister for Resources and Energy. What is the latest information available on the impact of the carbon tax and the silence of the Leader of the Opposition on the issue?

Mr CHRIS HARTCHER: I thank the House for its confidence in me, and I especially thank my good friend the member for Sydney. The first part of the question from the member for The Entrance relates to the impact of the carbon tax on electricity prices. I have dealt with the second part of the question, which relates to the silence of the Leader of the Opposition on this issue. I think his silence speaks volumes about him. I have referred to that, and will not traverse it any more. I point out that 3.2 million people hold electricity accounts in New South Wales, and overwhelmingly they will be massively disadvantaged by the carbon tax. Not only has the price of electricity increased by 60 per cent in the past five years under Labor but consumers faced a 17.3 per cent increase on 1 July.

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

Mr CHRIS HARTCHER: They will face a further 15 per cent increase on 1 July 2012. If the Leader of the Opposition interjects again, I will resume talking about him—and he will not enjoy the experience.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will return to the leave of the question and ignore the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr CHRIS HARTCHER: He will not enjoy the experience because he hides. He is a coward who hides. He hides in the corner.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will return to the leave of the question on the impact of the carbon tax.

Mr CHRIS HARTCHER: The Leader of the Opposition hides from the media. He should come out and speak, not hide. There has been a 60 per cent increase in the past five years; there was a 17.3 per cent increase on 1 July, then 10 per cent and another 10 per cent and now, because of the carbon price, there will be a further 15 per cent increase next year. That represents an annual increase of \$225 in the average electricity bill in New South Wales, and that is in addition to all the other increases that I have outlined to the House. What is the Opposition's response? It is dead silence, because members opposite are not prepared to stand up for 3.2 million consumers.

Just as significantly, the carbon price adjustments much touted by the Federal Government do not address the impact of the carbon price on small business. Tens of thousands of small business operators will not

be eligible for any assistance under the Federal scheme. A small business operator in the electorate of The Entrance told me that his electricity bill was \$8,000 a year four years ago but it is now \$8,000 a quarter. Every member of this House has a responsibility to stand up for the long-suffering people of this State. To have the member for Auburn interject when her electorate is one of the most socioeconomically disadvantaged areas of the State and she is not prepared to stand up for those who will bear the brunt of this tax—

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

Mr CHRIS HARTCHER: That speaks volumes about her.

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

Mr CHRIS HARTCHER: The New South Wales Government remains committed to the underlying concept of renewable energy. However, it supports renewable energy programs that do not disadvantage electricity consumers. The carbon price massively disadvantages electricity consumers.

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

Mr CHRIS HARTCHER: The New South Wales Government has invested \$120 million in the solar farm project in Moree under the direction of the Minister for the Environment. The Government has also instituted programs through the reliability taskforce and the merger taskforce to address the issue of spiralling electricity prices in this State. I look forward to advising the House when the taskforce reports are available so that members can tell their constituents what the O'Farrell Government is doing to address the ongoing electricity price spiral. [*Time expired.*]

INNER WEST LIGHT RAIL EXTENSION

Mr JAMIE PARKER: My question is directed to the Minister for Transport. Given that the GreenWay Project is an important cycle-pedestrian-transport link in the new light rail extension project, will the Minister clarify whether funding will be allocated in the budget to build the link through the Dulwich Hill corridor and whether the work will be completed prior to the opening of the light rail extension?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I thank the member for his question and commend him for his constructive interest in public transport. Active transport is a critical component of any serious attempt to get people out of their cars. I know there is a lot of interest in the inner west light rail extension and in the proposed GreenWay projects. I have spent a lot of time in the past few weeks meeting people who have an interest in or concern about aspects of those projects. Key to their success, and the success of every other transport project, is, of course, integration. Integration is the driving force behind this Government's work with light rail and all other projects. The Labor Government admitted that it opposed light rail and for a long time members on this side of the House were the only people calling for improvements to, and expansion of, light rail.

As happened with so many of their public transport plans, members opposite approached light rail in a piecemeal fashion and more often than not the left hand did not know what the right hand was doing. In fact, the former Minister for Transport, John Watkins, said in 2008 that his Government was absolutely against light rail. In contrast, this Government is getting on with the job of extending the light rail in the inner west. I assure the member for Balmain that the O'Farrell Government will build the light rail extension to the inner west and deliver an integrated active transport strategy. I note that just last night in this place the member for Marrickville said that the inner west light rail extension will improve transport access and provide important cross-connectivity in the inner west. Indeed, it will. However, members opposite failed to deliver it during their 16 years in government.

The former Deputy Premier could not deliver it even in her own electorate. The O'Farrell Government will deliver what she and her colleagues failed to deliver. I give the member for Balmain my assurance that it will happen. To demonstrate this Government's commitment to light rail, I point out that it has integrated light rail into the ticketing system within 100 days of coming to office. The former Government failed to do that over 16 years. When the Leader of the Opposition was Minister for Transport he did not even bother to examine that issue. This Government has also established a light rail project team to conduct a feasibility study into further extensions to the network in the central business district, the University of New South Wales and the University of Sydney.

Returning to the question from the member for Balmain, as I said, the Government has received extensive feedback from the community about the inner west light rail and GreenWay projects, and this is welcomed. I have asked the light rail project team to ensure that it takes that feedback into account. The former Labor Government did not plan anything properly, including active transport. The light rail project team is examining the best way to deliver the inner west light rail extension. I look forward to the completion of its work, and I will advise the House when that happens. Like much of Labor's work in the Transport portfolio, its planning for active transport, such as cycling, was woeful. There was no leadership from Labor with regard to cycleways and pedestrian links. The vacuum created by Labor's lack of leadership forced councils to pursue their own plans for active transport and that resulted in many gaps in those vital links.

The Labor Government loved talking about integrating active transport into the wider transport network, but did nothing about it. Transport for NSW—the new integrated transport authority—will guide this Government's approach to active transport. Unlike Labor, this Government will ensure that active transport forms part of its future transport plans; it will not be a last-minute thought bubble. That is how members opposite operated when they were in government. Transport for NSW will be developing a transport master plan, and active transport will form part of that plan. I look forward to working with the member for Balmain and with local councils—including the City of Sydney—to deliver the best integrated transport solutions for the inner west, including light rail and active transport.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Mr STUART AYRES: My question is directed to the Minister for Family and Community Services, and Minister for Women. What is the Government doing to help people suffering from domestic violence in western Sydney?

Ms PRU GOWARD: I thank the member for his question and commend him for his ongoing interest and strong advocacy in this area. He knows how serious this issue is, particularly in his electorate. The Penrith electorate experienced almost 1,000 domestic violence related assaults last year, which is a 13.9 per cent increase on the previous year. Whatever the reason for that increase, it highlights the need for ongoing domestic violence support services and for change. The former Government's response to such domestic violence statistics was to use bandaid solutions and to provide one-offs grants for services to run for one or two years with a so-called exit strategy—which, as members on this side of the House know, is often unrealistic or unachievable.

Extraordinarily, given that the Penrith local area command is in the fortieth percentile for domestic violence in the State, the former Government failed to provide funding for an ongoing service to link police and domestic violence services. That was not unusual for the former Government, which is why members opposite were booted out of government in March. The welfare service sector was subjected to myriad one-off projects established in marginal seats a year before an election that subsequently disappeared—a bit like Labor premiers. The Labor Government failed time and again in the welfare sector. It is interesting that members opposite object to that statement because I am not the only member who has made that point about the Labor Government's failures.

At least one member opposite agrees, and I refer to the Leader of the Opposition. He told the recent New South Wales Labor Party conference that he was horrified at the number of times that the Labor Government had let down the people of New South Wales. He was 110 per cent right: the Labor Government did let down the people of New South Wales. He might be slow on the uptake, but he has finally got with the program and is horrified. In contrast, the O'Farrell-Stoner Government is committed not only to working closely with the non-government sector in delivering services to those affected by domestic and family violence but also to working to a plan.

Ms Linda Burney: That is not what they are saying.

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

Ms PRU GOWARD: The Government is working to a plan in which one-off pilots are no longer the solution. They never were. We must ensure that more dollars go directly to assisting women and children to live their lives free of violence, and for that reason I have requested a review of the \$2.9 million Domestic and Family Violence Grants program to ensure that funding is provided to areas of greatest need and actually makes a difference. The vulnerable families of this State—as we on this side know, and this is why we were voted in—

need and deserve a stable and planned system of support that they can trust and can rely upon in times of need. The current grants program is an example of a very bad bandaid approach by the Labor Government; it was short-term funding thrown at services, with a washing of its hands when those services were forced to close.

The Bridges project in Penrith is a typical example of the former Government's failure to finance the service in a sustainable way, in a local area command with a significant domestic violence problem. The people of western Sydney knew that, and that is why we now have strong local advocates for western Sydney, such as the member for Penrith. The member for Penrith led the charge on ensuring that a great local service like Bridges continues to operate to help women and children affected by domestic violence, and I commend him for bringing this local service to my attention and for continuing to advocate. I am delighted to advise the member that the O'Farrell-Stoner Government will now provide not one-off, once-a-year funding but \$400,000 in funding over four years to continue that service and to provide it with the certainty that the people of western Sydney need.

The Bridges project provides services to women in that area who have contacted the police about a domestic and family violence incident. It enables police officers to connect women who have experienced domestic violence with experts who can provide emotional support, safety advice and court proceedings. These women are often under an incredible amount of stress, and this project gives them access to decent options. The New South Wales Government recognises the importance of stable local services delivered by committed non-government organisations, and I look forward to updating the House on the outcome of the review of the domestic violence program in the coming months.

Question time concluded at 3.43 p.m.

POLICE FIREARMS INSPECTION AND DAVID BARNETT

Personal Explanation

Ms PRU GOWARD: I inform the House that local police carried out an inspection of our family farm at Yass with my husband, David Barnett. My husband has a firearms licence and registered firearms. Although locked, his gun safe contained a loaded rifle and also housed live ammunition. It is a requirement that citizens store unloaded weapons in locked gun safes and that live ammunition is stored in separated locked safes. My husband is, of course, cooperating fully with the police, and I do not intend to comment further on this matter.

LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

Report

Mr Stephen Bromhead, as Chair, tabled Legislation Review Digest No. 1/55, dated 9 August 2011.

Ordered to be printed on motion by Mr Stephen Bromhead.

PETITIONS

The Deputy 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**.

Walsh Bay Precinct Public Transport

Petition requesting improved bus services for the Walsh Bay precinct, and ferry services for the new wharf at pier 2/3, received from **Ms Clover Moore**.

Pet Shops

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

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

Russell Vale Coalmining

Petition opposing coalmining operations at No. 1 Colliery, Russell Vale, received from **Mr Jamie Parker**.

CONSIDERATION OF MOTIONS TO BE ACCORDED PRIORITY

Carbon Tax

Mr CRAIG BAUMANN (Port Stephens—Parliamentary Secretary) [3.42 p.m.]: My motion regarding the cost of the Gillard Government's carbon tax should be accorded priority because the people of New South Wales must know where the New South Wales Labor Opposition and the Leader of the Opposition stand on the Gillard Government's carbon tax. The Liberal-Nationals Government strongly opposes the carbon tax. We on this side of the House care about the workers of New South Wales. We care about their jobs and we care about their families.

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

Mr CRAIG BAUMANN: The New South Wales Treasury has found that the Federal Labor Government's carbon tax will cost New South Wales at least 31,000 jobs and slug the State's economy around \$3.7 billion annually. Of those 31,000 job losses, around 18,500 will be job losses in the Hunter region. That means 18,500 families will be without a breadwinner and dependent on social services—18,500 workers who want nothing more than the satisfaction of going to work and supporting their families. The Federal Labor Government's carbon tax will also increase the cost of electricity for households by around \$500 a year. Businesses will pay between \$1,000 and \$4,000 a year, depending on their usage, and those costs will be passed on to their customers. In the last four days we have seen the United States of America's credit rating drop from triple-A to double-A+ for the first time ever. We have seen the Australian dollar drop 10¢ against the United States dollar. We have seen record falls in stock markets around the world.

If there were one motion that deserved priority in this place, this is it. The people of New South Wales must be told where the Leader of the Opposition stands on this disastrous carbon tax. If he is in favour of the Gillard carbon tax, he should tell us now. If he is against the Gillard carbon tax, he should come clean with the people of New South Wales and tell the Prime Minister to drop her plans. I was always led to believe that the job of the Opposition in the Westminster system was to keep the Government accountable for its actions. The Leader of the Opposition and his Opposition colleagues cannot be effective unless they stand for something. Economic forecasters are talking about the possibility of another global financial crisis. Investors are bunkering down and shedding stocks, reducing the book values of many fine and profitable Australian companies.

Falling company values lead to job shedding and reduced capital investment, and that puts downward pressure on their goods and on service suppliers. The silence of the Leader of the Opposition on the Gillard Government's desperate bid to find an alternative form of taxation is eroding business confidence; businesses that are not confident of some economic reliability in the future do not spend, and they do not employ. I am proud to have Tomago aluminium as a corporate citizen in my electorate. If a carbon tax is imposed, high energy users, such as aluminium smelters, will have to decide questions such as: Do we stay in Australia and struggle to survive, or do we go offshore to a country that does not have a carbon tax? The Leader of the Opposition has quite a reputation. He single-handedly brought down Morris Iemma, leading to the oh so very successful Rees and Keneally governments, which contributed to the lousy state of the Opposition benches now.

Mr John Robertson: I did do John Howard though.

Mr CRAIG BAUMANN: You masterminded the solar rebate, and we all know what a disaster that was. The Leader of the Opposition could try to balance the ledger by simply coming clean and admitting that he does not support the Gillard carbon tax. He should come clean here and now, so that we as a Parliament can try to head off an economic disaster for this great country.

Infrastructure NSW

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON (Blacktown—Leader of the Opposition) [3.47 p.m.]: My motion regarding restoration of integrity to Infrastructure NSW deserves priority. The Premier created Infrastructure NSW with

great fanfare. He piously promised to remove political interests from infrastructure decisions, and then appointed his mate Nick Greiner as head of the board of that organisation. So what do we learn today? Barely three months on, the relationship between the Government and Infrastructure NSW has hit the rocks; Infrastructure NSW has no clue what this Government is up to in terms of the North West Rail Link.

On the one hand, we have the Minister for Transport out on the town, keeping up a slick front. She pumps out press releases, appears in promo shops, and makes announcements about how the project is going according to plan. Yet behind the dazzle, nothing is happening. When it comes to the North West Rail Link the Minister has no idea of the route, no idea of the cost, and no time line for delivery. She is just like Sybil Fawty, assuring guests in the dining room that the meal they ordered is under control when back in the kitchen there is pandemonium and everyone is whacking each other over the head with pots and pans.

The SPEAKER: Order! I warn the Leader of the Opposition not to make comments similar to those made earlier this afternoon by Opposition members about other members.

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: Listen to the comments from the unhappy source from Infrastructure NSW, which appeared in the paper today—

Mr Brad Hazzard: Point of order: The terms of the motion are quite narrow—they may even offend the rule against anticipation. The motion calls on the Government to restore the integrity of its newly formed Infrastructure NSW. The motion makes no reference to the Minister for Transport. Avenues are available to the Leader of the Opposition to make a substantive attack on the Minister for Transport if he so desires, but it is not appropriate to do so now.

The SPEAKER: Order! I have warned the Leader of the Opposition that he should not make personal comments or cast personal reflections on the Minister. I again give the Leader of the Opposition that warning. The Leader of the Opposition has the call.

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: Listen to the comments from the unhappy source from Infrastructure NSW, which appeared in the paper today. A quote from someone who obviously did not get the memo, someone, unlike Nick Greiner, who actually wants to get on with the real work, said:

They have got all these bloody press conferences on the link [yet] we don't know yet whether this is [going to cost] \$12 billion, \$8 billion or \$10 billion.

That is a quote from someone slamming the Government for its disorganised and woeful project planning. This matter deserves priority because the Government is treating Infrastructure NSW like a joke and as little more than a front for Liberal Party fundraising. Nick Greiner and Max Moore-Wilton are headlining dinners to rake in big bucks from construction companies. The Government thinks so little of Infrastructure NSW that it did not bother to put a representative on the board from Transport New South Wales. The Premier, like a modern-day Mussolini, has already decreed that he will determine how Sydney's trains run.

Mr Brad Hazzard: Point of order: I am not sure whether the comment by the Leader of the Opposition reflects more on him than anybody else, but I ask him to withdraw it.

The SPEAKER: Order! I did not hear the comment. I was having a discussion with the Deputy-Speaker.

Mr Brad Hazzard: The Leader of the Opposition made reference to Mussolini. He should withdraw his comment about the Premier in that regard. The Leader of the Opposition can have a fair go, but he should withdraw this silly attack, apologise and get on with his motion.

The SPEAKER: Order! Does the Leader of the Opposition wish to withdraw the comment?

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: No, not particularly.

The SPEAKER: Order! It is your choice. The Leader of the Opposition has the call.

Mr Brad Hazzard: Is that a withdrawal?

The SPEAKER: Order! I cannot make the Leader of the Opposition withdraw a comment. I have asked him if he wanted to withdraw it and he has chosen not to.

Mr Brad Hazzard: The Leader of the Opposition referred to the Premier as a "modern-day Mussolini". If he does not remember what he said two seconds ago, he probably does not remember what he said in his party room this morning or even yesterday. The Leader of the Opposition should withdraw the comment and apologise.

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: My understanding was that Madam Chair asked me if I wished to withdraw the comment and I said no.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition is correct. He does not wish to withdraw his comment.

Mr Brad Hazzard: I ask Madam Speaker to direct the Leader of the Opposition to withdraw his comment as unparliamentary.

The SPEAKER: Order! I do not have the power to direct the Leader of the Opposition to withdraw his comment; I can only ask him to withdraw it.

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: It is time the Government faced the hard questions about how it will deliver the North West Rail Link. How will Sydney's congested network handle all these extra trains— [*Time expired.*]

Question—That the motion of the member for Port Stephens be accorded priority—put.

The House divided.

Ayes, 65

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

Noes, 22

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

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Motion agreed to.

CARBON TAX

Motion Accorded Priority

Mr CRAIG BAUMANN (Port Stephens—Parliamentary Secretary) [4.04 p.m.]: I move:

That this House:

- (1) notes the Federal Government's carbon tax will cost New South Wales 31,000 jobs;
- (2) notes the Leader of the Opposition is yet to publicly state New South Wales Labor's position on the carbon tax; and
- (3) calls on the Leader of the Opposition to find the courage to repeat in public what he says behind closed doors in his shadow Cabinet.

In explaining why this motion should be accorded priority, I detailed the effect that the Leader of the Opposition's silence or lack of interest in the Federal Government's carbon tax would have on the economy and the people of New South Wales. The Leader of the Opposition's comments on this issue add to people's confusion about what he and New South Wales Labor stand for. The November 2006 issue of *Workers Online* featured an article entitled "Robbo Goes Green: John Robertson's speech to the Walk Against Warming".

The speech followed the predictable barrel-thumping trade union leader line for a few pages, but in summary it calls on government to "place a price on carbon emissions and drive innovation and efficiencies that will create new jobs and build on the economy, not harm it". That sounds to me like support for a carbon tax. On 24 March last year, when the Leader of the Opposition was the Minister for Energy—the portfolio in which he orchestrated the disastrous solar bonus scheme—he is quoted in the *Australian Financial Review* as telling a Committee for Economic Development Australia lunch:

I think there's a general view that everybody wants some certainty around the price of carbon. And certainly from where I sit, looking at gas as a transitory fuel, we need a price on carbon to make gas competitive. At the moment with no price on carbon it just doesn't compete with coal.

That is what the Leader of the Opposition said in March last year. On 3 April this year, only a few days after his carefully orchestrated March State election defeat, in an interview with the *Insiders'* Barrie Cassidy, when asked about a carbon tax he replied:

Well, I think that the first point to make very quickly is that last Saturday's result was not a result of that. I support the scientific view that climate change is real. I want to get more information from the Prime Minister on the detail of the compensation package before I arrive at a position."

He further said:

The critical thing is the full package. I want to see the detail of the full package, including the compensation, because so far what I've heard is that people will be compensated. I will obviously as leader seek a detailed briefing from the Commonwealth.

Has the Leader of the Opposition had his detailed briefing? If not, why not? If so, where does he sit? Let us fast forward to this morning. I take the opportunity to quote Andrew Clennell, the much-respected State political editor of the *Daily Telegraph*. The article states:

Opposition Leader John Robert told colleagues yesterday they will never hear him publicly support a carbon tax and that Prime Minister Julia Gillard had completely mishandled the issue.

The comments were made in shadow cabinet and caucus yesterday, Labor sources said, and are seen as a clear move away from the line taken by former premier Kristina Keneally at the last election when she supported the tax.

Mr Robertson's comments also come after Labor MPs Noreen Hay and Cherie Burton refused to show up for a vote in support of the tax in state parliament last week.

Ms Hay, the MLA for Wollongong, was said to be concerned about the future of steelworkers in her electorate.

"He (Mr Robertson) said 'it's like Barry O'Farrell when Workchoices was happening. O'Farrell made sure he never publicly supported it,' an MP said. "He said, 'just like that you'll never hear me say I support a carbon tax' ... 'the whole thing's been mishandled by the federal government.

"They did it five weeks before the (state) election. That wasn't helpful'."

Ms Hay's move came a week after Premier Barry O'Farrell released NSW Treasury advice saying 31,000 jobs could go over the tax.

A spokeswoman for Mr Robertson said last night he would never publicly discuss shadow cabinet or caucus discussions.

It is a simple question and it deserves an answer. Did we get an answer today on Radio 2UE news at 1.00 p.m. when the Leader of the Opposition said, "I support the position that the Prime Minister is out there advocating, and that is putting a position on carbon"—I assume that in this case "position" is a euphemism for "tax"—"A significant economic reform that we are seeing being put in place by this Federal Government."? He got that right. That significant reform will be disastrous for New South Wales families. We are talking about 31,000 unemployed, including 18,500 in the Hunter.

Mr Clayton Barr: Point of order: The member for Port Stephens is clearly misleading the House when he speaks of 18,500 jobs.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! There is no point of order. The member for Port Stephens has the call.

Mr CRAIG BAUMANN: Just so the member for Cessnock realises there will be 31,000 job losses, around 18,500 job losses in the Hunter region. I would point out that Cessnock is part of the Hunter region. That means a good many of his families were—

Mr Clayton Barr: The goannas will not like it. The mine workers will love the carbon tax.

Mr Craig Baumann: There are many mine workers and they will suffer a great deal. The member for Cessnock also has an aluminium smelter in his electorate. I believe he did not impress too many of the workers from there before the last election. Aluminium smelting multinationals are very price sensitive especially to electricity, their major input, and there is nothing to stop them moving overseas as soon as the carbon tax bites. This is a very important issue. We need this Parliament to tell the Prime Minister that now is not the time to even think about instituting a carbon tax.

Ms CARMEL TEBBUTT (Marrickville) [4.11 p.m.]: Surprise, surprise! I speak once again to oppose the motion accorded priority that has been moved by the Coalition. But what do we see? We see yet another day and yet another motion on the carbon tax. I have to say that for a bunch of people who say that they are opposed to a carbon tax they sure like to spend a lot of time talking about it. They sure like to waste a lot of the time of this House talking about it because the reality is this is I think the sixth time that we have debated this issue. I do want to go through some of the claims that are made in this motion. First and foremost it needs to be said that just because the Coalition asserts a position, no matter how many times they assert it, that does not make it so. The Leader of the Opposition has made it very clear that he supports the Prime Minister and he supports her Government's action in putting a price on carbon.

The Leader of the Opposition has made it very clear and he has also said that he is pleased to see that we have a Federal Government that is finally willing to take action on climate change. He is pleased to see we have a Prime Minister who is willing to put in place these important economic reforms because she understands and the Leader of the Opposition understands and we on the this side of the House understand that climate change is an issue that needs addressing and the most sensible, most economic way to address climate change is to put a price on carbon and the Leader of the Opposition has been absolutely clear about that. He said it months ago, he said it last week, he said it yet again today because as a former Minister for environment and climate change the Leader of the Opposition understands the significance of this issue. He understands the necessity for taking action. He understands the importance of putting a price on climate change and he supports the action of the Prime Minister and her Government. He has made it clear on numerous occasions.

The reality is that claims of huge job losses which we have heard from the Coalition are nothing more than the Coalition's attempt to distract attention from their own poor performance with regard to job creation. We have seen that since they came into office some 38,000 jobs have been lost in New South Wales so what the Coalition is trying to do is to distract attention from that, distract attention from the horror budget we know is coming and to do that by saying, "Look over here, look over here, a price on carbon, let's frame a price on carbon". The Coalition's claim of significant job losses has been comprehensively rejected by economists and we know the modelling that the Coalition is relying on does not take into account the investment that the Federal Government is going to make in supporting jobs in competitiveness and building a clean energy future. Of course it does not take into account the jobs growth that will occur through renewable energy as well.

This is despite the fact that globally more money is now invested in renewable energy than in conventional energy generation and yet the Coalition takes no account of this. They trot out this modelling which has been discredited by many economists and which we know is all about distracting attention from their

poor performance on job creation. We also know that a carbon price will over time transform the way we generate electricity. It will prompt investment in renewable energy and in efficient gas-fired generation and it will result in a much more efficient use of energy. It will also level the playing field between clean and pollution-intensive technologies. So a carbon price will provide certainty. We know that industry wants certainty. Far from locking the economy into economic failure, a price on carbon will ensure investment in renewable energy and will ensure that we use energy more efficiently and we address this major problem that is confronting us, that is, climate change.

The Coalition has a very selective memory when it comes to the issue of addressing climate change. We heard what the Premier had said prior to the election on climate change and putting a price on carbon. It is quite instructive to have a look at some of the comments of other leading Coalition members and what they said prior to them receiving their marching orders from Tony Abbott and coming into this Parliament to do the bidding of Tony Abbott. For example, it is quite instructive to read what the State treasurer, Mike Baird, the member for Manly, said on 25 June 2007 about climate change: "We need to take this debate well beyond politics. Unless we prioritise climate change we will not get anywhere". Then he went on to say:

"Manly is bordered by the sea and any rise in sea levels as anticipated by climate change will have a disastrous effect on the area. The Corso could be under water and whole tracts of land could be lost."

Last week we heard the State Treasurer, the member for Manly, saying we should not be taking action on climate change, criticising the Federal Government, that Australia should not be acting because we were not seeing any action from India and China and other countries overseas. That has been called an embarrassing position by Malcolm Turnbull, and that is his view of the member for Manly. But a few years ago the member for Manly was saying that his electorate would be under the sea if there was not action on climate change. He cannot have it both ways. He cannot come into this Chamber, as he did last week, attacking us and attacking the Federal Government when a few years ago he was saying that his own electorate would be under the sea. How does he explain his position now to his electors? Of course he is not the only one. The member for Pittwater, Rob Stokes, is on the record, the member for Bega, Andrew Constance, is on the record, the member for Goulburn, Pru Goward, is on the record, all prior to the election, all claiming action to address climate change.

Mr LEE EVANS: [4.18 p.m.] I am told the Leader of the Opposition will never be heard publicly supporting Federal Labor's carbon tax. Really! If I may digress. We talk about carbon tax but we never talk about how much we are actually going to save with this tax. That is never mentioned. That is another story. This is interesting because already I have heard him vigorously supporting the carbon tax very publicly time and again. In November 2006 he said:

We need government to: Place a price on Carbon emissions.

That seems to me to be a fairly supportive statement. In March 2010 he said, "Everybody wants certainty around the price on carbon," and, "We need to set a price on carbon." Those statements also are clearly supportive. After Labor was roundly and rightly punished by the New South Wales voters, matters suddenly became less clear. Suddenly the Leader of the Labor Opposition needed "more information about arriving at a position". Today he has made a complete backflip with a vow not to support the tax publicly. So what happened? Did the Leader of the Opposition really have a change of heart, or is he hiding his support in the face of what he knows will be an absolute catastrophe?

Even now does he see how disastrous this tax will be for our economy and how hated it is by the people of New South Wales? The people of New South Wales simply do not know because the Labor Party refuses to make clear its position on this tax. The New South Wales Treasury review found that not only will the tax cost New South Wales at least 31,000 jobs but also that it will deliver an annual blowout to the New South Wales economy of \$3.7 billion. My electorate of Heathcote is located in the Illawarra where approximately 7,000 fewer jobs will be created because of this enormous burden. Growth in the New South Wales mining industry, which is the lifeblood of Heathcote, will be slashed to approximately 60 per cent of what it otherwise would have been. More than 25,000 jobs are directly linked to that industry as well as hundreds of auxiliary jobs. However, everything I have mentioned does not take into account what will happen in the Wollongong electorate, represented by my colleague Noreen Hay.

Noreen Hay's electorate is under stress from the threat of BlueScope Steel closing and moving its operations to a country that does not apply a carbon tax. Why should hardworking people struggle to provide for

their families? The only person who should lose his job is the Leader of the Opposition. He has misled the public on this issue and he now intends to mislead them about his party's position. How can he expect anyone to believe a word that comes out of his mouth or anything that is said by Labor members? I understand why the Labor Leader of the Opposition does not wish to talk about the carbon tax. Why would he want to talk about an increase in annual household power bills of \$500? Why would he want to talk about a price hike ranging from \$900 to \$4,000 for business power bills? Why would he want to talk about all of those cost increases that have nothing to do with the reduction of carbon in the atmosphere? I think he should talk about it.

As elected representatives, it is our duty to talk about the most devastating change of our time that will be imposed on New South Wales. New South Wales will suffer the worst impact from carbon tax of any of the mainland States because we have coal-fired power plants and aluminium smelters that will be hardest hit. Output from New South Wales industries is expected to decline by approximately 50 per cent by 2050. Power prices will increase by at least 15 per cent under the carbon tax. Dividends from New South Wales power generation will decrease by \$45 million in this financial year and \$290 million in 2014-15. On top of all that, New South Wales government agencies will be slugged with a cost of \$71 million a year. I can see why the Labor Leader of the Opposition does not support all carbon tax publicly—but the word "publicly" should be duly noted. [*Time expired.*]

[*Business interrupted.*]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders: Routine of Business

Mr GREG SMITH (Epping—Attorney General, and Minister for Justice) [4.23 p.m.]: I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to permit the conclusion of debate on the motion accorded priority prior to the commencement of government business.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) [4.23 p.m.]: This is quite extraordinary. Today we had an entire question time that was devoted to the issue of the Opposition's position on carbon tax. Now there is a motion before the House—not an Opposition motion but a Government motion—in relation to a matter that was foreshadowed two hours ago. Speeches have been prepared and media releases have been issued on the basic question of what the Opposition's position is on climate change measures and are now before the Federal Parliament. What do we have here in New South Wales? We have a Minister of the Crown, someone who is as senior as the Attorney General no less, interrupting the Government's own motion to gag its own speakers and to apply the gag in an attempt to shut down debate. This is completely instructive. The Government has moved the motion, asked the question, and does not want the question answered.

Mr GREG SMITH (Epping—Attorney General, and Minister for Justice) [4.25 p.m.], in reply: I ask the member for Maroubra to clean out the sand—or is it salt—from his ears and listen to what I just said. I asked that standing and sessional orders be suspended to permit conclusion of this debate. I am not trying to stop the debate. I am trying to let it finish because I know that the member for Balmain wants to speak and that there may be others, such as the member for Cessnock.

Mr Michael Daley: The member for Balmain will be granted leave to speak.

Mr GREG SMITH: Nevertheless, the Government is allowing the debate to conclude. Crocodile tears are being shed by the member for Maroubra—someone who constantly interrupts question time and receives three warnings each question time. The Opposition Whip, obviously with the consent of the Leader of the Opposition, tried to stop question time. What hypocrisy. What humbug. Bah!

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! Before I put the question, I will correct a statement. I called on the Minister, who was seated at the centre table during debate but who did not come into the House to move the motion.

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

Motion agreed to.

CARBON TAX**Motion Accorded Priority**

[*Business resumed.*]

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) [4.26 p.m.]: This motion is a complete stunt. It is about the sixth time it has been debated in the House. I heard the member for Wagga Wagga say in relation to this motion that it was like Groundhog Day, and indeed it is. We debated this on Thursday 4 August. If the Government moves a motion that is in effect identical to a motion that has been moved six times previously, we are entitled to treat it with the disrespect and disdain it deserves. I simply refer the House to my speech on Thursday 4 August and I suggest that Hansard incorporate it. It is a stunt and a red herring.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! I mention for the sake of clarification that it was necessary to extend the time for debate or it would have been interrupted by Government business at 4.30 p.m.

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) [4.27 p.m.], by leave: I thank the Leader of the House and the Government Whip for allowing me to make a contribution to this debate. I appreciate their providing me with that opportunity. Predominantly this motion relates to the Federal Government's proposal for a carbon tax and the Coalition's response. From my perspective, the focus is on aspects on which agreement exists. The Federal Coalition admits that climate change is real. Despite some of the more negative and backward perspectives in the Coalition, the Labor Party and the Coalition have an identical policy, which is a 5 per cent reduction of the year 2000 carbon emissions levels by 2020. The policies are identical. While the Coalition and the Labor Party frequently argue about different perspectives, quite frankly their policies are identical. When it comes to reducing carbon, they both agree it is significant, even though there are renegades in both parties. Publicly and in terms of their policies, they support the position that climate change is real. They both agree on the need to take action. The issue is how to do that.

I would have imagined the Coalition would have supported the market mechanism. I would have thought that philosophically the Coalition would have recognised from its perspective that markets generally deliver more efficient and effective outcomes and result in a lower price. In fact, that is what the economic fraternity says and that is why very few people in the academic community or the wider community recognise that the direct action plan is anything more than a massive subsidisation program to polluting industries. For too long polluting activities which have made climate change worse have been cheaper than clean alternatives because the polluters have not had to pay for the damage they do. Putting a price on pollution is about making polluters responsible for the damage they cause and using the revenue to help householders, and then allowing for investment, to make clean energy alternatives cheaper.

We know about the cost of the direct action plan. The Federal Coalition in saying that we should be funding abatement out of budget and, according to the Opposition, up to \$10.5 billion by 2020 coming straight out of the budget. Where does that \$10.5 billion come from? It comes from schools, hospitals, defence, foreign affairs and universities. The Coalition approach is a massive subsidy to the worst polluters in Australia. We know the competitive grants schemes that the Howard Government ran for many years were largely a failure. We know that the cost of abatement was on average \$140 a tonne. There is no evidence that the Coalition's direct action plan on climate change will cost any less than \$140 per carbon tonne abated.

It is an incredibly expensive program that is a direct cost to the budget, and there is no evidence that the Government will be increasing taxes to pay for it. There is no evidence of the Coalition saying it is going to increase taxes to pay for it, so it will come out of existing services, which are already stretched. The Opposition has claimed it can reduce emissions by 5 per cent to 2020 for \$10.5 billion, but that is ridiculous. Nobody believes that \$10.5 billion will buy the level of abatement that is required by 2020. We know even if it is not at \$140 a tonne, but say, \$90 a tonne, it will cost tens of billions of dollars by 2020. Even Malcolm Turnbull has said by 2050 it will be costing \$18 billion a year just to pay for abatement to reach the levels that we know the scientific community is looking for.

Today the Government in this House criticised Labor for not stating its position on climate pricing. Quite frankly, The Greens know there are always problems with what happens federally. We are not always the biggest fans of the Federal Labor Government but when it comes to two separate policies—one setting a price on carbon before moving to a market mechanism, the other being a massive budget bottom line subsidy of the

biggest polluters in Australia—anybody would say that setting a price on carbon before moving to an emissions trading scheme is a more cost effective and price effective method of reducing carbon. I cannot believe that the Coalition is supporting a massive subsidy which comes straight out of the budget bottom line. It is not proposing new taxes to fund it so there will be a reduction.

Mr Andrew Gee: Tell the unemployed.

Mr JAMIE PARKER: I will come to that comment about jobs. The final point I make on the Coalition's position is that it reckons it will be able to reduce carbon emissions by 60 per cent by using it in carbon foil. That is a complete furphy and it is not supported by the CSIRO. The report that the State Government has is a preliminary assessment. It does not take into account new jobs that will be created by alternative energy. It does not take into account any new jobs. Because the report takes no account of new jobs, it is a failed report. [*Time expired.*]

Mr CRAIG BAUMANN (Port Stephens—Parliamentary Secretary) [4.33 p.m.], in reply: I thank members representing the electorates of Marrickville, Heathcote and Balmain for their contributions. It is good to see an independent being able to enter this sort of debate.

Mr Michael Daley: He is a Green.

Mr CRAIG BAUMANN: Yes, in the Labor Party. I am sorry, he is one of yours, just like Bob Brown and his mates. The member for Marrickville said we were wasting time talking about carbon. It might be a waste of time for her but it is certainly not for us. She continually talks about carbon tax and climate change. I do not think any member of this House does not recognise that climate change is fact. What degree of climate change is man-made is a different issue. We cannot talk about a climate change debate when we are meant to be talking about a carbon tax. I have not heard the news in the past two hours, but I think the Australian dollar has dropped further against the American dollar, and I do not know what has happened on the Dow Jones or our stock markets.

Mr Daryl Maguire: It has dropped 10¢.

Mr CRAIG BAUMANN: It has dropped 2¢ since I prepared these notes. We are possibly on the brink of a global financial crisis. Now is not the time to introduce another tax. I call on the Leader of the Opposition to formulate some policies—hopefully, against the carbon tax.

Question—That the motion by agreed to—put.

The House divided.

Ayes, 60

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

Noes, 22

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

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Motion agreed to.

GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING BILL 2011**Agreement in Principle**

Debate resumed from an earlier hour.

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta) [4.46 p.m.]: The Government Advertising Bill 2011 is not designed to stop the advertising of valuable community services, education campaigns, public health announcements and so on. Advertising is a valuable tool and, given my background in marketing, I know that it can be a cost-effective way to inform a large number of people. This bill is not designed to prevent the publication of road safety messages about drink-driving, speeding and the wearing of seatbelts. It is also not designed to prevent governments advertising vacancies in the public service or inviting expressions of interest and facilitating community consultation. This bill is designed to regulate government advertising.

The regulations proposed in the bill should be open and transparent and they should have legislative force, and they will. The bill provides that the guidelines must be published in the *Government Gazette* and that they are to be made available free of charge online on a government website. It also addresses and prohibits government advertising campaigns and other material that might support a political party. That is particularly important because the onus is upon us as a responsible government to spend taxpayers' money fairly and equitably and in the public interest and not on political campaigns.

I am sure the people of New South Wales do not want their taxes spent on political advertising. People are facing higher and higher costs of living. Under the proposed carbon tax, they will find it even more difficult to cope. So we should not be wasting taxpayers' money. The bill prohibits the use of the names, prominence of voice or image of any Minister, member of Parliament or candidate, as well as prohibiting the use of any logo, slogan or the name of any political party in government advertising. That is a fair and reasonable stance to take, and it is in line with the views of the public.

The bill requires a cost-benefit analysis and peer reviews of government advertising campaigns that cost more than a specified amount, and requires a compliance certificate to be given before a campaign is commenced. The bill sets clear and unambiguous guidelines, making sure taxpayers' money is spent in the best interests of the community. It gives heads of departments the power to make these decisions. After all, they are the persons most intimately involved with the decisions and are best able to determine whether the advertising is worthwhile. They will be responsible for campaigns costing more than \$1 million, and will be required to undertake a cost-benefit analysis. Cost-benefit analyses often are conducted by businesses to determine whether advertising campaigns are sensible, whether there is a financial case to undertake advertising, and to identify the strengths and weaknesses in the arguments. A peer review will be required for any campaign costing more than \$50,000.

The head of the government department will be required to provide a certificate to certify that the advertising campaign serves a public purpose, is in the interests of the public, provides accurate information, and is supported by research and development. Rather than using the previous Government's system of planning on the back of an envelope, the bill requires proper research so that decisions will be based on evidence. Further, the certificate must certify that the advertising campaign is an efficient and cost-effective way to get the government's message across. The bill also prohibits Ministers from controlling the method, medium or volume

of a government advertising campaign when deciding to issue a certificate. As well, the bill prohibits government advertising after Australia Day and prior to election day in a State election year. That is in line with public sentiment that we should ensure that taxpayers' money is not wasted or used to promote a political party.

The bill requires a political party that is in government in this State to pay the costs of government advertising that contravenes the prohibition relating to political advertising. Real penalties are provided for these breaches. The party could potentially be required to pay the cost of that advertising if the prohibition is breached. The governing party is liable for a government advertising campaign if these provisions are breached. However, the bill provides the right to seek Supreme Court review of a liability to pay those costs. That mechanism is particularly important to ensure review by an independent umpire. The governing party will have the ability to apply to the Supreme Court to determine whether a liability exists, whether a breach has occurred, and the appropriate costs to be borne by the breaching party for the whole or part of an advertising campaign.

The bill also requires the Auditor-General to audit the government advertising activities of government agencies and report the findings to Parliament. I believe the Auditor-General is in an ideal position to provide that independent audit of such activities following a campaign. It is appropriate that the audit be undertaken after the campaign because it is the role of the Auditor-General to audit what has happened with a view to determining whether there has been compliance with the objectives of the bill. The Auditor-General can choose to audit one or more government agencies, the test being whether the agencies' activities have been conducted efficiently, economically and in compliance with the guidelines.

It is a strong point that the Auditor-General be able to conduct the review after the financial year. The bill also requires advertising compliance certificates to be made available as open access documents, providing further transparency regarding what government is doing across a range of government advertising. That meets the public's expectations that the taxes they have paid from their hard-earned incomes will be spent effectively. The certificates will be free of charge, and on the web. The member for Campbelltown made the point that this bill is about good governance of the State and the proper use of taxpayers' hard-earned money, which is especially important in the light of rising costs.

The member for The Entrance summed up the statistics well. Rather than go through those statistics again, I think it is particularly pertinent to refer to government spending on advertising during the term of the former Labor Government, which promised that government advertising would be reduced by some 20 per cent or 25 per cent. In fact, under that administration government advertising actually increased by 6 per cent. In their 16 years in office, Labor governments spent a total of \$1.3 billion on advertising. That begs the question whether that \$1.3 billion was spent effectively and efficiently. The statistics given by the member backed up the argument for better governance through controls on government advertising.

In conclusion, I commend the Premier for his commitment on government advertising in 2011. That is part of the Government's 100 Day Action Plan. It provides transparency in governance, accountable government, checks and balances within the system, clear and unambiguous guidelines for government advertising, and a review mechanism through the Auditor-General's auditing of government departments and campaigns and tabling of reports in Parliament. The bill also provides penalties for breaches that occur and, in balance, the right of the political party in government to seek review by the Supreme Court of decisions regarding penalties for breaches. In summary, the bill is about the best use of taxpayers' money—which is guaranteed under a Liberal-Nationals Government.

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Menai) [4.57 p.m.]: I support the Government Advertising Bill 2011. We are all here today as elected members of Parliament, thanks—at least in part—to the help of advertising. We are all aware of the power of advertising and how it can persuade or dissuade us on a variety of topics. Advertising and politics go hand in hand in informing, convincing or selling certain standpoints. However, this tool has been open to abuse, and that is why I support the Government Advertising Bill 2011. A common criticism from the public is how taxpayer-funded government advertising is utilised. When there is scepticism that it expresses biased views based on party politics, the message is diluted and sometimes even lost.

The Government Advertising Bill 2011 seeks to restore integrity to government advertising through regulation. The bill will see New South Wales become only the second Australian jurisdiction—after the Australian Capital Territory—to enact laws to regulate government advertising. This bill has been a long time coming. It has been promised now for more than 16 years and it will be a historic achievement to see it finally come to fruition. The people of New South Wales should be able to expect that their hard-earned taxes are being used for their benefit and for the benefit of the community they live in—not for the benefits of elected members and their parties.

In introducing the bill, the Premier quoted the Auditor-General's estimates of upward of \$80 million spent each year on government advertising. The general public deserves to know that, if such large amounts are being spent, they are being spent to educate, raise awareness and increase public safety—in other words, that this money is being spent responsibly. The bill delivers another commitment outlined in the Government's 100 Day Action Plan. It requires compliance by Ministers and government agencies for every advertising campaign. A wide range of government agencies, including the New South Wales Police Force, government departments, and teaching and health services in New South Wales, will be required to adhere to its provisions.

What is encompassed by a government advertising campaign? It is designed to disseminate information to the public about a government program, policy or initiative or about any public health or safety matter. For example, some of the better-known campaigns I recall were against smoking, violence against women and drink-driving as well as a campaign on skin cancer awareness. Each one of those issues is of public importance and should be communicated to the general population. Not one campaign was about showing a political party in a different light. All were about community awareness and met the guidelines suggested in the bill for taxpayer-funded government advertising.

From my childhood, I recall the Slip! Slop! Slap! skin cancer awareness campaign and the Stop. Revive. Survive campaign to get drivers to take rest breaks every two hours when driving. Both issues were, and still are, of great public importance. They were funded by, or on behalf of, a government agency, and were disseminated under a commercial advertising distribution agreement across various forms of media. That concept refers to those advertisements we hear on the radio every day on our way to work or during an advertisement break when watching television after dinner.

The existing government advertising guidelines—originally published as Premier's Memorandum 2010-08—have been revised a number of times to address a variety of issues. While those revisions have improved the quality of government advertising, compliance with the guidelines has been difficult to enforce. The bill seeks to ensure that regulatory guidelines are met, kept and adhered to or costs will be incurred. If the guidelines are breached, the governing political parties risk paying back the cost of the prohibited advertising campaign. Costs can be reimbursed but the bill is not simply about reclaiming costs; it is primarily about restoring integrity to government advertising.

The first prohibition is that "a government advertising campaign must not be designed to directly or indirectly influence support for a political party". Despite this appearing to be an obvious and fair guideline, it has not always been adhered to in the past. A public safety announcement or an advertisement with community information should not be used to spruik the achievements of the government of the day; it should be about informing the public. It is that simple. The second stipulation is that the campaign "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". That would cloud the message and convey bias instead of communicating information in support of the cause. The third prohibition states that "the name of any political party, its logo or slogan may not be in a government advertising campaign." We are not talking about a re-election campaign, which is a completely different style of advertising and not subject to these guidelines.

The bill is about protecting public awareness campaigns and the dissemination of important information to the people of New South Wales. Critically, the bill includes a formal, apolitical process for every government advertising campaign led by the heads of government agencies. They, too, must independently manage and maintain the integrity of the campaign. Campaigns will be protected from ministerial control and a cost-benefit analysis must be carried out if a campaign is likely to exceed \$1 million. The Government is committed to reducing the costs of unnecessary spending, and expensive advertising programs must be justified. Peer review also will be required if any proposed campaign is likely to exceed \$50,000.

Last year, the former Labor Government failed to cut government advertising spending by 25 per cent, as promised by former Treasurer Eric Roozendaal. Instead of slashing spending on government advertising, it was revealed that advertising spending had increased. In 2009-10 the former Labor Government spent \$105 million on taxpayer-funded government advertising. That is in stark contrast to this Government, which wants to cut spending on unnecessary government advertising—and we will adhere to that commitment. The bill will improve the transparency of government and restore the faith of the people of New South Wales.

In addition to measures to ensure independent control, the Auditor-General will monitor government advertising campaigns to identify any breaches that may occur. Each year the Auditor-General will perform an annual audit of the advertising campaigns of one or more government agencies. Those campaigns in breach will

be made to comply with the provisions of the bill. The Auditor-General also will examine the economics, efficiency and compliance with the audited campaign. If the Auditor-General were to find something amiss then the cost of the advertising campaign will be referred. Under clause 6 of the bill, the cost of the campaign is payable by the governing political party from the commencement of the campaign.

I support the bill because government advertising needs to be protected from political influence and abuse. The guidelines in the bill will ensure that government advertising remains a powerful tool to inform people about important issues that affect our community. It is unacceptable for government advertising to be used to promote the achievements of political parties. The people of New South Wales should be able to trust that public money will be used with integrity and honesty. The bill takes the power away from Ministers and places it with the agencies that produce the campaigns. When the guidelines are breached, new measures will return the costs of the campaign to the governing party.

People watch how their taxes are spent. They work hard and entrust governments to do what they can to make the most of every dollar. Community campaigns are worthwhile because they protect and inform people, and taxpayers understand that expenditure. Spending taxes on a re-election campaign is seen as wastage and an abuse of office. For example, that money could be used in my electorate—other members could roll off lists in their electorates as well—for many things not involved in assisting in the election or re-election of a politician or political party. Taxpayers are not responsible for that. The money could be put to better use by many community and sporting groups, schools and hospitals.

The Slip! Slop! Slap! campaign has gone a long way to reducing the incidence of melanoma, the Buckle Up! campaign has gone a long way to reducing injuries on our roads, and the Life. Be In It. campaign, featuring Norm, has helped many to get outside and be active. Anti-speeding campaigns are as important as messages to keep off railroad tracks—a message that hit close to home recently when a tragedy occurred in my area resulting in the loss of a local student and the hospitalisation of his friend. Taxpayer dollars should be spent informing the community about how to keep safe and about infrastructure and community groups; it should not be spent on government advertising. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) [5.07 p.m.]: A Colgate smile wins you hearts and Vegemite makes you happy. Red cars go faster and Red Bull gives you wings. Advertising is used to sell all sorts of messages, and is often costly. In the March election campaign New South Wales Labor wasted a lot of its own money and that of the members of New South Wales unions. The people of New South Wales still booted them out, and that had to hurt. Labor's dismal multi-million dollar campaign to hoodwink the public into voting for it was a spectacular failure. It did not win hearts and it did not make anyone happy. People thought those opposite could not go fast enough, and it certainly did not give them wings. Perhaps the wings went to the pigs they saw flying above.

It is evident from the last State election result that Labor's expensive advertising campaign was ineffective, not to mention misleading. But Labor had the right to waste its campaign money as it chose. If that included misguided fantasies to win over voters, so be it. The public is not stupid and Labor's feeble attempt to con the people of New South Wales fell on deaf ears. People expect more from government. But the people of New South Wales do not expect millions of taxpayer dollars to be spent on pushing partisan political agendas. The New South Wales Auditor-General estimated that from 1999 to 2009 the total expenditure on government advertising ranged from \$80 million to \$120 million per year—about \$1 billion over a decade or so. It does not take a genius to realise the higher figure coincides with an election year.

Members should cast their minds back to 1991, after the Greiner Government was re-elected. Labor's then Waste Watch chair, Michael Egan, was left breathless over the news that the New South Wales Government had jumped to thirty-sixth position in the list of Australia's top 200 television advertisers. The Greiner Government had cost taxpayers a whopping \$4.1 million in the first six months of the year. Mr Egan bellowed that there was "simply no excuse for this outrageous waste of taxpayers' money". He said that it "underlined the need for Labor's Government Publicity Control Bill, which would prevent any New South Wales government from plundering the taxpayers' pockets on television advertising for its own political gain". I ask this question: Would that essentially be the same publicity control bill that the then Leader of the Opposition tried to introduce in 2007—the one that Labor opposed?

Instead of taking Mr Egan's advice and preventing further delving into taxpayer pockets when it was elected in 1995, the Labor Government went on an advertising spending spree that made the Greiner Government look extremely thrifty. In 2007 the Labor Government climbed up the ladder to become the

seventh-biggest spender on advertising in the country, splashing around more money than McDonald's and Coca-Cola. Despite Labor's promise in 1995 to introduce legislation to curb politically motivated advertising, Labor instead spent more than \$1 billion over the following dozen years. As part of the Liberal-Nationals Opposition, the current Premier tried to push through the Government Publicity Control Bill, which would have ensured that money was not spent on government publicity for partisan political purposes. It also would have enabled the New South Wales Auditor-General to monitor the advertising.

The New South Wales Labor Government opposed the bill. Of course, it did so because it needed advertising to constantly counter its poor performance. In 2009 another report from the Auditor-General revealed that the revised government advertising guidelines introduced in August 2007 had made no impact whatsoever on the spinning advertising campaigns from New South Wales Labor Ministers. In 2008 the then Premier promised "no more spin". He said that he would regulate the public money spent on political spin. As we saw, that in itself was just more spin. Still nothing really changed. If anything, the spin got worse, the advertising costs got higher and the Government blew its own trumpet louder. We were positively deafened by the loud and vulgar sound of costly advertising telling us how wonderful things were while our hospitals and transport systems were deteriorating.

For example, the New South Wales Labor Government spruiked the Commonwealth's Building the Education Revolution Program during the Federal Government's election campaign. Sure, it was disguised as a WorkCover New South Wales safety awareness campaign, "Be Aware, Take Care", but there was no mistaking that it was a timely reminder of how lucky we supposedly were to have all that building money to revolutionise our schools. As we know, schools got buildings at inflated costs, whether they wanted them or not. Too bad if toilets did not work; the school got a new hall. Too bad if the buildings were too small; schools got them anyway, like the canteens at Tottenham Central School and Orange Grove Public School, the library at Urana Central School and the hall at Alstonville Public School.

Just in case we did not pay enough for this fantastic revolution, New South Wales taxpayers got to pay extra by funding advertisements during the Federal campaign, reminding us of how marvellous it all was. One can kind of understand the New South Wales Labor Government throwing away all those taxpayer dollars on itself and its Federal mates. After all, they excelled at it for 16 years. But at last something is being done. The only trumpeting one will hear now is that of the cavalry coming. As promised in his 100 Day Action Plan, the Premier and the Government are doing something about the previous appalling waste of taxpayer dollars on puerile political spin.

The Government Advertising Bill 2011 will restore responsibility to government advertising. It will take away the platform to spruik failed policies and make any government advertisements more about what the Government is actually doing for the people of New South Wales, what it is offering them, rather than what it should be doing, perhaps will do, or would like to do but never actually does. We are not against government advertising. Of course the Government needs to advertise. The Government advertises for non-campaign issues such as jobs, tenders, public announcements and specific campaigns aimed at changing community behaviour or attitudes, or raising awareness such as advice on driver fatigue, warnings about double demerit points, encouragement for people to quit smoking and guidelines for water restrictions. They are all legitimate reasons to convey a message.

We should be favouring messages about encouraging people to be healthier, safer or more environmentally aware. We want the people of New South Wales to know what they are getting for their vote and hard-earned tax dollar. We do not like it when these messages are politicised, when they are all about spin and no substance, when governments inappropriately carry on about how good and fabulous they are, rather than simply tell people what is on offer and how the Government is improving their lives. This Government will ensure that taxpayer money used on advertising is well spent. This legislation will prevent inappropriate taxpayer-funded political advertising. There will be no more political material in government advertising campaigns designed to benefit a political party. The independence of heads of government agencies authorising advertising campaigns should be protected and free from interference by a Minister.

Further, the Auditor-General will scrutinise all government advertising campaigns and make the governing political parties liable to pay back the costs of campaigns that breach those laws. Government agencies that need to comply with the provisions of this bill will include public service departments, the New South Wales Police Force, teaching services and New South Wales Health services. Features of the bill include that campaigns outside the election run-up will be restricted to information solely about matters of government

or public importance, there will be no more spruiking of policies for partisan purposes, there will be no more advertising campaigns designed to influence support for a political party, there will be no more voices or images of Ministers, and there will be no more political logos or slogans.

There will be a formal process for developing each and every government advertising campaign, and heads of government agencies will be responsible for independently managing and vouching for the integrity of the campaign. Government advertising campaigns will not be subject to ministerial control. Accountability will be ensured through a cost-benefit analysis for a proposed government advertising campaign likely to exceed \$1 million. For campaigns that cost more than \$50,000, a peer review will be required. Campaigns will not go to air unless these reviews have been conducted. Even after a campaign goes to air there will be more scrutiny from the Auditor-General, who will conduct random annual performance audits of the advertising campaigns of one or more government agencies. As the Chair of Parliament's Public Accounts Committee, I will follow these reports and any recommendations from the Audit Office closely.

As the Chair of the former Opposition's Waste Watch committee, I am extremely familiar with the levels of wasted government expenditure under the previous Labor regime and have repeatedly highlighted those issues. As a Government member I am pleased that people will no longer be fed expensive advertisements that they are forced to pay for, based on partisan political agendas. Instead, we will spend the money on what the people of New South Wales need. For example, the city's new Waratah trains—the ones that were meant to be ready more than a year ago—are starting to be put into service. Granted, it is a project we have inherited with huge problems—nearly as huge as the fanfare with which the Labor Government heralded them when the project was announced. But instead of talking about it, we are working to fix things. We will deliver the North West Rail Link, not just repeatedly re-announce it and defer commencement.

The Minister for Health, Jillian Skinner, visited 15 hospitals in 13 weeks. No film crews or reporters followed her. She talked to those involved in the running of a hospital, from the cleaners to the doctors. If she is not followed by a media entourage it is easier for her to do her job. During those 13 weeks she was not focused on how many hours she could clock up on television and radio, or adding to the scrapbook or newspaper clippings. She was focused on getting the job done and doing it well. We saw at the last election that the people of this State are not stupid.

The people of this State worked out for themselves that the New South Wales Labor Government was a dud, just as they know that an advertisement laced with political spin is not one to be trusted. Let us give the people of New South Wales proper information. Let us bring back integrity to our advertising by presenting factual information, objective information, really useful information that efficiently and effectively explains how things work. We cannot guarantee to give the people of New South Wales wings, but we can cause them to smile with the knowledge their State Government is spending their advertising dollar wisely and responsibly. It is what they reasonably expect from us and what they deserve.

Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) [5.22 p.m.]: I support the Government Advertising Bill 2011, which is designed to ensure that government advertising does not promote political parties. The bill will restore integrity to taxpayer-funded advertising and must be supported. Funding allocated to Government advertising should be spent on messages that are important to the community: messages that promote healthier lifestyles, messages that encourage safer driving or messages that are a call to arms to perform our civic duty as residents of this great State. Each dollar spent on advertising should be directed toward informing the community, engaging stakeholders or providing awareness campaigns on various issues. This is an issue that we on this side of the House have been passionate about for some time. Our Premier spoke of its merits in 2007. Sadly, those opposite voted down the legislation—and look at the result. For so many years the previous legislation enabled former Ministers on that side of the House to use taxpayer-funding to spruik their own achievements.

This is why it is important that we have a clear distinction between when a Government can or cannot use taxpayer funding to disseminate a message. However, Labor in general does not seem to have an issue with this. It is reported that at one stage State Labor had the seventh-highest advertising bill, spiking coincidentally around election time. The previous Government advertising expenditure was more than Toyota and McDonald's combined. In fact the Auditor-General estimates that in the decade from 1999 to 2009 the total expenditure on government advertising each year ranged from approximately \$80 million to \$120 million, which of course spiked in an election year. This figure combined over that period is approximately \$1 billion dollars.

Those opposite dare to disagree. Over the past couple of days we have heard from those opposite that they want to tackle this issue—and they are high and mighty about it—but what did they do in their 16 years in

office? They did absolutely nothing. Is this because they will no longer be able to reminisce about the days when they would increase their expenditure in an election year, or is it because they simply enjoyed wasting the State's money? Either way I am proud to be part of a Government that is not ashamed to get tough on guidelines for government advertising. I proudly went into the election campaign agreeing with the Premier's Five Point Action Plan to rebuild the New South Wales economy, return quality services, renovate infrastructure, restore accountability to government, protect our local environment and return planning powers to our local communities. I refer to paragraph (d) in the objects of the bill, which relates to our pledge to restore the integrity and accountability of government. This bill features measures that will prohibit electioneering to the masses funded by taxpayer dollars that otherwise should have been spent by a political party and not a government. The overview of the bill states:

The object of this Bill is to regulate Government advertising campaigns by:

- (a) providing for Government advertising guidelines, and
- (b) prohibiting Government advertising campaigns and other material that could influence support for a political party, and
- (c) requiring cost benefit analyses and peer reviews of Government advertising campaigns to be carried out for campaigns costing more than a specified amount, and an advertising compliance certificate to be given, before a campaign is commenced, and
- (d) requiring a political party, whose parliamentary representatives are Ministers in the Government of this State (a governing party), to pay the costs of Government advertising that contravenes the prohibitions relating to political advertising, and
- (e) providing a right to seek a Supreme Court review of the liability to pay those costs, and
- (f) requiring the Auditor-General to audit Government advertising activities of Government agencies and to report the findings to Parliament, and
- (g) requiring advertising compliance certificates to be made publicly available as open access information.

These measures and many more highlight the stance this Government is taking. It is a stance that is in stark contrast to those opposite, who were in office from 1995. The formulaic political process for developing each and every government advertising bill will be established under this bill. Heads of government agencies will be the individuals responsible for independently managing, assessing and vouching for the integrity of their campaign. They will not be subject to ministerial control concerning any government advertising campaign. This is an important step in restoring accountability to Government. It is an historic step for this Government and a sign that we are serious about our commitments to restoring accountability to government.

It is significant that the Government is introducing legislation that will place restrictions on itself that those opposite had not placed on themselves in their 16 years of government. It is highly hypocritical for them in Opposition to bandy around in this Chamber their commitment on spending integrity when they could not do anything whilst in government except waste money, promote their mates and create an infrastructure deficit for the people of Wollondilly and New South Wales. I am pleased to support a bill that will save money that will be used to deliver for the people of Wollondilly and the people of New South Wales. I commend the Premier on the introduction of this bill and I commend it to the House.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Castle Hill) [5.23 p.m.]: I support the Government Advertising Bill 2011. I believe this is a landmark bill for this State and I applaud the Premier for persevering in this matter. It is a matter that we took to the electorate during the last election campaign and it is a matter that all members of our community feel strongly about. The trust of our communities in the political process is something dearly bought and oftentimes cheaply relinquished. One of the cheaper practices (cheap on the part of the perpetrators rather than the consumers) is that of vote-buying with government funds and government advertising, especially around election time. If a government is unable to successfully deliver its message through the means available to it, it is not acceptable for governments of any kind to use mediums at taxpayers' expense to deliver those messages. It is nothing short of disgraceful that an average \$100 million per year was spent on government advertising in the decade of Labor from 1999-2009.

We do not have to travel too far afield to see once again the exploitation that is occurring at a Federal level in respect of the carbon tax advertising across the board; we are being inundated with advertisements on television and in our letterboxes. This kind of advertising may or may not be effective, but it is a poor use and an abuse of public funds. It does nothing for rebuilding the integrity of the political process. It is a bid for style over substance, although often government advertisements fail even to be stylish. Advertising is an elaborate form of communication. The prerequisites for good communication are fundamental to advertising.

One of the most basic aspects of good communication is integrity. This bill is directed towards establishing that integrity. It introduces serious and necessary restrictions on the practice of government advertising and makes the use of public funds for this purpose more accountable. One of the key features of this bill is that it provides for pre-emptive action when it comes to advertising. We do not need to wait until public funds are misspent and then start bemoaning the process that led to the wastage. This bill clearly outlines from the outset that campaigns must not be designed to directly or indirectly garner support for a particular party.

The bill provides that the expenses of some proposed campaigns must be vetted by peer review, for those costing more than \$50,000, and by a full cost-benefit analysis if the campaign will cost more than \$1 million. That will prevent worthless or partisan campaigns ever seeing the light of day. Clause 10 of the bill places restrictions on the only slightly more subtle practice of beefing up certain advertising campaigns just before election time to create the impression that a whole lot is happening. We know in the case of the former State Government that a whole lot was not happening. This bill is based on sound ethics of honesty and integrity. It provides ethical guidelines, but it also provides for legal ramifications for breaches of the bill.

The bill requires the Auditor-General to review government spending on advertising annually and to report on compliance with the guidelines. It will make a political party responsible for repaying the costs of a campaign that breaches those guidelines. The bill makes obvious provisions for necessary Government announcements, such as public health campaigns and other community issues. By toughening the approach to partisan campaigns, this bill should enhance these important notices. It will increase the funds available for them, put them into sharper focus, and restore a sense of integrity to government advertising that is indispensable for clear communication. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr ANDREW CORNWELL (Charlestown) [5.30 p.m.]: I am delighted to speak in support of the Government Advertising Bill 2011 that will restore integrity to taxpayer-funded government advertising, which advertising has long been used to deliver important messages to the community. This should be directed at health, safety, literacy and education—topics that are apolitical and that result in a better-educated community. It should be designed to change behaviours, not votes. It should not benefit politicians or political parties. The Premier, Barry O'Farrell, attempted to address this issue from Opposition by introducing the Government Publicity Control Bill 2007. The Labor Government of the day opposed that legislation. In 1995 the Carr Government was elected with a commitment to control taxpayer-funded politically motivated government advertising.

Over the past 16 years the former Labor Government spent vast sums of taxpayers' money on its own base political purpose. The more politically motivated the cause, the more likely the former Government was to open the purse strings. From 1999 to 2009, total annual expenditure on government advertising ranged from approximately \$80 million to approximately \$120 million, which amounts to approximately \$1 billion a decade. The spending always spiked in election years. Think of the infrastructure and services that could have been delivered with that money. How could half a dozen faceless men, sitting around a lazy Susan in Sussex Street, let down the people of New South Wales so badly?

The waste is heartbreaking. In his agreement in principle speech the Premier outlined that the framework of the bill was to prohibit party-political material in government advertising, prohibit advertising campaigns that are designed to benefit a political party, protect the independence of heads of government agencies that authorise advertising campaigns and ensure they are free from interference by a Minister, provide a role for the Auditor-General to scrutinise government advertising campaigns, and make governing political parties liable to pay back the costs of advertising campaigns that breach these laws.

This bill delivers on yet another commitment contained in the 100 Day Action Plan. Government agencies that will be required to comply with the provisions of this bill include public service departments, statutory bodies representing the Crown, the New South Wales Police Force, teaching services and New South Wales Health services. As a result of the enforcement provisions of this bill, the Government will provide for a rigorous and transparent process. Currently we are witnessing an unseemly exhibition by the crippled Federal Labor Government and its carbon tax propaganda. Recently the *Australian* reported:

LABOR MPs are running advertising promoting the carbon tax using taxpayer dollars and blending their own spin with the federal government's supposedly non-political and non-partisan Clean Energy Future campaign.

The besieged member for Dobell, Craig Thomson, member for Robertson, Deb O'Neill, and member for Shortland, Jill Hall, featured in a four-page advertising lift-out in the Central Coast *Express Advocate* a couple

of weeks ago. Their faces were prominently displayed on the cover page alongside a map of Australia with the words, "clean energy future". Craig Thomson claims there was no use of the clean energy future logo. The *Australian* states:

... the government CEF website features as its logo a stylised map of Australia with the same words.

Also like the CEF website — the address of which is prominent on the front page of the ALP advertisement — it has a map of the world with the countries supposedly acting on climate change.

The advertisement uses lines of argument very similar to those on the CEF website, including dollar figures on "help for pensioners" and "investment in clean energy" ...

Mr Thomson said he had thought up the idea in conjunction with fellow ALP central coast MPs Jill Hall and Deb O'Neill, and they had pooled some of their parliamentary printing and communications entitlements to pay for the advertisement.

The similarities between the logos are striking. If the logos are not identical, then the logo in the advertisement certainly is a replica that would make the noted New South Wales forger, Francis Greenway, blush. The carbon tax propaganda campaign is designed to reduce public outrage over being deceived at the last Federal election and to allay fears that the tax will negatively impact on local communities, especially in the Hunter. The *Australian* recently reported that:

Sharon Grierson, the member for Newcastle in NSW's Hunter region, said voters were moving on from the carbon tax issue, suggesting the government's information campaign had begun to address community concerns.

"It does reflect that the more people know the more settled they feel about this," she said.

"For this electorate, I haven't sensed very much hostility."

As a local Hunter member of Parliament, I assure the Federal member for Newcastle that the community is not being hoodwinked by government advertising. Ms Grierson is quite correct when she claims the community is not hostile. In similar circumstances to 26 March, the community, in contrast to being hostile, possesses a quiet resolve to remove the worst Federal Government since Gough Whitlam. Unlike Federal Labor members of Parliament who represent Hunter electorates, the O'Farrell-Stoner Government in New South Wales will ensure that government advertising is used appropriately for education, not for propaganda. I take great pleasure in commending the bill to the House.

Mr JOHN WILLIAMS (Murray-Darling) [5.37 p.m.]: It is with great pleasure I express support for the Government Advertising Bill 2011. As a member of the former Opposition, I became well aware of the misuse of taxpayers' funds and the former Labor Government directing those funds primarily to promote itself. The former Labor Government's purpose was to paint a very good image of itself and what it represented. In most instances, false and misleading statements were made. There are two issues involved in government advertising: One is the type of advertising campaign that the former State Government ran, and the other is fiscal management.

The former Government never managed the State's budget properly. If it had applied proper fiscal management, there should have been fixed expenditure on government advertising. Unfortunately, most of the former Government's advertising campaigns directly endorsed members, Ministers and Premiers of the former Government to show them in a good light. But that is not the purpose of government advertising. Government advertising should present a bland but informative message about government services, changes, contracts and positions. Government advertising should not be used to promote a government to enhance its chances of re-election.

Unfortunately we saw far too much of that Government promoting itself, its ideas and its initiatives but in most cases that never ever got beyond the promotion stage. Often the former Government promoted a new transport link. Advertising material, such as dedicated banners, were produced and in front of those a former Premier would stand and make announcements to nominate a particular transport route and what it was doing in relation to it. Those announcements were made with big fanfare to make the Government look very good. Unfortunately most of that promotion amounted to nothing and was merely smoke and mirrors. After time the projects were forgotten. Their promotion involved substantial amounts of money—money that was thrown on the ground. We saw far too much money wasted in that way.

This bill is not about promoting ideas. As earlier speakers have mentioned, if the current Federal Government's carbon tax is so important for the people of Australia it should be able to stand up on its own two

feet and the Government should not have to go out there with warm and fuzzy advertising to make people feel good about alternative energy. The Federal Government is using its advertising to tell us that all the smoke and pollution emissions from power stations will be removed, and we will live in Nirvana. Julie Gillard said she would use advertising to inform the public about why we need a carbon tax. That advertising is fairly loose and glossy. I do not know what this advertising has cost compared with basic advertising. The fact is we want basic advertisements that give people information but that does not attempt to soft-sell. The Federal Government and the former State Labor government soft-sold regularly, mostly around election times when it needed to display a new image and promote itself to the people of Australia and New South Wales.

The former Labor Government produced a warm and fuzzy advertisement about State Labor and what it had done in 16 years. It rolled through screeds of announcements that it had made but that really resulted in nothing. The only completed project we ever saw was the desalination plant, which was promoted very well by that Government. I would hate to see the budget on the desalination plant. Quite honestly, starting the desalination plant will create such an increase in carbon emissions from most of its generators that it is hardly worth starting. It is in complete contradiction to what the Federal Government is promoting with the carbon tax. The purpose of the advertising was about a government telling the electorate that it was doing something when it was doing nothing.

The advertising was getting the word out that the former Government was good, it had the interests of the people of New South Wales at heart and it would make everything right. The advertisements were telling voters that communities will be guaranteed services in the hospitals and be provided with the infrastructure they have been crying out for, to make them feel good, particularly at election time. This legislation is about killing the waste, putting down some guidelines for advertising and formalising what government advertising is all about. It should be given the five-way test. What has occurred in the past in relation to government advertising does not stack up or fit in to what people expected from it. This Government will put out a budget which will not promote but rather will inform the citizens of New South Wales—

Pursuant to standing and sessional orders business interrupted 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.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE WORLD'S INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

Matter of Public Importance

Mrs BARBARA PERRY (Auburn) [5.53 p.m.]: As the shadow Minister for Aboriginal Affairs on this International Day of the World's Indigenous People I extend my deepest respects to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and in particular to all Aboriginal elders both past and present. I also acknowledge the traditional owners of this land, the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation.

In raising this matter of public importance I acknowledge the incredible message from United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon on this International Day of the World's Indigenous People:

Together, let us celebrate and recognize the stories, cultures and unique identities of indigenous peoples around the world. At the same time, let us work to strengthen their rights and support their aspirations.

I will begin by using this occasion to pay tribute to the late Ms Lola Edwards, who passed a little more than a week ago. Lola was a prominent, much-loved and cherished advocate for the Stolen Generation. She played a key role in the establishment of the Stolen Generations Council of New South Wales-ACT and in lobbying for more services for Aboriginal communities. Lola was also a key supporter of Link-Up NSW. She did tremendous hard work and was passionate in her devotion to reconnecting Aboriginal people who were removed from their families on behalf of that organisation. Hers is an incredible legacy in and of itself. I offer my sincerest sympathies to Lola's partner Bill Pritchard, the chief executive officer of AbSec, and her friends and families.

In May I had the occasion to honour the life of another inspirational Aboriginal and great Australian, Lionel Rose. Lionel was a world boxing champion and one of the first sportspersons in the world to take a stand

against apartheid. He cared nothing for his own career or money and everything for justice and the rights of the oppressed. Lionel lives on as an eternal reminder and challenge to us all of the responsibility we bear to stand firm on our convictions and to be people who are willing to stand for what is right regardless of the cost.

In June I spoke at a Mabo Day gathering in the presence of Jesse Mabo. Eddie Mabo is a further example of an Aborigine who left behind a profoundly inspirational legacy that touched and irrevocably changed our nation. His landmark address at James Cook University in 1981 was the catalyst for one of the most significant decisions made by the High Court of Australia since Federation. The overturning of the notion of terra nullius held prior to the June 1992, which maintained that this land was not occupied prior to European colonisation, was a landmark moment in the history of this nation and in the relationship between white Australia and the Aboriginal people. I began my contribution tonight by touching on the lives of a few notable Aborigines to highlight the essential point that one of the most significant roles that the Aboriginal community has played in the development of our nation has been to convict us by way of example and to inspire us to become more noble, courageous and dignified as individuals, members of a wider community and political leaders.

Another key aspect, although it is less widely discussed, is the redemptive power and beauty of Aboriginal culture and spirituality. Recent dating of the oldest known archaeological sites in Australia employing thermo-luminescence and other cutting-edge dating techniques suggest that Aboriginal presence goes back 40,000 years; some evidence suggests that the final figure may be closer to more than 60,000 years. As such, Australian Aboriginal culture may justifiably claim itself to be the oldest living culture on earth. The eons of time that have passed have imbued Aboriginal culture and spirituality with a tremendous depth, wisdom and richness that many are yet to fully appreciate.

One of the aspects most fascinating to me is the deep bond that exists with the earth and the profound concept of oneness with nature. Beaches, canyons, rivers, waterfalls and islands as well as the sun, moon, animals and visible stars all have their own unique stories of creation and of interconnectedness. To the Aborigine, they are all sacred and part of the living, breathing fabric of life and reality. As human beings we are part of nature, and it is one of our most sacred and important duties to nurture and protect the planet on which we were born. It is a tragic fact that all too often modern civilisations tend to view the earth as theirs for the taking without any regard or respect for the natural world around them with its many living and breathing systems. We are only now belatedly discovering that our lives and our futures are inextricably tied with that of the earth and should we continue to fail to respect this interconnectedness we will destroy not only the planet, but also ourselves.

Aboriginal and other indigenous cultures are also immensely powerful carriers of eternal values and of unique human and cultural expression and identities. The theme for this year's International Day of the World's Indigenous People is indigenous designs: celebrating cultures crafting our own future with the emphasis being on highlighting the need for preservation and revitalisation of indigenous cultures. This is a most timely call and one that I hope all members of this House will join me in heeding. Globalisation and advances in technology, such as the rapid spread and expansion of the powers of the internet, are proving to be a blessing and a curse. The danger is that although such advances should theoretically enable a greater enrichment of global culture, they all often have the opposite effect. The universal rise of the cult of the celebrity and the popularisation of international pop culture based films, magazines and novels are threatening to erode our unique cultures and reshape the values we have long held dear.

Indigenous cultures—and the Aboriginal culture in the context of our nation—hold firm to their unique identities, to the values of family and respect for elders and to their spirituality that remains deeply bonded to the earth. Aboriginal culture and spirituality is a vital touchstone to our own souls and an important reminder to us that we too must remain unique and firmly connected to the heartbeat of the planet and ourselves. Being interconnected also implies that what I do to you I in fact do to myself as well. There is no distinction, although we may think that one exists.

The history of white settlement in Australia is deeply shameful and contains within it many chapters and episodes of almost unimaginable cruelty and injustice. Let us never forget, on this day and every other day, that in the process of stripping the indigenous community of its humanity over the many harsh decades and centuries that passed since white settlers first arrived on our shores we utterly debased ourselves and stained our souls with their blood and suffering. During Reconciliation Week in May of this year I addressed the House on National Sorry Day and on other issues of importance to the Aboriginal community. I considered it a great

privilege to do that in this Parliament. As a Minister in the Keneally Government at the time, with bipartisan support we amended the Constitution to acknowledge and honour the Aboriginal people as the first people and nations of the State.

I am also proud of our Federal parliamentary colleagues, in particular former Prime Minister Rudd, who offered the first ever official apology on behalf of the nation to the Aboriginal people. I will never forget on that day the outpouring of emotions, and the tears that flowed down the faces of the elders and other members of the Aboriginal community. In saying this, I am also mindful that, as far as we have come, there is much that remains to be done. We must continue to build on the programs and initiatives that have been implemented. Saying sorry is simply not enough.

Today, I am heartened by the spirit of bipartisanship that exists between all parties and elected representatives in the New South Wales Parliament on these matters, and the shared determination to continue building upon the work that has been done so far. I use this occasion not only to extend my sincerest respects to the Aboriginal community as we celebrate International Day of the World's Indigenous People, but also to renew my deep commitment to furthering and advocating for their interests.

Mr TROY GRANT (Dubbo—Parliamentary Secretary) [6.00 p.m.]: It is significant that today we join all countries of the world in an acknowledgement of International Day of the World's Indigenous People. The O'Farrell-Stoner Government acknowledges the significant contribution that Indigenous people make to New South Wales's rich cultural life. The focus of this year's international day is Indigenous designs: celebrating stories and cultures, crafting our own future. This theme highlights the need for preservation and revitalisation of Indigenous culture. In my electorate, I am very much aware of efforts being made across the Wiradjuri nation. This day will be celebrated far and wide by my community, because the national day is very relevant to what is being achieved in my electorate. It is also a reminder of our responsibility to understand, as the member highlighted, that there is a story and a personal experience behind every expression of culture and heritage by an Indigenous person or community. I thank the Hon. Barbara Perry for bringing this matter before the House today.

The O'Farrell-Stoner Government is committed to the revitalisation and preservation of Aboriginal culture. That is why the Government recently announced funding for the creation of the Centre for Aboriginal Languages Coordination and Development. Linguists estimate that at colonisation about 70 Aboriginal languages were spoken within what is now New South Wales. Today, there are very few speakers of Aboriginal languages. According to the 2006 census, there are 804 Aboriginal people in New South Wales who identified as speaking an Indigenous language. The loss of this rich culture is a tragedy for all the peoples of New South Wales.

The O'Farrell-Stoner Government has made a commitment to provide the New South Wales Aboriginal Education Consultative Group—known as NSW AECG Inc.—with \$1.277 million to develop the Centre for Aboriginal Languages Coordination and Development, which will be overseen by a council of experts. This equates to approximately \$400,000 every year, for three years, to achieve that goal. NSW AECG Inc. is the recognised peak advisory body on education and training and advocates on behalf of Aboriginal people and communities. It is made up of volunteer members involved in local and regional AECGs across the State. The Government's decision to support this group is based on key aspects of our direction: real partnerships with Aboriginal communities, real Aboriginal ownership of initiatives and a real focus on what is possible and positive, and this includes cultural empowerment.

We share the view of Aboriginal communities that reclaiming and maintaining their language and culture is imperative. It instils a greater sense of identity, pride and confidence in the people. The teaching of Aboriginal languages in schools also leads to increased school attendance and participation. In my own electorate, the Wiradjuri language will be made available through the recent announcement of that most wonderful Minister for Education, Adrian Piccoli. That will be available to students across the Dubbo campuses. We are very excited about this. This is not a symbolic gesture. This is a tangible, real, on-the-ground way of assisting the revitalisation and preservation of Aboriginal cultures.

This support is significant, but we are doing much more to work with Aboriginal people. We are setting new directions in Aboriginal affairs, through the wonderful Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Victor Dominello. This is based on advice from Aboriginal people and the evidence-base that exists from programs that have proven successful in reducing disadvantage. It is about time that the Indigenous people of this State had a fair go. The O'Farrell-Stoner Government is acutely aware of the current gaps that exist between Aboriginal and

non-Aboriginal people in New South Wales. So far, governments' efforts have done little to decrease the gaps in outcomes of life expectancy, child abuse and neglect, while employment, imprisonment, juvenile detention, overcrowding, and alcohol and tobacco consumption remain key issues. These are some of the issues that pose the greatest threat to a vibrant, dynamic Aboriginal culture, which I have seen first-hand as I have lived and worked in Aboriginal communities over the past 22 years.

While there have been some improvements in addressing the disadvantage, in my view they have been limited at best. New South Wales is home to the largest population of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in Australia. The need to address this gap is more pressing than ever. However, we stand at a moment in time where there is a great opportunity, which I am excited about, to work together to achieve real change. The New South Wales Government is committed to ensuring that improving the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is a key priority. We are committed to building capability, so that Aboriginal people can seize opportunities to participate and contribute to their community. The New South Wales Government will make decisions hand in hand with Aboriginal communities.

The evidence left by the previous Government points to systems that were, quite frankly, ineffective. Two Ways Together promised so much but did not live up to its expectations. The New South Wales Auditor-General's report into Two Ways Together describes a failure of the former Government's policies. The Auditor-General's report chiefly acknowledges the former Labor Government's failure to be accountable. This Government does not intend to make that mistake. The O'Farrell-Stoner Government will talk openly and honestly with Aboriginal people about the challenges that we jointly face and how to ensure that the mistakes of the past are not repeated.

While I acknowledge the complexities of closing the gap in Aboriginal disadvantage, it is clear we must build real and effective linkages between Commonwealth and State governments, put locally driven solutions for economic and cultural empowerment front and centre, and involve independent and non-government voices. While closing the gap is difficult and complex, it starts with leadership from this Government, accountability and simplified service delivery. Since May, the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Mr Dominello, has travelled far and wide—to western and far western New South Wales, to Tamworth and Myall Creek, as well as to southern Sydney, where he met with a large number of community representatives. Meetings of this kind characterise the Minister's commitment and those of the Government to approach these challenges together, to ensure that everything is locally driven, and to ensure that recognition of International Day of the World's People is properly accounted for and delivered in this State.

Mrs BARBARA PERRY (Auburn) [6.07 p.m.], in reply: I thank the member for Dubbo for participating in the debate on this matter of public importance. He highlighted issues to do with his electorate in particular. When I was Minister for Juvenile Justice, I visited the Orana Juvenile Justice in the member's electorate. I am very proud, as the former Minister for Juvenile Justice, of our record in relation to working with young Aboriginal people in detention, as well as looking at early intervention and prevention. The work done at Orana by the staff, in partnership with the young people there, is amazing. I very much reflect on those days as Minister for Juvenile Justice and on the important work being done by Juvenile Justice staff right across the State. The over-representation of young people and adults in detention is shameful, and it is something we all need to do more about.

Having said that, I will watch closely to see whether the Government works with the Aboriginal community, as the member for Dubbo stated. I am particularly proud of the former Government's achievements in encouraging and empowering Aboriginal people. Empowerment comes from a number of things. I am pleased that 9 August has been set aside as International Day of the World's Indigenous People to ensure that the language, tradition and culture of indigenous peoples are maintained. It is awful that languages have been lost to the Aboriginal people. The language, tradition and culture of many indigenous peoples worldwide have also been lost, in part by colonisation.

Tonight as we reflect on the issues affecting indigenous people we must also focus on what can be achieved in partnership with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of this nation. I commend the United Nations for proclaiming a Second International Decade, from 2005 to 2015, with the theme "A Decade for Action and Dignity" for indigenous people worldwide. The latest statistics reveal that an estimated 370 million indigenous people live in some 90 countries and speak more than 4,000 of the 7,000 languages still spoken today. They live on over 20 per cent of the earth's surface and largely overlap with the world's richest areas in biological diversity. The connection of indigenous people to the land and their knowledge of the natural environment play an important role in the protection of biological diversity and ecological systems.

I began my remarks by referring to the comments of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on this International Day of the World's Indigenous People, and I will also end with a comment from him. He noted, "indigenous people suffered centuries of oppression, and continue to lose their lands, their languages and their resources at an alarming rate". He further noted, "Despite these obstacles, indigenous people make an enormous contribution to our world, including through their spiritual relationship with the Earth. By helping indigenous peoples regain their rights, we will also protect our shared environment for the benefit of all." This day is all about looking forward together.

Discussion concluded.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

RIVERWOOD POLICE STATION

Mr ROBERT FUROLO (Lakemba) [6.13 p.m.]: Tonight I speak about a matter of great importance to the people of the electorate of Lakemba. The need to improve the sense of safety in our community has been raised with me by local residents through street meetings and surveys. Previous Labor governments have recognised that need, and I am grateful for the 120 extra police that were allocated to my local area in the past four years. But more work still needs to be done, especially at Riverwood police station. Riverwood police station was once a fully operational station but some years ago its officers were split between the Hurstville and Campsie local area commands. It then became a highway patrol base. That has had a real impact on nearby residents. A constituent recently told me a frightening story. One day as he was walking in a park he came across "a woman calling for help." He said:

I found a topless woman hiding in the bushes with a male looking for her. I went to Riverwood police and was told by the officer that he couldn't come as he was the only officer in the station. So I went back to the park until Hurstville officers attended. When the police arrived, both the woman and the man were gone.

Luckily, they were eventually located when Hurstville police attended the scene. The constituent told me of another episode when he had witnessed a man using a garden stake as a spear in an effort to catch children. He said:

I went out to try and protect them and I was then approached and challenged by this person—him with the spear, and me with a cricket bat.

The police were on their way. He added:

When police did arrive, the male had already gone. Had there been police attending other than being sent from Hurstville, he would've been caught.

I appreciate the difficult jobs of our police men and women, but I call on the Minister for Police to take my comments into consideration and to increase the number of general duties police officers working out of Riverwood police station. As part of this bipartisan campaign, which is supported by police and the community, I circulated a petition in my electorate. So far I have received close to 400 responses. The new member for Oatley also supports it. Upon his election to this place he said: "I also want to ensure there are additional resources for Riverwood Police Station." Detective Acting Superintendent Terry O'Neill, acting Commander of Hurstville Local Area Command, was quoted in the local newspaper as saying he "would welcome extra police in Riverwood."

The request for extra police at Riverwood is not to diminish the great work of our local police. In fact, with the member for Oatley, I recently had the pleasure of attending the Central Metropolitan Region Zone 1 awards at Hurstville, where a number of awards were presented to police in recognition of the fine work that our hardworking policemen and policewomen do in protecting our community. I was in awe of the courage and self-sacrifice they demonstrate on a daily basis and, while calling for extra police at Riverwood, I commend the great work of the officers at Hurstville and Campsie local area commands.

DRUMMOYNE ELECTORATE EVENTS

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne) [6.16 p.m.]: I have great pleasure in sharing with the House a number of special community events that I have attended over the past few days. On Thursday 4 August the South Western Sydney Region Public Education Ambassadors presentation ceremony took place, with more

than 600 students, parents, teachers and educators in attendance. The night was about congratulating those students chosen for leadership, advanced communication skills, ongoing contribution to the school community and adherence to the values of public education. Some 21 public education ambassadors, exemplars of the qualities of public education, were acknowledged as regional ambassadors. I congratulate Harrison White, Concord High School; Veronica Choi, Concord Public School; Chananda Scott Young, Concord West Public School; and Joshua Anderson, Mortlake Public School, on their achievements. The students were thrilled by the presence of Minister for Education, Adrian Piccoli. The member for East Hills and the member for Strathfield also attended. I congratulate Mr Tom Urry, Regional Director, South Western Sydney, on a sensational evening.

On Sunday 7 August I attended the Sandakan memorial service at Burwood Park. Sandakan has been described as one of the most horrific episodes in our military history. We must never forget the enormous contribution and sacrifice made by generations of Australians who served this nation in World War II. Only six prisoners of war survived the death marches to Ranau—all of them Australian. Of those men who valiantly served their country, 23 were from Burwood—sons, friends, nephews and uncles from our community. The Sandakan remembrance service plays a pivotal role in helping to keep the legacies of our often unsung heroes alive.

The word "hero" is used all too lightly. The term is used to describe people who play sport, television celebrities and others. Those brave Australians who gave their lives to defend our nation are true heroes. It is important that we remember their sacrifice. It was a fantastic ceremony attended by some 300 people. Music was provided by the students of Burwood Girls High School and St Patricks College, Strathfield. They also read many of the prayers. Trinity Grammar School students were involved with the call to order and the honour guard withdrawals. The guest of honour was Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir, AC, CVO, Governor of New South Wales. She is a fine advocate for New South Wales.

A number of local government representatives were present, including but not limited to the Mayor of Burwood, Councillor John Faker, Strathfield Councillor Tony Maroun and Burwood Councillor Henson Liang. The member for Canterbury and the member for Strathfield were also at the event. I commend the Sandakan education committee and chairperson Councillor Ernest Wong for a job well done. I concluded the week of events with a seven-kilometre bay fun run. What a great community event supporting healthy active lifestyles in the beautiful, scenic inner west.

More importantly, the sponsor, CanTeen, was involved with the 2011 bay run. Through fundraising, CanTeen makes a real difference to the lives of young people living with cancer. Every year in Australia thousands of young people are suddenly confronted with a cancer diagnosis. All CanTeen programs are designed to ensure that young people living with cancer get the strength and support they need from young people just like them. While I pulled up very sore and tired, I commend all associated with the event and thank the community and sponsors for their support and participation. I encourage everyone to get involved in 2012.

TAMWORTH RURAL FIRE SERVICE

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) [6.21 p.m.]: Today I bring to the attention of the House the valuable work done by the Rural Fire Service not only across the State but in the Tamworth electorate in particular. Friday 5 August was a big day for the Tamworth zone, with the delivery of new vehicles and the first annual medals presentation for long service. A number of dignitaries were on hand to help the zone celebrate, including Rural Fire Service Assistant Commissioner Keith Harrap, New South Wales Emergency Management Committee Chairman Phil Koperberg, Superintendent Bryan Daly and Tamworth zone superintendent Allyn Purkiss. On Friday the Tamworth zone of the Rural Fire Service took delivery of eight new vehicles. These vehicles, which were welcome, will replace part of the ageing fleet in the zone.

There were five category one tankers for the Borah, Gowrie, Moore Creek, Nundle and Woolomin brigades. Two category nine tankers were handed over to the Attunga and Kootingal-Moonbi brigades. A category 16 four-wheel drive vehicle was handed over to the Tamworth Rural Fire Service. Our Rural Fire Service volunteers deserve the very best, and we are proud to be able to provide these vehicles to them. Apart from delivering the vehicles, on Friday night the Tamworth zone held its first ever annual medals presentation at a special dinner function. National and long service medals were awarded to 17 dedicated volunteers. This was the first time the Tamworth zone had held such an event and it was a great success. It was an honour for me to attend, with about 120 volunteers. I took the opportunity to thank them and to acknowledge that they are often the first at the scene of an accident or a fire.

National medals are presented to members of the service in recognition of their years of diligent service that goes above and beyond what is expected of active members within their brigades. Long service medals are presented to members of the service in recognition of their years of active service. All recipients should be commended for their dedication, commitment and service to the Tamworth community. Unfortunately, time does not permit me to detail all 17 medal recipients, but I will highlight a few whose service history is extraordinary. Three volunteers were awarded the Long Service Medal 3rd Clasp for 40 years service. They were presented to John Thrift, 46 years service; Phillip Hahn, 44 years service; and Robert Hahn, 41 years service.

John Thrift joined the Bendemeer Rural Fire Brigade in 1965. During his time he served in the position of captain and then became group captain of the Tamworth fire control centre in 2004, giving a combined total of 45 years service. He retired from the group captain position in 2011 but he continues to provide valuable local knowledge and remains very active in his brigade. He is a worthy recipient of the long service medal. Another person honoured on the night was Phillip "Jack" Hahn, who received the Long Service Medal 1st, 2nd and 3rd Clasps. Phillip joined the Dungowan Rural Fire Brigade in 1967. During his time with the brigade he has held the positions of captain and president, giving a total of 44 years service. Jack's speciality is chainsaw operations, and he has trained many members in the safe use of this equipment. He is a worthy recipient of the Long Service Medal.

Ken McKnight, who received the Long Service Medal 1st, 2nd and 3rd Clasps, joined the Winton Rural Fire Brigade in 1968. During his time with the brigade he held the position of deputy captain, and continues to be an active member of his brigade, giving a total of 43 years service. He is a worthy recipient of the Long Service Medal. All volunteers need to be thanked. Without them, we simply would not have this service, and their efforts are greatly appreciated. Importantly, while we acknowledge the long service of our volunteers, we need to look at filling the ranks of those who retire. I encourage our young people to take up the worthwhile cause of volunteering for the Rural Fire Service. I was pleased to see a number of young people at the medals presentation on Friday night. They are the youth, and they are coming through. Congratulations to the Tamworth zone. I salute the 1,268 members and encourage them to keep up their valuable work.

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Parliamentary Secretary) [6.26 p.m.]: Today I commend the Minister for Citizenship and Communities for his efforts in developing a volunteering strategy for New South Wales. Importantly, the strategy recognises the hard work of the men and women across the State who give so much of their valuable time.

NOAH'S CHALLENGE—ADVENTURE RACE

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast—The Speaker) [6.27 p.m.]: I am pleased to inform the House about the Noah's Challenge—Adventure Race to be held in Nowra on Saturday 15 October 2011. I was delighted to attend the launch of the Noah's Challenge on Friday 5 August at the University of Wollongong, Shoalhaven Campus, where I presented the organisation with a grant of \$10,000 to kickstart this important fundraising event. The inaugural Noah's Challenge—Adventure Race, with multiple disciplines, including mountain biking, running, canoeing and orienteering, should take between two and five hours to complete, and will commence in west Nowra at the West Street Oval. The participants will benefit from the physical exercise and enjoy the sights throughout the Shoalhaven, as well as assist this valuable organisation to raise money, allowing Noah's Ark to continue to deliver important services for local residents.

The event has the full support of the local community, including students and parents of the Noah's Ark Centre of Shoalhaven and Shoalhaven City Council. A small group of community members from Kangaroo Valley and Wattamolla Valley have formed a committee to organise the fundraising event. The idea for the event came about due to a strategy for finding a sustainable fundraising model that, once developed, can grow year on year and benefit the community and participants in the process. Although Noah's Ark receives government funding, unfortunately that funding does not cover all its operating costs. Therefore, it is essential for the organisation to continue to fundraise throughout the year.

The Noah's Ark Centre is currently in its thirtieth year of operation within the Shoalhaven and provides early intervention services for children and families on the South Coast. Noah's Ark provides flexible, professional, caring and culturally appropriate services for children and their families where the children have a disability, developmental delay or challenging behaviour, as well as for early childhood centres through training and resourcing, Aboriginal communities and organisations where there is an invitation to work in partnership. Early childhood intervention services support families of children with a delay in development or a disability. They include therapy, education and support services that assist families to help their child grow and develop.

Noah's Ark is an important fixture within the Shoalhaven and the South Coast community as it celebrates the child, not their difference. It believes in supporting the important role of parents and carers, believes children and families deserve a high-quality service, employs professionals, and believes working in partnership with the Aboriginal community is important. Noah's Ark provides speech pathology, occupational therapy and psychology services, as well as education, behaviour support, autism-specific services and family support.

Staff at Noah's Ark include early childhood teachers, special education teachers, general primary teachers, occupational therapists and speech pathologists offering these invaluable services to the needy children across the Shoalhaven. Noah's Ark early childhood educator and speech pathologist also visit Gudjahgahmiamia Day Care Centre to support children and families in the Wreck Bay Aboriginal community. The staff of Noah's Ark and Gudjahgahmiamia work together to provide an inclusive service where children with a range of abilities can learn together.

This is a two-year program funded by Family and Community Services and a joint project within the Wreck Bay Aboriginal Community Council. The program's objectives are to build the children's level of understanding concepts, develop fine motor and cognitive skills and teach children to follow directions; to work closely with the centre director to program and develop the skills of other workers; to work closely with Wreck Bay Aboriginal community to establish a relationship that supports their goals for children in their community; to ensure that families are linked in to social and other kinds of support in the community including preschool and school; and to teach parents skills that will empower them as their child's first teacher and assist families with complex needs to develop skills and build self-esteem.

I sincerely thank members of the Noah's Challenge—Adventure Race committee and staff of Noah's Ark—Vittoria, Cindy, Di, Karen and Belinda—for their continued hard work in organising the launch event on Friday 5 August. I also offer my thanks to Noah's Ark Chief Executive Officer Ginger O'Brien for her wise and professional stewardship not only of Noah's Ark but of this challenge event. I also wish to thank the Hon. Andrew Constance, Minister for Ageing, and Minister for Disability Services, for his support of the program. I look forward to the Noah's Challenge—Adventure Race on 15 October and encourage all residents to participate.

EPPING ELECTORATE DEVELOPMENT

Mr GREG SMITH (Epping—Attorney General, and Minister for Justice) [6.32 p.m.]: Epping is a major gateway between Sydney's north and north-west. It is a delight to live there, with its beautiful gardens, natural reserves and parks, and its moderate climate. But its town centre is a mess, with shops on both sides of the railway line struggling to survive, many of them shabby, and roads choked with through traffic. A lot of hope was generated by the coming together of the Hornsby and Parramatta city councils—which each control one side of the railway line—with the Department of Planning to be involved in a study by a consultant to explore the potential for residential development and job establishment in Epping.

The aim was to maximise the use of public transport infrastructure developed by the State Government and to cater for future population growth in terms of the Metropolitan Strategy for Sydney 2036. The shopping and commercial areas of Epping are long overdue for upgrading and modernising but development has largely been frustrated by insufficient parking and traffic gridlock. Epping railway station is now a transport and bus hub as well as a train hub, with trains on the northern line and the Epping to Chatswood line. It will also be part of the North West Rail Link and the Parramatta to Epping rail link when built, and this has attracted, and will continue to attract, an enormous amount of traffic to the Epping station area.

This means that quiet streets within a radius of about one kilometre of Epping station are parked out each weekday by thousands of cars. Roads leading to the intersection of Beecroft Road and Carlingford Road and small roads such as Ray Road and Midson Road are regularly chock full of traffic. While the Epping town centre study has promoted a grand change, with massive commercial buildings recommended, the point has been made by many—including a majority of those on Parramatta council recently—that a solution has to be found to Epping's choking traffic and parking problems before proceeding with high-rise buildings that will generate even more traffic.

My colleague John Alexander and I set out our views in a piece that appeared in the *Northern District Times* of 3 August. I reflected on the fact that at present Epping does not offer a friendly situation to the elderly, in particular, the disabled, women with prams and people on bikes. They used to be able to use a serviceable

ramp across the railway station. However, when the modern railway station was built, the ramp was demolished and steep stairs and lifts—which constantly break down—were installed. I have had the sad experience of speaking several times to elderly people who tell me that their main pursuits are located on the other side of the bridge—such as their church and their social activities—but they often cannot get to them except by taxi, which they cannot afford so they are stuck.

I urge the Government and local councils not to block this proposal but to work with the Department of Planning, the citizens and those who want to pursue more commercial development in the Epping area to find a solution to the traffic gridlock. There must be ways of entering and leaving Epping that do not create traffic problems around main shopping centres and see thousands of cars parking in surrounding streets. Residents often find it difficult to park outside their own homes during the day. Sometimes their driveways are blocked or theft occurs because strangers are parking in the area.

The M2 is not a solution for those citizens. It would be if the tolls were reduced to equitable levels. Rather than paying the full toll from Beecroft Road to Marsfield—a distance of just three kilometres—the toll will be about \$5 by the time the M2 is finished. It will cost motorists only \$2.85 to travel 12 kilometres from Pennant Hills to Seven Hills. Something must be done so that a lot more traffic can be shepherded onto the M2. But both councils will have to do more to resolve the parking problems, the Government will have to provide assistance and the developers will have to chip in so that Epping can again become a lovely place to live and its citizens can enjoy their beautiful, quiet suburb.

BREASTFEEDING

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Castle Hill) [6.37 p.m.]: I acknowledge the great work of the Australian Breastfeeding Association, particularly the work of its New South Wales branch. The Australian Breastfeeding Association is a not-for-profit organisation that was established in 1964 to encourage and support mothers who wish to breastfeed their babies, and to create an awareness of the benefits of breastfeeding in the community. I was fortunate recently to attend the opening of the first breastfeeding drop-in centre in New South Wales, in my electorate of Castle Hill. The centre will be an invaluable community resource. It will provide sanctuary for women within and around the Hills district who are looking for support, assistance and a welcoming environment. With an abundance of young families in my electorate of Castle Hill, there can be no better place to open the first centre than in the heart of Castle Hill. The centre will no doubt provide great support for mothers across the Hills district.

Last week we celebrated World Breastfeeding Week. Every year for the past 19 years the World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action and other breastfeeding advocates in more than 170 countries worldwide have celebrated this event during the week of 1 to 7 August. This year's theme centred around communication—specifically, the need to communicate, create awareness, mobilise and build bridges across generations, cultures, religions and civilisations on breastfeeding. While last week signified a worldwide celebration, we can look within our own borders to see the importance that the community places on associations such as the Australian Breastfeeding Association. The association is one of Australia's largest women's organisations and is a key provider of peer support for mothers. The 1800 mum 2 mum breastfeeding helpline is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It is not only the third-largest helpline in Australia, behind Lifeline and Kids Helpline, but also responds to a large number of calls from local mothers needing ongoing counselling and support.

The value of the helpline support group cannot be underestimated. Each year in New South Wales more than 30,000 calls are taken by the helpline. Contacts between local groups are made from Moree to Lismore to Albury with breastfeeding classes, parenting programs, talks, literature dissemination and other counselling contacts being provided to ensure that mothers have the confidence and reassurance they need to continue breastfeeding. The opening of the new and modern Breastfeeding Lounge Drop-In Centre in Castle Hill last week will provide The Hills local community with a space in which to support the work and training of volunteers. It also offers mothers the opportunity to obtain expert assistance and advice, participate in specialised classes on a range of topics that include parenting, sleep and settling, or simply provide an environment where mothers can meet for a cup of tea or coffee.

I had great pleasure in speaking at the opening as well as touring the facility with Louise Duursma, who is the President of the New South Wales branch of the Australian Breastfeeding Association. I commend the association for one particular aspect, which is the emphasis and focus placed on the role that fathers play with their new-born babies. There is no doubt that in today's society we are seeing a new trend; fathers are playing a greater role in the birth and early years of their child's lives. The days are well and truly over when fathers

received a phone call at work to inform them that their baby had been born and then visited their wives in hospital after the pain had been endured. I was conned by my wife into enduring her 20 hours of labour. With the assistance of gas, I got through it.

Mr Rob Stokes: And an epidural.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: I did not receive an epidural, but the gas was of some assistance. It has certainly provided a great bonding experience between me and my wife as well as between me and my daughter, Charlotte. I look forward to enduring that process again next month for the birth of our next daughter. In the company of the member for Cessnock, I also attended a very important lecture given by Dr Richard Fletcher titled "How Father-Baby Bonding Helps a Child for Life". It is great that those topics are being recognised by the Australian Breastfeeding Association. The association's launch of the online resource enables mothers and fathers to discuss and be involved in forums concerning new-born babies. I encourage all fathers of young children to participate in this important initiative. I commend the work that the Australian Breastfeeding Association does for mothers and fathers in The Hills community.

NETBALL NSW STATE AGE CHAMPIONSHIPS

Mr GLENN BROOKES (East Hills) [6.41 p.m.]: On Saturday 2 July 2011 I had the pleasure of attending the opening of the 2011 Netball NSW State Age Championships at Deverall Park. I must confess that when I accepted the invitation to attend the opening, I had no idea how big the event would be. Upon my arrival at Deverall Park I was amazed to see thousands of people, both participants and spectators. Now that I am a much wiser person, I know that the Netball NSW State Age Championships is one of the largest sporting events in the Southern Hemisphere. To accommodate the number of teams participating in the 2011 championship, the event was held at three separate venues. Bankstown City Netball hosted the division 2 competition, which accommodated 34 associations from throughout the State.

History shows that New South Wales is one of the most successful netball States in Australia. This State has claimed countless State titles and produced some of the best players in the country. That is commendable, especially when one considers its humble beginnings in 1929 when it had only a handful of players. Now Netball NSW is one of the largest independent sports organisations in this State. The Netball NSW State Age Championships were held between 2 and 4 July. They were hailed as the "best ever" by Netball NSW. While the Minister for Sport and Recreation, the Hon. Graham Annesley, officially opened the championships in Liverpool, the weekend's events at Deverall Park were opened by the Mayor of Bankstown, Mr Khal Asfour. The Bankstown City Netball Association did an excellent job hosting the division 2 competition at Deverall Park.

However, I was disappointed that the mayor took no steps to promote the Bankstown City Council during the event. There was not a single banner, poster or other indicator to highlight the host city. I was equally disappointed that the mayor failed to advise his fellow councillors of the event. That said, I congratulate all netball teams on their tremendous effort, especially participating teams from the Bankstown City Netball Association. The Bankstown City Netball Association will soon celebrate its fiftieth anniversary. I congratulate the Bankstown City Netball Association on reaching such a milestone and for its work within the Bankstown area to promote both its sport and the city of Bankstown.

SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS INTERNATIONAL PIANO COMPETITION

Ms PRU GOWARD (Goulburn—Minister for Family and Community Services, and Minister for Women) [6.46 p.m.]: Between 30 September and 9 October, the Goulburn electorate once again will host the Southern Highlands International Piano Competition. This year will mark the third time the competition has been held in Goulburn since it was established in 2005 by a group of local music lovers in conjunction with the Southern Highlands business community, and no doubt spurred on by pianist extraordinaire and local benefactor, Ted Springett. The competition is open internationally to anyone between the ages of 18 and 34 years—whether they are from Tarago or Toronto, Penrose or Paris, Bowral or Beijing.

This year the event will be attended by musicians from as far abroad as Korea, Sweden, Russia, China and the United States of America. That makes it a truly international event in my electorate. Since establishment of the piano competition, it has been well attended and financially supported locally. It is well on the way to being a cultural tradition in my electorate. I am honoured to be patron of the competition. On behalf of the board, I express sincere gratitude for the \$3,500 grant provided for the event by the New South Wales Government. Clearly the grant demonstrates the support of the O'Farrell-Stoner Government for rural and regional culture.

However, no international cultural event would occur without the hard work and dedication of volunteers. I take this opportunity to personally recognise the board of the Southern Highlands International Piano Competition including the Chairman, Richard Griffin. I know that the entire board has invested a great deal of personal time and effort to ensuring that the event will be a great success. It is already clear that the board's endeavours are working: The competition has attracted internationally renowned conductor Valery Gergiev, who is the current and a former conductor of the London Symphony Orchestra, to act as artistic patron. I certainly look forward to welcoming him to the Goulburn electorate. I thank Grant Foster for his wonderful efforts as creative director.

Music and artistic pursuits are a significant aspect of life in the Goulburn electorate. The days are rare when my electorate is not hosting a range of great performances, varying from school plays and musicals to orchestral concerts and international events. Recently I had the pleasure of attending a performance at the Goulburn Regional Conservatorium by the Idea of North, which is an a cappella group, and Stephen O'Connell's *Illara* concert. They were both wonderful experiences and confirmed to me the conservatorium's place as one of the cultural hubs of Goulburn. It is amazing to think that the conservatorium has been part of the Goulburn community for more than 25 years. Regional conservatoriums are a great facility in rural areas. Their programs of music education help to nurture early childhood interest in music, which, as we now know, is so important to developing not just musical talent but young minds generally.

Conservatoriums also provide the opportunity for regional residents to participate in and enjoy music. In the city of Goulburn, as in the Southern Highlands generally, those opportunities are numerous. Interested musicians are able to explore music through workshops, join the orchestra or participate in one of the many choirs that are run by the conservatorium. The Goulburn Regional Conservatorium is a very valuable facility. As I have stated many times, Goulburn is a very diverse electorate that is teeming with opportunities for artistic expression. The opportunities range from the youth-focused Southern Highlands Youth Arts Council to the Highlands School of Performing Arts and the Lieder Theatre Company. The Goulburn electorate is alive with creativity.

In fact, further proof that the Southern Highlands has strong musical interest is the recent opening in Bowral of a music education facility run by the University of Canberra. Goulburn's diverse culture has also allowed it to become an attractive destination for international acts, with American Grammy award winning band Train joining Australian talent INSX at A Day on the Green held in January this year at the picturesque Centennial Wineries. These concerts that have featured local and international musicians, and they have become a huge tourist drawcard for the region. It is extraordinary that a region in New South Wales should be so culturally and musically active. To quote the late John F. Kennedy:

If art is to nourish the roots of our culture, society must set the artist free to follow his vision wherever it takes him.

That is certainly possible in the Goulburn electorate, and the support of the O'Farrell-Stoner Government is essential to that nourishment and freedom.

NAIDOC WEEK

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) [6.51 p.m.]: I draw the attention of the House to the events of NAIDOC Week in the Kiama electorate, which were certainly important to my community. NAIDOC Week is an annual event held in July since the mid-1970s to recognise the rich Indigenous and cultural history that makes Australia unique. The theme for this year's NAIDOC Week celebrations was Change: the next step is ours, and it recognises the commitment by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to take responsibility for their own futures, by creating the solutions, driving the changes and owning the outcomes. Whatever the means or focus of the celebration, NAIDOC Week provides a wonderful opportunity to celebrate Aboriginal culture, which is one of the oldest and proudest cultures in the world. The New South Wales Government strongly supports NAIDOC Week and is committed to building relationships with Aboriginal and Indigenous communities based on mutual respect, trust and confidence.

This year I marked the start of NAIDOC Week by attending a flag-raising ceremony at the Shoalhaven Entertainment Centre with Mayor Councillor Paul Green to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across the region. In my role as the chair of the Shoalhaven City Aboriginal Advisory Committee I have been privileged to work with our local Aboriginal community on a number of important projects. It might seem odd, but until 2008 Shoalhaven City Council did not have an acknowledgement of country as part of its civic protocol. I was delighted to work with the Aboriginal community to not only introduce that measure but also to

introduce a statement of commitment between the council and local Indigenous people. The Aboriginal flag is displayed in our council chambers and in the front of important civic buildings in recognition of the council's close connection with local Aboriginal people.

I attended the 2011 local government regional NAIDOC Week awards at the Shellharbour Workers Club where I was pleased to congratulate the following winners: Uncle Steven Russell, male Aboriginal elder of the year; Aunty Nell Mooney, female Aboriginal elder of the year; Corey Belsito, Aboriginal young achiever of the year; Ricki Lee Donovan, Aboriginal young achiever of the year; Natalie Beckett for outstanding service in Aboriginal health; Roy 'Dootch' Kennedy, Aboriginal community representative of the year; and the Illawarra Aboriginal Corporation for the Aboriginal organisation of the year.

It was an outstanding local event and I was pleased to join with the member for Shellharbour, Anna Watson, the Federal member for Throsby Stephen Jones, the Federal member for Cunningham Sharon Bird, the administrator of Shellharbour council, David Jesson, the Kiama mayor, Sandra McCarthy and councillors, the Wingecarribee mayor, Ken Halstead, and councillors in being part of what was a wonderful evening. It presented for the community an outstanding display of Aboriginal culture, history and heritage. The feeling in the room about reconciliation, coming together as a community and recognising what is good about the Aboriginal community, what is happening around our district and how we can be so pleased and privileged to have wonderful people doing extraordinary things in our own backyard was electric.

NAIDOC Week is an opportunity to reach out to the Aboriginal community and to stand side by side in celebrating the rich history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. NAIDOC originally stood for National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee, a committee that was responsible for organising activities during NAIDOC Week. The committee's acronym has since become the name of the week itself. One of the great social challenges faced by governments today is to improve the living standards of Indigenous people and to close the gap in life expectancy by providing better health services and improved access to suitable housing across remote Indigenous communities. Improving education outcomes for local Aboriginal people is also extremely important. I am proud of the Liberal Party's record of delivering important reforms for Indigenous Australians.

In 1971, the late Neville Bonner, AO, became the first Indigenous Australian to sit in the Australian Parliament. Mr Bonner was initially appointed by the Queensland Parliament to fill a casual vacancy in the representation of Queensland in the Senate. He was then elected in his own right in 1972, 1974, 1975 and 1980. Mr Bonner did not always agree with the direction of the Liberal Government, but he was always a fierce advocate for Aboriginal rights and affairs. In fact, it was the Liberal Party that established the first Ministry for Aboriginal Affairs, and I am proud of its history in that respect. I can still remember former Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's bold pledge to the nation during his Apology to the Stolen Generations, that "unless the great symbolism of reconciliation is accompanied by an even greater substance, it is little more than a clanging gong".

I certainly support those statements. I believe that reconciliation is something with which all members in this House can unite. We should unite in the interests of tolerance, acceptance and working together as a community, recognising this nation's first people are truly great generations of people that have given much to Australia. We could do more to work with them, and recognise the leaders in the Aboriginal community that were acknowledged as part of NAIDOC Week, to ensure that we close the gap on many of the aspects of intolerance that we see right across our communities and thus become an even greater nation.

ORANGE ELECTORATE FARMERS

MASTERCHEF 2011

Mr ANDREW GEE (Orange) [6.56 p.m.]: I draw the attention of the House to the fact that Gulgong sheep farmers Hamish and Sally Drury of Talinga Pastoral have officially produced the best hay in the State after taking out the top prize at the 2011 hay and silage awards. The couple's produce was selected as the best entry from more than 80 hays and silages, with the New South Wales Department of Primary Industries pasture specialist, Neil Griffiths describing the product as outstanding at last week's Grasslands Society of New South Wales conference in Bathurst. I note that the Drury's hay feeds a variety of animals from dairy herds to racehorses in the Hunter Valley, Sydney and interstate as well as animals at Taronga Zoo. The Gulgong rural community has long been renowned for its contribution to the agricultural economy of this State. This award is further proof of the high quality farming from this area of the Orange electorate. It is important that the House recognises excellence in agriculture. I commend the outstanding work of Hamish and Sally Drury.

Other outstanding farmers in the Orange electorate also deserve recognition from this House, one of whom is Norm Smith of Wellington who recently was awarded the New South Wales farmer of the year award. Norm is a great example of the spirit of farmers not only in the Central West but also in the State as a whole. Norm is a fourth generation innovator and farmer. His grandfather was one of the first farmers to use superphosphate fertiliser and his father sowed the pastures by aeroplane because the property was so hilly. Norm is a wonderful role model for all young people. Farmers like Norm are just what we need to encourage younger people to return to the land and consider a career in agriculture.

After nearly a decade of drought, Norm manages his farm with a focus on increasing productivity. Norm and his wife, Pip, have blazed the trail for planned grazing management on their property Glenwood, using rotational grazing with shorter graze periods and longer rest periods. This means less fertiliser, greater diversity in plant species, increased water holding capabilities and increased soil nutrition. Norm shears his 6,000 sheep once every eight months. It takes Norm, four shearers and three classers and rollers 10 to 11 days to do so. I congratulate not only Norm and his staff but also his wife, Pip, and the whole family on their marvellous work. I note that it was Norm's wife, Pip, who nominated Norm for this very prestigious award. Norm is a fantastic ambassador for Wellington in the Central West and farmers across New South Wales.

I also draw the attention of the House to the magnificent achievement of Orange's own Kate Bracks who, on Sunday night, took out the 2011 MasterChef title. Kate's MasterChef win puts Orange and the Central West region of New South Wales even more firmly on the map of Australia's top culinary destinations. This is an outstanding achievement and fantastic news for Kate, her family and for Orange. My family, like many in Orange, followed Kate's progress all the way through the competition until Sunday's night finale. In winning the MasterChef title, Kate has been an outstanding ambassador for Orange and has brought further recognition of the high quality local produce, local talent and dining experiences that visitors to Orange and the Central West can expect.

Orange Food Week, which is held in April, is a key regional event on the New South Wales events calendar, and Taste Orange is currently showcasing some of the best of Orange's regional food, wine, art, music and more at the Bondi Winter Festival, which is supported by Destination NSW. Kate's great victory will provide a valuable boost to food and wine producers, and tourism in Orange and the Central West. Kate, you had everyone in our city on the edge of our seats. On behalf of the electorate of Orange, I congratulate you on a job well done. I confirm that we will be around next week for some of your famous snowman dish that won you the MasterChef 2011 title. I again congratulate Kate Bracks.

TRIBUTE TO KEVIN PARKER

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) [7.01 p.m.]: I pay tribute to a good friend of mine, Kevin Parker, a member of my community who passed away recently. News of his passing was a shock. My community has lost an important contributor to the Lions Club of Oatley and many other groups. Kevin Parker was born in the Illawarra on 17 June 1940 and attended Christian Brothers College at Wollongong. Kevin made a major contribution to the community and to the New South Wales Police Force, serving for 30 years at a number of police stations including at Kogarah, Hurstville, Port Kembla, Dapto, Wee Waa, Redfern and Goulburn Street. While he was at Dapto, Kevin was involved in the establishment of a community youth club. Indeed, he made an invaluable contribution to charities and fundraising in every area in which he worked.

Those efforts included organising charity bowls days. Bowling was one of Kevin's many passions and he held executive positions at a number of local clubs, such as Dapto Citizens Bowling Club, Wee Waa Bowling Club, Hurstville City Bowling Club—which is in my electorate and at which he was vice president—Mortdale Bowling Club, Peakhurst Bowling Club, Oatley RSL and Community Club and the Oatley RSL Sub-branch. Kevin Parker joined the Lions Club in 1970. He was a member of the Oatley branch and helped with the establishment of the St George Breakfast Club. As a member of the Oatley Lions Club he was a member of the cabinet of District 201N5. He was the public relations and Lioness liaison chairman. He was also secretary-treasurer, safety officer, tail twister, Youth of the Year chairman, vice president and president. At the district level, he participated in the convention, and was zone and regional chair and the Lions Mint chairman.

The community has lost an outstanding individual who worked day and night fundraising for Lions and the many charities that it supports. Kevin will be remembered for his tireless contribution to the Lions Club of Oatley. I have many fond memories of working with him in my capacity as a member of Lions at the Oatley Festival barbeque, the Lugarno Festival barbeque, Lions Club meetings and the Oatley RSL Club. One would always see him with his mates at the Oatley RSL Club or at the Oatley pub. He always had a story to tell and he

had a great sense of humour. He was an outstanding character in my community and he spent many hours, day in and day out, helping with local festivals. Kevin's passing has come as a shock to many, but he will be fondly remembered.

HARLEQUIN RUGBY CLUB

Mr BRYAN DOYLE (Campbelltown) [7.06 p.m.]: It gives me great pleasure to make my contribution while proudly wearing the Harlequin Rugby Club tie. I draw members' attention to the fortieth anniversary of the club. The clubhouse is at Campbelltown—the opal of the south-west. Like me, my friend the member for Macquarie Fields attended a recent club function. The Harlequin Rugby Club was formed in 1972 at the Lacks Hotel by several rugby buffs. They fielded a team in the Sydney Subbies for several years. Since that time, the club has competed in the Illawarra district competition and the Sydney sub-districts competition. In 2003, the club returned to the Sydney suburban competition, where in 2006 it won the second division club championship and was promoted to the first division of the Sydney suburban competition.

The club's home ground is the Campbelltown showground, which is located on the Moore-Oxley bypass—the gateway to Campbelltown. The club has worked with the local council to maintain and develop the ground and it has big plans to upgrade the facility, including the grandstand and the clubhouse. The club fields strong representatives in both the junior and senior competitions. The Old Jokers—a group of over 35s players—are also part of the club. They probably should know better. As part of the club's involvement with the local community, it is hosting a sevens tournament in conjunction with the Fisher Ghost Rugby 7s Festival this year.

The tournament will be held on 12 November at the Campbelltown showground and will promote our sport to the local community, involve community groups and help to introduce the club to the festival, Campbelltown and the wider community. The club has a proud history and represents much that is good in the city of Campbelltown. It includes life members such as Geoff Hicks, who played in the first Harlequin team in the early 1970s. Geoff was the inaugural president of the junior rugby club from 1980 to 1990 and coached many senior and junior teams, including the premiership-winning Colts team of 1994. Ray Wilkinson, another life member, was president from 1980 until 1984 and oversaw the redevelopment of the showground and construction of the current clubhouse. Ray is now the secretary of Sydney Rugby Union.

Eddie Hughes is another life member who played in the early 1970s. Eddie was secretary of the junior club from 1980 until 1994. Phil Hayward played and coached in the 1970s and as club secretary was responsible for much of the ground redevelopment and the clubhouse construction. The Harlequin Rugby Club is well served by its current committee comprising President Adam Collins, Vice President Administration Col Packer, Vice President Football Andrew Choice, and members Brad Williams, Ray Jackson, Dave Waite and Brady Bisson. The club is excitedly looking forward to its fortieth anniversary and I have no doubt that its victory song—"You are my sunshine"—will be sung with more gusto than ever before.

TRIBUTE TO JOHN "SPUD" MURPHY

Mr BRUCE NOTLEY-SMITH (Coogee) [7.08 p.m.]: It is with sadness that I inform the House of the passing of John "Spud" Murphy. Spud passed away suddenly on 3 August aged 71. He will be dearly missed by his kids, whom he affectionately referred to as "Matt", "Bub" and "Pip". I knew Spud through his involvement in the Boy Scouts movement. He is known for his long and dedicated service to the Coogee Cubs, Scouts, Venturers and Rovers. My first memory of Spud relates to a camping trip during which our site was invaded by some local lads intent on making trouble. Spud and another scout leader arrived in the nick of time. I am sure that it was Spud's imposing stature and his gravelly voice more than anything else that convinced the potential troublemakers that it would be in their best interests to leave immediately.

At that time cubs groups were sponsored by the church. That meant members were required to attend church parades once a month. That posed a problem for Spud and his cub mates because the preacher at the time was, to use Spud's words, a "fire and brimstone preacher" whose sermons scared the kids so much that they feared attending. Nevertheless, Spud was not deterred and he continued as a member of the Scouts for more than 40 years. Spud was instrumental in setting up the Sydney Cenotaph Guard and served as a volunteer at the Cenotaph from 1988 until his sudden passing.

At least four times a year Spud would lead the local Coogee Scout crew to wash down the Cenotaph in Martin Place. Every year, at the Anzac Day Dawn Service—rain, hail or shine—Spud's crew would work

throughout the night preparing the monument for the service in the morning. As a result the Scouts became an integral part of the Anzac Day service, as was Spud in his capacity as a member of the Dawn Service Trust Committee. Eventually, Spud became an RSL Cenotaph attendant, a dedicated voluntary role.

Spud's road to involvement in the RSL came about after his military service, service for which he was awarded the Vietnam Logistic and Support Medal and the Australian Active Service Medal. I was reacquainted with Spud when I was the mayor of Randwick due to his involvement in the local RSL movement. Spud was a member of the crew of MV *Jeparit*, an Australian National Line cargo vessel which was chartered to deliver supplies to Australian forces in the Vietnam War. Many of the ship's seamen refused to man the vessel after five voyages, leading the Royal Australian Navy to commission the vessel as HMAS *Jeparit*, and for the vessel to enter military service. Spud served three tours of duty to Vietnam on the *Jeparit*.

But Spud just did not give up his time to commemorative associations alone. He had a great love for baseball, after he was introduced to the sport by his brother at the age of 10. He continued on with this involvement, eventually becoming vice-president of the Waverley District Baseball Club. Serving others and the memories of others is often a thankless and underappreciated task, but it was one Spud carried out with dedication. He became heavily involved with every organisation he joined. His efforts are a testament to his dedication to volunteer organisations and to our community.

The Custodian of the Cenotaph described Spud as an "iconic figure on the Sydney commemorative landscape, known by Premiers past and present", and noted that Spud was always personally addressed by the Governor Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir every time she visited the Cenotaph. He was cherished by his relatives and all who knew him, and will be sadly missed, but certainly not forgotten.

Private members' statements noted.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 7.12 p.m. until
Wednesday 10 August 2011 at 10.00 a.m.**
