

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Thursday 8 September 2011

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

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

## APPROPRIATION BILL 2011

### DUTIES AMENDMENT (FIRST HOME—NEW HOME) BILL 2011

#### Agreement in Principle

**Debate resumed from 6 September 2011.**

**Mr JOHN ROBERTSON** (Blacktown—Leader of the Opposition) [10.00 a.m.]: This is a budget that hurts the very people that elected this Government. This is a budget that rests on the back of pensioners, foster carers, first home buyers and the most vulnerable in our society. In a blatant breach of one election promise after another the Premier has sacked 5,000 workers, cut wages and conditions, slugged a \$1 billion stamp duty tax on first home buyers, increased rents for pensioners and slashed the allowances for foster carers. But there is more to this budget than meets the eye. In fact, much of the substance has been deliberately hidden from the people of New South Wales. The frightening, unwritten truth is that there is so much more to come. With \$8 billion of cuts still to be made, the threat of an axe hangs over every public sector worker in New South Wales, and every vital service.

We know the Premier is going to close three jails. Does that mean he is going to privatise the rest of them? We know he is going to lease the desalination plant. Is that the first step to selling off Sydney Water? We know he is going to privatise ferries. Can the Premier guarantee that the rest of the public transport system will not be auctioned off to the highest bidder? We know many of the infrastructure projects are underfunded. Does that mean the Premier has secretly decided to sell off electricity and sell off the poles and wires? The people of New South Wales will have to keep holding their breath and wait even longer to hear the Premier's real plans.

With this budget the O'Farrell Government has not just created a monster but a two-headed monster—a budget that hurts people at the same time as it hurts the bottom line. That is right: In six short months the Government has taken the budget from a \$1.3 billion surplus to a \$718 million deficit. A deficit budget to fund a bold job creation plan would be one thing in this fragile economic environment, but the O'Farrell Government has delivered a deficit with very little to show for it.

Having overseen the loss of 20,000 jobs across the economy since coming to office, the Government has now axed 5,000 more. It forecasts employment growth to contract from the 3.8 per cent it inherited to a miserable 1 per cent over the next financial year—a figure that will not even keep pace with population growth. This is a Government well on the way to trashing its economic credibility. It has endangered the State's coveted triple-A credit rating. It has left New South Wales dangerously exposed to international events—with no new initiatives or reforms to create jobs. Later in my remarks I will outline another way.

The people of New South Wales are the collateral damage of this budget. It is the first grisly chapter in the story of a new, unfair New South Wales. And it is littered with victims—unsuspecting people who took Barry O'Farrell at his word when he made them a promise. On 26 March the O'Farrell Government was entrusted with a sweeping mandate. But, five months later, just wander outside and see how the community is reacting. That sound you will hear today is the cry of betrayal from tens of thousands of nurses, teachers, police, firefighters and other public sector workers, their wages and conditions king-hit by this Premier's decision to bring back the worst of WorkChoices—after saying nothing about his plans before the election. Regular mums and dads are forced to accept a wage cap of 2.5 per cent while inflation runs hot at 3.6 per cent—either that, or trade off rights such as overtime, penalty rates and breast-feeding breaks.

When Tony Abbott called WorkChoices dead, buried and cremated Barry O'Farrell was already stomping out into the graveyard to exhume the body. And today—as nurses, ambulance officers and child

protection workers ask why their wages and conditions are being cut—the Premier's response is: Let them eat cake! These are not the only souls who have been betrayed. This week we learned 5,000 public sector workers will be given the tap on the shoulder—or, as the Minister for Health likes to put it, "deleted"—and sent packing by this Government to Centrelink. These are men and women with names and faces. They are health workers and prison wardens with families, forestry workers, scientists and ferry staff with children. These workers and the vital services they perform will never be replaced.

Then there is the epic disappointment with this budget in the regions of our State—western Sydney, the Central Coast, the Hunter, the Illawarra and beyond—a disappointment expressed not so much with angry words but a piercing hurt, a sullen silence; at commitments made, but not kept; at hopes dashed that this new Premier would be different. When this Government failed to tell the people of Stockton for 54 hours of a toxic chemical spill in their neighbourhood it sent a devastating message: that people like you are not important to people like us. Now regular families in the great regions of New South Wales have that same sick feeling. Just as this Government forgot the people of Stockton, it is already forgetting them. A budget cooked up on Sydney's North Shore simply has no clue what life is like for people who do it tough. It is a long way from Barry O'Farrell's high-rise office to the Blacktown-Mount Druitt Hospital in my electorate.

Today one in eight people are already walking out of the emergency department without being able to see a doctor. Under the previous Government contracts were tendered for a \$245 million upgrade, including a cancer care centre and 120 extra beds. Barry O'Farrell wound the Government's commitment back to \$125 million. Then on Tuesday, in an appallingly vindictive act, he gutted funding to an insulting \$500,000. It is the same story across New South Wales: Tamworth Hospital promised just \$3 million for a \$220 million upgrade—paltry scraps tossed at planned hospital upgrades at Parkes and Forbes, Hornsby and Cessnock, when the O'Farrell Government promised so much more, with no mention of further funding and no start date on construction.

The Government is not content with drowning western Sydney's aspirational young couples in stamp duty; we now learn commuter car parks in Cabramatta, Granville and Blaxland have been scrapped. And there will be zero funding for the upgrade of Fairfield station. The \$25 million Parramatta arts precinct has been beaten to a pulp and shoved in a dumpster despite the new Liberal member for Parramatta promising to deliver it at the last election. And this Premier calls himself the Minister for Western Sydney. With friends like that we do not need enemies in western Sydney. Central Coast roads funding has been slashed by one-third. The betrayal is repeated in the Illawarra, where the Government has scrapped the Illawarra Advantage Fund despite its proud record of creating jobs. The Government also squibbed its full commitment to the Princes Highway upgrade and other public transport projects. Meanwhile, up in the Hunter the member for Maitland has gone missing on her own electorate.

A promise of \$45 million for the New England Highway safety upgrades mysteriously vanished into thin air. The same goes for the \$20 million to kickstart Maitland Hospital. We are more likely to run into Elvis than a cop on the beat from Swansea police station. This Government's promise to reopen Swansea police station has bitten the dust. If only that were the extent of the betrayal of this budget. However, having inherited a \$1.3 billion surplus, this Government has seized the chance to give our State's most vulnerable citizens a gratuitous poke in the eye. On 26 March the 70,000 pensioners in public housing, who scrimp and save on fixed incomes, had no idea that five months later Barry O'Farrell would hike their rents by \$11.90 a week.

The State's foster carers, who move mountains against odds, had no idea their allowance would be docked by more than \$212 a fortnight. Young first home buyers had no idea that they would be slugged up to \$22,000 in stamp duty. Just as a young couple, after prudently putting away a little each week to save for their first home, is on the cusp of realising their dream, Barry O'Farrell barges in and snatches it away. The caller who gave the Premier a serve on talkback radio yesterday had it right.

The caller had it right. This is a knife in the back of anyone who ever aspired to step off the rental market treadmill, whose dream was simply to let their kids jump on a trampoline in their own backyard. With

this policy Barry O'Farrell has chosen to play Big Brother, to barge his way into people's housing decisions with all the finesse of an elephant on ice skates. His almighty shadow looms over young couples, terrifying them to take up new housing on the city fringe or pay up to \$22,000 extra. But he ignores the fact that so many considerations go into a young couple's choice of residential location. Some couples want to live near their parents; others want to live near work or preferred schools for their children. With home building approvals falling throughout 2011, the last thing New South Wales needs is a short-sighted policy that reduces demand for housing and compounds the downturn—or encourages people to take their housing investment interstate.

Over and over the Premier campaigned on tackling the rising cost of living, yet straight after the election he signed off on breathtaking utility price hikes—an electricity hike of 18 per cent effective 1 July, and now an extra \$12 price gouge in this week's budget for good measure, and a water price hike that the Premier has never come clean about but lurks like a predatory shark in Sydney Water's Statement of Corporate Intent. Over the next financial year the O'Farrell Government will extract soaring dividends from Sydney Water—demanding that it meet a targeted 79 per cent increase in profits before tax. Needless to say, this result is only achievable on the backs of hard-suffering households—people sick to death of rising utility bills as their real incomes remain stagnant. And that is before the privatisation of Sydney's desalination plant raises water prices even further.

Barry O'Farrell has already turned his back on the people who elected him. Those who voted Liberal for the first time have awoken to find their seemingly inoffensive Premier suddenly bloated with arrogance and squeezing them hard. And all for what? After all the pain meted out by this Government—the mass sackings, the cruel cuts to wages and conditions, the gouges to pensioners, foster parents and young home buyers, the hike in mining royalties—it is so inept that it cannot even deliver a budget surplus. Of course, the Government began trashing its own economic credibility from day one. This Premier and his inexperienced, naive Treasurer came into office full of bluster, accusing the previous Government of leaving a black hole. Their ranting and raving was based on the cynical premise that if you repeat an untruth often enough it becomes the accepted wisdom. Their claims bore no relation to reality. Premier, the previous Labor Government left the State with a triple-A credit rating.

We delivered 15 out of 16 budget surpluses. We weathered the global financial crisis without sacking a single worker. One by one every independent expert—the Parliamentary Budget Office, Standard and Poor's, and the Coalition's own Michael Lambert—marched out to attest that we left the budget in solid shape and issued our forecasts with full transparency. Today the Premier stands exposed. He over-egged his case. Government budget papers confirm a starting surplus of \$1.3 billion—far better than even Acting Treasury Secretary Lambert anticipated in his report. The Liberals and The Nationals went from Opposition into Government but failed to realise that the job description had changed. The Premier is no longer in opposition with the luxury to talk down the economy for base political objectives, as he has done for the past 12 months. He holds the responsibility of government. His duty is to instil business confidence and certainty.

In August this year the real market shock hit—and the numbers did deteriorate. But after talking down the economy year after year in opposition the Premier and his hapless Treasurer were caught flat-footed. That is why this budget missed the mark. It should have been about building confidence, delivering certainty and growing employment at a time of global economic instability. It should have been a budget that invested in jobs instead of waving the white flag and settling for a pathetic 1 per cent annualised employment growth rate—not even enough to keep up with population growth. The budget should have provided clear funding plans and timelines for key infrastructure commitments, and sent a clear message to investors that the Government was in charge and had a plan. Instead, the Government's fiscal strategy plays with fire and leaves no buffer in case of an international downturn.

The budget contains no details of how the Government will meet its \$8 billion savings plan, or how the assets the Premier will privatise—Sydney Ferries, Port Botany and the desalination plant—factor into the budget to help meet his uncosted infrastructure commitments. The Premier basically has announced a rail line on a wing and a prayer. He is out posing for glossy photos but the figures and time frames remain a mystery. What

does he have to hide? The 5,000 public sector job cuts and the tens of thousands more positions that the Government fails to replace through natural attrition are almost certain to have a contractionary effect. The impact will seep across New South Wales like a slow-acting poison.

The O'Farrell Government has learned nothing from the austerity lessons of North America and Europe that laying people off in uncertain times is exactly the wrong thing to do. These job cuts will hit the tax base, hit household income, and hit business and consumer confidence. Combined with a fragile international economy—and all it takes is a small slip in growth or revenues—the Government is dancing on the precipice of a new era of budget deficits for our State. At a time of global uncertainty, the Government has pulled the wrong lever. It could have invested in people and buttressed the State's financial position. Instead its budget takes an axe to people and an axe to the financial position. So today I announce a plan to put people back at the centre of this budget.

It is a practical, affordable plan to create jobs and invest in our suburbs, towns and rural and regional areas. I call on the O'Farrell Government to redirect all funding from the \$280 million Regional Relocation Grant Scheme to create and retain 44,000 jobs in agriculture and manufacturing over four years. The new Regional Agricultural and Manufacturing Promotion Scheme [RAMPS] would help businesses in rural and regional New South Wales doing it tough. Our policy would invest more than one quarter of a billion dollars in jobs and job creation—to deal with the long-term structural changes and costs associated with the resources boom, summarised by the high Australian dollar over the past 12 months.

The Government must support growth outside the mining sector to ensure all industries in our economy are strong. Part of the scheme would be made available to retrain and redeploy employees suffering from recent job cuts in the Illawarra, Tumbarumba and Ingleburn—workers the O'Farrell Government forgot in its budget. Most importantly, our plan would underwrite 44,000 jobs and help grow rural and regional communities. A \$7,000 handout will not last long for a family in rural and regional New South Wales, but a secure job will pay the bills and the mortgage for the long term.

The plan would have three major components: \$200 million in targeted capital assistance to help regional businesses expand plus funding for companies to restructure to avoid downsizing or closure; \$40 million to retrain employees displaced or laid off in rural and regional New South Wales; and \$40 million to support businesses looking to innovate and seize new opportunities in the Australian economy. The Government's own Regional Industries Investment Fund has reduced regional development funding by \$11 million. While the Government's fund is a sneaky budget cut for rural and regional New South Wales that includes spending for infrastructure and community projects, our program would invest more than one quarter of a billion dollars to directly create and retain jobs in agriculture and manufacturing areas. This will not only benefit rural and regional New South Wales, it will also increase business confidence across New South Wales and provide a strong tax base for the future—ensuring government can provide essential infrastructure and services. After all, that is what the New South Wales budget needed to be about and what those opposite have failed to deliver. This week's budget marks a line in the sand. Barry O'Farrell will go down in history as the Premier who lost the surplus.

He has put all his chips on the North West Rail Link—even if he has to trash the State's most vulnerable citizens in the process—pensioners, foster carers, war widows—and launch a \$1 billion sneak attack on first-time home-buyers. He has lazily settled for economic contraction rather than investing aggressively in jobs. But the North West Rail Link will cost a whole lot more than \$314 million this year and \$2.5 billion over the forward estimates. So, over to you Premier. How do your promises of a wafer-thin surplus stack up when you have barely put down pocket change on the North West Rail Link? Having shown in this budget that most of your election promises are not worth the paper they are written on, what other front-line services will you cut? Who else will you sack? What other assets will you move to privatise? Where will your terrible addiction to privatisation end?

Let there be no doubt from this day forth: Premier, the honeymoon is over. Your Government owns everything that happens to the New South Wales economy. If electricity and water prices go up, the Premier will

be in the dock. If the property market falters because his stamp duty hikes impact young families, the Premier will be in the dock. If New South Wales sinks its triple-A credit rating, the Premier will be in the dock. If the economy slows down and unemployment goes up, the Premier will be in the dock. He inherited an unemployment rate of 4.9 per cent and he will own every single job loss. I say to the people of New South Wales: In a few short months this Government has already started to disappoint.

I am determined to lead a strong Opposition that holds this Government to account. When the Government attacks the working conditions of nurses, teachers and firefighters we will fight it. When the Government rips the heart out of programs that improve people's lives we will shame it, because we in Labor believe that every person deserves a little extra hope. I say to all who feel let down by this Government, from Newcastle to Bathurst and Coffs Harbour to Campbelltown: We hear you; we see you and you will never be forgotten again.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

**Bills agreed to in principle.**

### **Passing of the Bills**

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

## **BUDGET ESTIMATES AND RELATED PAPERS**

### **Financial Year 2011-2012**

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD** (Wakehurst—Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Infrastructure NSW) [10.27 a.m.]: I move:

That this House take note of the Budget Estimates and related papers for the financial year 2011-2012.

**Pursuant to resolution debate adjourned and set down as an order of the day for a future day.**

## **RESIDENTIAL PARKS AMENDMENT (REGISTER) BILL 2011**

### **Consideration in Detail**

#### **Consideration of the Legislative Council amendments.**

#### *Schedule of amendments referred to in message of 6 September 2011*

No. 1 Page 3, schedule 1. Insert after line 11:

[2] Section 3 (1)

Insert in alphabetical order:

park land owner, in relation to a residential park, means any person who jointly or severally, whether at law or in equity, is entitled to the land comprising the residential park for any estate of freehold in possession.

No. 2 Page 3, schedule 1 [2], proposed section 142A (6) (b), line 34. Insert "and, if not the same person or persons, the name and contact details of the park land owner or owners" after "owners".

No. 3 Page 4, schedule 1 [2], proposed section 142B (5) (b), line 35. Insert "or park land owner or owners" after "owners".

No. 4 Page 4, schedule 1 [2], proposed section 142B (5) (c), line 36. Insert "or the contact details of the park manager" after "park manager".

No. 5 Page 5, schedule 1 [2], proposed section 142B (7), line 11. Insert "during any calendar year" after "10% or 10".

No. 6 Page 5, schedule 1 [2], proposed section 142D (3), line 30. Omit "may". Insert instead "is to".

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS** (Lane Cove—Minister for Fair Trading) [10.22 a.m.]: I move:

That the House agree to the Legislative Council amendments.

The amendments improve the bill by adding clarity to a number of its provisions. I thank members who have participated in the debate, both in this Chamber and in the Legislative Council, in particular, the Hon. Jan Barham, who moved a number of sensible amendments. I look forward to moving ahead with this important work and reviewing the Act knowing that the Register of Parks will be in place to support a comprehensive consultation process. I commend the amendments to the House.

**Ms CHERIE BURTON** (Kogarah) [10.28 a.m.]: The Opposition will support the amendments moved by the Government and The Greens in the Legislative Council. They add to proposals in the bill to make it clear that details of park owners will need to be registered to clarify the requirements for updating registered information and to ensure the Register of Parks will be made publicly available. I understand this measure has the support of residential park groups. The Opposition is happy to support any measures which give more meat to this bill and, therefore, make the legislation more effective when it comes into operation.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

**Legislative Council amendments agreed to.**

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

## **TRANSPORT LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2011**

### **Agreement in Principle**

**Debate resumed from 7 September 2011.**

**Dr GEOFF LEE** (Parramatta) [10.30 a.m.]: It gives me great pleasure to speak in debate on the Transport Legislation Amendment Bill 2011. I commend Ms Gladys Berejiklian, the Minister for Transport, and the Hon. Duncan Gay, the Minister for Roads and Ports, for introducing the bill and for demolishing the silos that existed during the appalling Labor Government tenure of the past 16 years. The need for this bill goes back as far as 2008 when the Liberals and Nationals made a pre-election commitment to transform the silo approach and to develop one entity called Transport for NSW.

Transport for NSW will have a customer-centric approach to infrastructure planning and the delivery of transport for New South Wales. The economic cost of traffic congestion amounts to billions of dollars a year, which is significant, but it also affects people trying to get to work. Every morning in Parramatta 70,000 people wake up and leave the local government area to travel elsewhere. They spend up to two or three hours on Victoria Road, Parramatta Road, the M4 motorway and Old Windsor Road commuting to and from work, which would be time better spent with their families. At present issues exist with the freight network and the commercial chaos that is created by businesses spending excessive amounts of money to transport goods and people in an effort to service clients and to deliver materials which has a social impact on families and businesses.

I had an opportunity to look at the transport management centre, which will coordinate the different departments being formed within Transport for NSW. I was impressed with its ability to monitor the roads, rail network and ferries and its ability to manage day-to-day traffic issues, including timetables, critical incidents such as those that have occurred on the F3, and special events such as the upcoming Sydney marathon. The member for Strathfield came up with the idea of reproducing the effective transport coordination system that was in place during the Olympic Games. Once Transport for NSW is up and running we will again have that level of coordination.

Most people would agree that traffic congestion eases during school holiday periods. I am given to understand that during our school holiday periods there is a 3 per cent to 5 per cent reduction in traffic on our roads, which means that the roads are freed up for the average person driving to work, for parents taking their kids to school, and for businesses making deliveries and trying to service their clients. Transport for NSW aims to reduce traffic congestion so that we have a free flow of commerce, vehicles and public transport in New South Wales. That is what we need after 16 years of Labor's failures, lack of foresight, lack of planning and its non-delivery in the area of transport infrastructure and coordination.

This legislation calls for an integrated transport authority, Transport for NSW, which will have as its core purpose providing for the needs and expectations of the travelling public—an authority at the centre of planning and delivery, which is wonderful. Other members have spoken about putting the customer first, and the customer is the great people of New South Wales. Transport for NSW will combine into one organisation the Roads and Traffic Authority, NSW Maritime, the Transport Construction Authority and the Country Rail Infrastructure Authority and be responsible for the integration of bus, rail and ferry timetables. People in my electorate of Parramatta are looking forward to seeing this level of coordination in a transport system that they utilise.

It is important to have a one-stop shop—a central point of contact—where members of the community can obtain information relating to boat licences or driver licences. People are sick of going from department to department, or not knowing where to go and being given the run around. As I said earlier, congestion costs New South Wales billions of dollars a year, both commercially and socially. The NRMA, a long-time advocate for reducing traffic congestion, has presented many reports containing suggestions on how to improve road congestion. I note that Transport for NSW will be implementing a smart ticketing system and the Government has done some good work in this area. The Minister for Transport, Ms Gladys Berejiklian, has worked hard to ensure that our current ticketing system is integrated. However, as much more is required these issues will be addressed by Transport for NSW.

The Minister for Transport has achieved great success in providing discounts for monthly, quarterly and yearly tickets, with a 50 per cent increase in uptake of those tickets in the western suburbs. The people of Parramatta appreciate the good work that is being done by the Minister. This Government will focus on customers to ensure that this system works for the people of New South Wales. We will break down the silo mentality so there is communication between ferry, road, train and bus, and we will provide an integrated approach. Transport for NSW will integrate six bodies and break down those silos to avoid wasting money on projects that do not proceed; for example, the \$0.5 billion that the incompetent former Labor Government spent on the Rozelle metro—money that could have been better spent on projects in Parramatta. Transport for NSW will ensure that projects are merit assessed, properly planned and delivered and that process will be closely linked to Infrastructure NSW in order to achieve those objectives.

Parramatta residents are sick of broken promises such as the Parramatta to Epping rail link. Parramatta is an interesting area because as the capital of greater western Sydney it combines a central business district with leafy green suburban streets. It has been forecast that in the next 20 years to 2031 there will be an additional 30,000 jobs and 20,000 residents in the electorate of Parramatta. Currently the Parramatta electorate supports 110,000 jobs and 90,000 people come into the Parramatta local government area each day to work. Public transport is a big issue in the Parramatta electorate as one-quarter of our residents do not own a car. We have a rail network that includes Westmead, Wentworthville, Parramatta, Harris Park, and Telopea. It is interesting to note that the first Parramatta train station opened in 1855 as part of the link between Sydney and Parramatta. Now it is estimated to be the fourth or fifth busiest train station on the network, with one-quarter of Parramatta residents travelling to work by rail.

The Parramatta ferry has continuing patronage and service delivery issues as a result of the former incompetent Labor Government. The capacity of the ferry to transport customers is limited by the number of people that can access it and park nearby. It is estimated that up to 25 per cent of scheduled trips are cancelled due to river dredging problems and the ability of vessels to travel during low tide. Major roads such as Victoria Road, Parramatta Road, the M4, Pennant Hills Road and Old Windsor Road are utilised by a little over half the people in my electorate who travel each morning to drop their kids off to school, go to work, or both. In his Budget Speech Treasurer Mike Baird announced a \$2 million funding allocation to upgrade the Cumberland Highway connection to the M4. Anything that improves congestion and reduces the commute for the community of Parramatta will be appreciated. I am not talking about only the buses that travel into the city; I am talking also about buses that travel on the north and south axis—to Macquarie Park and Chatswood. Nearly 500,000 people use the bus way travelling from Liverpool to Parramatta every year.

Bus timetabling is also an issue in areas such as Dundas and Telopea, which have inadequate services. It is great to see the \$6.8 million budget allocation for a bus lane on Church Street to facilitate bus access. That will ease congestion in that area of Parramatta, which is such an important electorate. We also have a huge bus-rail interchange at Parramatta, the capital of western Sydney and the hub for the electorates of Penrith, Liverpool and Campbelltown. The budget also allocates \$45 million for a new State Transit Authority bus depot and a large amount for footpaths and cycleways. That will encourage residents to cycle or walk to work. We also need more parking capacity in the central business district and at Westmead Hospital. I am talking to the office of the Minister for Health about how we can improve parking capacity at Westmead so that hardworking doctors, nurses and staff can find a parking space and not have to wait for two years to have a space allocated. That will take pressure off the streets around the hospital and improve the local amenity.

Parramatta needs the Epping to Parramatta rail link. We have already made representations to Infrastructure NSW. The previous Government failed in that it delivered only half the link at twice the cost. We also need jobs in the local area so that people do not have to travel to North Sydney, the Sydney central business district and Macquarie Park to work. Parramatta must be recognised as a major employment hub and its transport infrastructure must reflect that. It is home to 110,000 jobs and another 30,000 are on the way. We already have the justice precinct, which employs 1,500, and Sydney Water employs a further 2,000 people. We look forward to the \$1.6 billion civic place development. It is predicted that it will generate 8,000 jobs in the area.

We want to be able to encourage people to use public transport so we must make it easy, convenient and reliable. We also need a ring road around Parramatta so that motorists are not held up at traffic lights, and more park'n'ride facilities on the outskirts of the central business district so that the people who work in Parramatta can take a shuttle into the centre of the city. The existing loop bus that the State Government is funding provides an exceptional service to Parramatta because it connects all the different areas in the central business district and some one million people use it each year.

Transport for NSW will be an essential part of the development of this State. It will make public transport convenient and easy to use and we will have aligned timetables so that buses arrive before trains depart and people can make connections. It will provide a cost-effective approach so that we are not wasting millions of dollars. It will examine the bus and train routes to ensure that they are appropriate. It will also ensure coordination of services, which is essential. These changes will encourage people to use public transport because it will be easier. I congratulate the Minister for Transport and the Minister for Roads and Ports for their foresight in developing Transport for NSW. They have already demonstrated their commitment to getting the State moving and I commend their bill.

**Mr LEE EVANS** (Heathcote) [10.44 a.m.]: I also support the Transport Legislation Amendment Bill 2011. This bill brings about historic change to the delivery of transport services in New South Wales, change that the people of New South Wales have been crying out for the past 16 years. The current clutter of agencies and authorities responsible for this vital sector have been overwhelmed by miscommunication and poor coordination. Transport in this State has been a clumsy juggling act where one hand has not known what the other was doing, and often did not even seem to speak the same language. This has driven public confidence and satisfaction so low that countless people who are ideally situated to use public transport still prefer to drive their cars.

This increases the already massive burden of congestion on our roads and few places around New South Wales have experienced this worse than the Heathcote electorate. Every day motorists using Sydney's gateway to the south are bumper to bumper with thousands of other motorists who should be getting to work on an integrated network on which they can rely. The speed limit in the Heathcote shopping centre is 50 kilometres an hour and the traffic is often backed up three to four kilometres in the morning and afternoon peak hours. The previous Government relied on commuters to put up with substandard service. As long as some were still willing to endure the massive delays and mismanagement, everything was okay. It is not enough simply to build public transport infrastructure; we must make it so efficient and convenient that the public have no choice but to use it. We must make the comparative benefit of public transport obvious and undeniable to achieve its potential.

Australians returning from trips overseas invariably do so racked with envy after using the efficient networks they found so easy to navigate despite a language barrier. This is often the case even when returning from nations that are far less developed than Australia with far larger populations. In Japan the public transport system seamlessly moves millions of people every hour and passengers alighting from a train know there will be a bus seat waiting for them as they step off the platform. It pains me to imagine what international visitors to New South Wales must say about their experiences using our network when they return home.

The purpose of this bill is to bring the New South Wales transport system up to a level we can be proud of on an international stage. It will fundamentally change the way we look at transport in the State and the people of New South Wales deserve nothing short of this. The establishment of Transport for NSW is the first and most important step toward this radical program of improvement, coordinating delivery across all modes and putting the customer at the centre of planning decisions, whether that customer is a motorist, pedestrian, public transport user, farmer or importer. In one clean sweep this bill removes the roadblocks of bureaucracy that paralysed the Roads and Traffic Authority by bringing all modes of transport under one united authority. There will be no more passing the blame or the endless excuses that were typical of the former arrangement.

However, we must remember that it is the system that has been broken all these years, not the individual staff members. I am proud that these workers can now escape the maze of red tape and join one unified authority with a clear purpose and structure. The New South Wales Liberals and The Nationals made this commitment back in 2008 and still the previous Labor Government failed to enact any meaningful reform. Time and again it would promise changes and improvements, usually before elections, but time and again these promises were broken, and the people of New South Wales paid the price. The new integrated authority will design a system to support the economic development of the State and the delivery of this infrastructure will be done on time and on budget. Customers will know that their train, bus, ferry and light rail timetables are integrated and that someone has actually sat there and thought about how they will get from A to B. It will provide critical infrastructure to support walking and cycling without interfering with the needs of other road users.

An easy-to-use ticketing system will fulfil the broken promise made by the previous Government when modern ticketing infrastructure was half installed at railway stations across the State a decade ago. The new system will be state-of-the-art so that visitors can easily navigate the various modes the day it commences. Locals who long ago abandoned the confusing networks and ticketing systems will return to public transport and be able to trust their ability to plan trips. Our ability to change perceptions and the usage of public transport was clearly demonstrated in July when long-term train ticket sales more than doubled following a significant price cut. The discount, which saved commuters up to \$240, caused a 105 per cent increase at Sutherland railway station in my electorate and a 103 per cent increase across the State. This meant 19,000 extra long-term ticket sales and significantly shorter queues at ticket boxes. This capacity to affect trends is encouraging but obviously much more significant reform is required to fix our failing system.

Beyond tickets and schedules, the process of obtaining drivers licences, boating licences and information across all modes will be brought under one roof so that stakeholders will know exactly where to go, whether they are using taxis, buses, trains, light rail, ferries or community transport, cycling or walking or all of the above. The bill abolishes the existing silo authorities of the Roads and Traffic Authority, the Transport Construction Authority, NSW Maritime and Country Rail Infrastructure. These will be replaced by the six divisions of Transport NSW, making its functions clearer and more efficient. These divisions are customer experience, planning and programs, policy and regulation, transport services, transport projects and freight and regional development.

Having an entire division dedicated to customer experience shows that we are committed to building a working system and being accountable for the results. This division will lead the organisation to provide the most attractive system possible and will behave as an advocate for transport users. This is incredibly important for commuters in my electorate, many of whom spend well over two hours on the public transport system getting to and from work each day. These people need and deserve to know that someone is listening when they have a complaint and, more importantly, that something will be done about it. No longer will suggestions and complaints disappear into a black hole. No longer will the New South Wales Government take its transport users for granted.

The Planning and Programs Division will establish and maintain the close links between planning and development of transport investment programs to make sure that projects announced are delivered. It will identify needs and clear plans to fulfil those needs, making sure that strategic plans are linked to land use. It will also manage Transport NSW submissions to Infrastructure NSW. The Freight and Regional Development Division will guarantee improved productivity, especially in the regions, by providing a central office for the New South Wales Government's role in freight transport, distribution and servicing New South Wales. The industry will have a single point of contact with government, whether it is using road, rail, marine, ports and intermodal terminals. A key objective of this division will be to encourage and protect regional development by connecting key locations where freight is generated and delivered.

The Policy and Regulation Division will drive strategic policy in areas including procurement and performance of public transport, national transport reform initiatives, transport access and pricing, driver and vehicle licensing and registration and safety across all modes. This division will be the main interface in industry stakeholders on policy and reform matters and shape New South Wales's contribution to the national agenda. The Transport Services Division will ensure that Transport NSW delivers value for money for the people of New South Wales in every aspect of its operation. It will develop and manage performance contracts so that no part of the network slips below the very high standard we have set. It will focus on service planning, development and improvement, contract development, ticketing services including electronic ticketing and the development of an integrated timetable.

Transport NSW will take over the planning and coordination functions of RailCorp, State Transit, Sydney Ferries and the roads and maritime authorities, leaving these agencies to focus solely on the delivery of quality service to customers. In this way, all planners will have intimate knowledge of all other plans being developed across the network. No decision will be made without first understanding how this will affect users on other modes and planning how the modes can complement each other. Staff working in existing offices currently are employed under more than 10 different awards, but the new agency will introduce one standard award, which is consistent with the practice in the New South Wales public sector. This will remove confusion and disparity. Staff who transfer to the new agency will not suffer financial detriment.

All this sounds like common sense and the way that it should have always happened, but this type of system eluded the previous Government for 16 years. Throughout that time countless headlines screamed the solutions that were so badly needed, but they fell on the deaf ears of those opposite. While campaigning before the election the lion's share of complaints I heard were about the transport system. One major complaint was that people were left stranded on the railway station in the morning hoping that their train would arrive. Instead, all they got was a loudspeaker announcement that the service had been cancelled, which resulted in their being half an hour to 45 minutes late for work.

Since we came to office in March constituents have regularly visited my office and approached me on the street just to tell me how grateful they are that the New South Wales Liberal and Nationals Government is now at the helm and getting to work to make up for Labor's years of neglect and under-performance. Some of the constituents who have come up to me in the street have been a little too exuberant: they have hugged me. I suppose it is not a bad thing for a new member of Parliament to be hugged by his constituents because they are so grateful we are in government. The Opposition should take note.

**Mr John Williams:** You're a big teddy bear.

**Mr LEE EVANS:** I am. The new authority has been supported by historic funding commitments announced in the New South Wales budget, with \$13.1 billion for transport and roads in 2011-12—that is \$1.4 billion or 12 per cent higher than the 2010-11 budget. This includes a record \$5.4 billion investment in New South Wales roads, including \$2.4 billion for new roads, \$1.2 billion for maintenance for the State's existing roads, \$344 million in improvements to the traffic network and \$265 million for road safety. An operating and capital expenditure for public transport of \$7.7 billion was provided, representing a 10 per cent increase on last year's budget. This includes more than \$600 million for the North West Rail Link and South West Rail Link, \$51 million to start building the Wynyard Walk and \$103 million to expand light rail. Clearly, this is a Government committed to repairing and reforming the State's transport framework. With this bill we can bring the New South Wales transport system into the twenty-first century and give the people of New South Wales the service they deserve. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr MARK COURE** (Oatley) [10.57 a.m.]: I support the Transport Legislation Amendment Bill 2011. This bill means a significant change for the administration of transport in this State. For the first time in the history of our State all planning and policy in transport across all modes, including roads, will be integrated. The new structure will be dedicated to serving transport customers, whether they catch a train, drive a car, ride a bicycle or hop on a bus or ferry, Transport for NSW will be responsible for making their trip as easy and as comfortable as possible. This bill means a significant change for the administration of transport in this State. The fundamental change will be the way in which we approach public transport across the State.

These changes have been driven by the need to create a better transport system, one that maximises the benefits for the community and the economy. The integrated transport authority, which will be created by this bill, is fundamental in delivering this outcome for the people of New South Wales. The changes in this bill put the customer firmly at the centre of transport. The intent is to create a team that will deliver changes that will affect people's lives in a positive way to create a public transport system of which we can all be proud.

This is a fundamental reform to the way we plan transport services in the State. These reforms will mean fewer people in the back office and more people in the front line of our public transport system as our State grows and our transport services grow with it. Transport for NSW demonstrates this Government's focus on providing a service for the people of New South Wales. This bill ensures that transport agencies operate as a team, with every person across the transport portfolio playing an important role in shaping the services that are delivered to the customer. This bill is about ensuring shared ideas, shared solutions and a shared outcome for public transport across New South Wales. The focus for Transport for NSW is the customer, whether it is a public transport user, a motorist, a pedestrian, a farmer or an importer. This bill means that the customer will be the centre of everything the transport agencies do.

This bill will provide a coordinated approach to public transport across New South Wales. From simple things like ensuring train and bus timetables provide seamless connections for customers, through to the delivering integrated plans and major multimodal projects. This has been on the agenda for many years and was the policy of the previous Labor Government, but that Government was more interested in bad opinion polls and in changing leaders than in actually implementing policies. Transport for NSW will be responsible for improving customer experience through planning, program administration, policy and regulation of transport services, infrastructure and freight. This will free up the operating agencies such as RailCorp and the newly formed Roads and Maritime Services, to focus on providing safe, clean, reliable and efficient transport service to customers.

The relationship between Transport for NSW and the operating agencies will be a partnership. It will not be a case of the integrated authority making decisions in isolation. While decision-making for planning and policy will be centralised in Transport for NSW, the operating agencies will still be relied upon to provide expert advice to inform those decisions. Coordination between bus, rail and ferry will improve public transport so that people regard it as truly reliable, regular, clean and safe—something that is overdue. Public transport will become the preferred option, not just for commuters but for social and occasional users. This will mean, over time, that fewer people will feel the need to drive to work. To encourage members of the public to use public transport regularly and reliably, we need two things: one, correct policy settings; and two, appropriate investment in infrastructure.

Over the years lack of appropriate policy settings by the previous Labor Government has resulted in many commuters giving up on public transport and instead adding to road congestion by deciding to get into their cars every day. An example in my electorate is the congestion on the M5 and King Georges Road. Of course, under investment in infrastructure only exacerbates the problem and adds to further congestion. How can commuters have any faith in that policy setting or in funding, when the previous Government announced, axed and re-announced more road and rail projects than it now has members in the lower House? One example is the infamous Action for Transport Plan 2010. We all remember that, do we not?

**Government members:** Yes.

**Mr MARK COURE:** Was the Hornsby to Newcastle high speed rail line, which was to have started in 2010, delivered?

**Government members:** No.

**Mr MARK COURE:** The North West Rail Link—was that delivered?

**Government members:** No.

**Mr MARK COURE:** The Sutherland to Wollongong high speed rail link—was that delivered? No, it was not. The Hurstville to Strathfield rail link—was that delivered? No, it was not. The Liverpool Y-Link—was that delivered? No, it was not. What about the Rozelle Metro?

**Mr Chris Patterson:** How much did it cost?

**Mr MARK COURE:** It cost \$500 million from memory. Was that delivered? No, it was not.

**Mr Kevin Conolly:** We got the bill.

**Mr MARK COURE:** We got the bill, but was it delivered? No, it was not. The extension to the Eastern Suburbs rail line—was that delivered?

**Government members: No.**

**Mr MARK COURE:** For many years my community has suffered from the twin troubles of poor policy settings and under investment in infrastructure. As a result, every day many commuters are confronted by congestion on the King Georges Road and the M5. This bill deals with the first of those challenges by getting the policy settings right and creating an environment in which the customer comes first. It also delivers on an integrated transport network, aligning buses, trains, ferries and light rail—something that is long overdue. In relation to funding, it is important to know the steps already taken by the O'Farrell Government to make public transport a more reliable option. The decision to cut fares by 9 per cent for monthly, quarterly and yearly rail tickets is a sensible and practical policy decision. In my electorate, commuters at Penshurst who had bought a yearly ticket were running back up the stairs to tell me that they had saved more than \$200 per annum by buying an annual ticket.

The Restart NSW Fund Bill will also see investment in infrastructure and will begin to unlock some of those much-needed infrastructure projects that are not as headline-grabbing as the North West Rail Link or the M5 East upgrade. A perfect example was the need for a left-hand turn bay to reduce congestion on some of the local roads in my own electorate, like Hillcrest Avenue and Woniora Road. This road is used by many commuters to connect to King Georges Road or to access the Hurstville central business district. I recently hosted the Treasurer in my electorate and showed him the site firsthand. He agreed that projects such as the one at this intersection would be ideal for funding under Restart NSW.

I look forward to campaigning and ensuring that project, like many others, is delivered. The budget, which was handed down two days ago, provides for significant investment in transport infrastructure. It is a sound, sensible and fiscally responsible budget that deals with the financial hand grenade left to us by those opposite, but it also addresses the significant backlog of infrastructure. In my electorate \$10.4 million was allocated to increased capacity at Hurstville railway station; \$500,000 was allocated to bus priority treatment at Bridge Street and King Georges Road; and \$60,000 was allocated in 2011-2012 to plan for the upgrade of the M5 between King Georges Road and Camden Valley Way. This significant investment in transport infrastructure in my community will reduce backlogs and congestion, and improve the reliability of the public transport network.

That does not include investment in new buses, trains and commuter transport. It is a record spend of \$13.3 billion—a \$1.4 billion increase on last year—which constitutes a 12 per cent increase in spending on transport and roads. However, it is not about the amount of money you have but how you use it. Coupled with the legislative changes to establish Transport for NSW, taxpayers' money will be better targeted and better spent. A number of organisations have supported this reform and it is worth quoting Brendan Lyon, the Chief Executive of Infrastructure Partnership Australia. He said recently about Transport for NSW:

This structure will equip New South Wales with a transport division solely focused on the freight network for the first time.

A single agency to oversee transport planning and procurement and drive accountability from line agencies makes sense. This new structure will better equip New South Wales to make the right decisions about its transport infrastructure and services.

This model reflects world's best practice and drives a much clearer delineation of responsibilities and outcomes.

The organisation created in this bill integrates not just the transport services but also the teams of people across the transport portfolio. Transport for NSW and the bus, rail, ferry and road maritime service agencies will be part of one team, delivering something that truly makes a difference to people's lives. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr GREG PIPER** (Lake Macquarie) [11.09 a.m.]: I speak on the Transport Legislation Amendment Bill 2011 and endorse the benefits that it may deliver. The historic disconnect between the various areas of responsibility for infrastructure and service delivery for a range of transport needs for residents and businesses in New South Wales should be well known by all in this House. Many important initiatives were proposed by the Government in its election platform, and the establishment of Infrastructure NSW and Transport NSW were two of the most appealing. It is early days for both initiatives; however, the logic of the move is compelling. The frustrations of failure or sub-optimal performance of public transport are endured by thousands of people daily and members have received lots of representations from constituents about that.

We often speak in this place about what commuters want. Commuters travelling to and from work or school want timely, comfortable, safe and, importantly, reliable public transport options. The implications for

commerce are obvious, both intrastate and interstate, particularly with the problems of coordinating rail freight on lines shared with passenger services. The inability to advance the well-known need for rail corridor upgrades to separate freight and passengers and to reduce rail distances has been an ongoing frustration; this bill provides a way forward. As both a mayor and local member, I have been consistently frustrated with the culture of agencies such as the Roads and Traffic Authority and RailCorp dealing in a transparent and cooperative manner with the community, its elected representatives and others involved in planning to meet the needs of growing communities.

This criticism is not directed at particular individuals—no doubt many employed in those agencies, if not all of them, are good people—it is aimed at the organisations that appear to have developed a culture in which customer service is a hollow cliché and customers are regarded as an inconvenience. The bill provides for a coordinating authority to be called Transport for NSW, with a central role in the governance of the delivery of transport services. A recent independent study has recommended an autonomous regional authority to achieve better planning and coordination of public transport in the Hunter. I support this, but I understand the Government does not—at least at this stage. Transport for NSW would be well placed to provide the rational improvements that the Hunter deserves. I call on the Minister to keep an open mind on the possibility of providing greater regional autonomy in the future.

This is an opportunity to plan and provide bus, train and ferry services that not only do a better job of meeting the needs of the people of the lower Hunter, but also to integrate the timetabling of services to maximise the benefit. The biggest single and most beneficial public transport project on the horizon in the lower Hunter is the Lake Macquarie Transport Interchange at Glendale. It was pleasing to see \$1 million committed to Stage 1, the Pennant Street Bridge, as part of the overall project in this week's budget. A train station and bus interchange at this important location can deliver great benefits by changing the commuting habits of many of the people who work in the adjoining commercial and industrial areas. It will be a valuable step to increasing patronage on public transport to a level where it becomes easier to provide more frequent train services and integrated bus timetables to suit. These improvements could also be achieved at other stations along the Newcastle to Central rail line.

This significant proposal, which has been the subject of extensive discussion by many members from the lower Hunter over a long period of time, has wide community support particularly in the Hunter. But while the funding allocated in this week's budget for the Pennant Street Bridge interchange was pleasing, the members for the electorates of Charlestown and Wallsend and I, as the member for Lake Macquarie, as well as our earnest member for Cessnock who is present in the Chamber, are disappointed that Federal funding was not provided through the Regional Development Australia Fund. This morning I spoke to our local Federal member, the Hon. Greg Combet, who assured me that he is committed to the project. I look forward to the future support of the Hon. Greg Combet and his Federal colleagues for that funding.

Public transport could be improved by shifting to a customer-centred focus and by operating more rationally. This would result in improved potential for extra effort to be applied in meeting the needs of particular groups. For example, I have previously spoken of the need for improved guidance for visually impaired people at railway stations. There is still much to be done, but even seemingly small things can be improved in this process. An appropriate centralised oversight of road projects may also ensure greater customer focus when priorities are set for work on problem roads such as Main Road 217. History has shown that a lack of contingency planning on the F3 can lead to severe consequences in the event of collisions and lane closures. Rather than becoming wise after the event, Transport for NSW should aim for a higher level of forethought in any comparable situations.

Many important decisions on road infrastructure are not of a technical nature. A change in this area could ensure maximum benefit for motorists. I look forward to a change of culture, which should include much greater communication between regional managers and local elected representatives—it occurs quite well in most agencies. For example, I have a good flow of communication with local police, health and education managers. No-one expects that these changes will solve all problems, but creating a more transparent and responsive process will be a big start. I endorse the Transport Legislation Amendment Bill 2011 and I acknowledge the efforts of Minister Berejiklian and Minister Gay.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET** (Castle Hill) [11.16 a.m.]: I support the Transport Legislation Amendment Bill 2011. The bill establishes a new integrated transport authority called Transport for NSW that will put the needs and expectations of the customer at the centre of the planning and delivery of transport services with the coordination of planning and policy across all modes. In 2008 the Coalition, then in

opposition, gave a commitment to establish Transport for NSW. The bill implements the announcement made by the Minister for Transport and the Minister for Roads and Ports on Friday 15 July 2011. This bill is long overdue. When those opposite were in government, and what a great Government that was—

**Mr Clayton Barr:** Hear! Hear! For 16 years.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Yes, those opposite were in government for 16 years. The former Government was good at coming up with plans. Whilst it realised this was an important plan it did nothing about implementing it—like many other of its plans in that 16-year period, such as the North West Rail Link. Yesterday I was at Castle Hill to celebrate the commencement of geotechnical drilling for that rail link. What a great day to be at Castle Hill. In this week's budget funding has been allocated for the North West Rail Link to be enshrined in law for the first time. When the proposal for the North West Rail Link was first announced by those opposite in 1998 I was running around the football field as a schoolboy. Trains should have been pulling into Castle Hill last year. The O'Farrell Government has been in office for only a short period of time but it is getting on with the job of delivering transport. This Government is all about getting on with the job.

**Mr Anthony Roberts:** Hear! Hear! We have good local members up there.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** We have great new local members in the Hills district. They are doing a fantastic job for New South Wales.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** They are one-termers.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** We will see about that. Our Government is getting on with the job in delivering for the Hills district, which was neglected for so many years because there was no political advantage to those opposite. The great thing about being part of the O'Farrell Government is that our Government is not focused on where the votes are; it is focused on what is important to New South Wales. To have gone to an election with an \$8 billion infrastructure promise to the people of New South Wales, particularly in the Hills district where many could say there were no votes in it for the Liberal Party, was fantastic. The O'Farrell Government is focused on delivering for all of New South Wales, not only where the votes are.

The lesson to be learnt from the past 16 years is that the public will not cop any further policy announcements that, in essence, are pork-barrelling. I am proud to be part of a government focused on delivering across the board. As I said, the Opposition supported the creation of an integrated authority. Members opposite saw the need for it. Not only the Opposition but also industry and business leaders in the community recognise that it is an important way to go. John Lee, the Chief Executive of the Tourism and Transport Forum—a peak industry group for the tourism, transport, aviation and investment sectors—described the move as a "strong and welcome step". Mr Lee said:

The establishment of a new integrated transport authority will streamline the delivery of transport services across New South Wales. For too long transport services have been planned independently and without due regard for coordination and the needs of passengers.

Transport for NSW will allow the Government to move resources from administration to the front line, providing a more customer-centric approach to service delivery. As the member for Oatley said, the Chief Executive of Infrastructure Partnerships Australia, Brendan Lyon, has also welcomed the move. He said:

A single agency to oversee transport planning and procurement and drive accountability from line agencies make sense. This new structure will better equip New South Wales to make the right decisions about its transport infrastructure and services.

An integrated authority is not simply something that has been touted and supported by industry and business; it was supported by sections of the media back in 1995 when Labor promised to do exactly what the Coalition Government is doing now. While Labor may have had all the plans in the world, the Coalition Government is getting the job done. On 18 April 1995 the *Daily Telegraph-Mirror*—that was a long time ago—stated:

"Rail, bus and ferry services will be managed by a single authority under a plan to encourage commuters to use more public transport," the State Government said today.

**Mr Anthony Roberts:** What date was that?

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** That was 18 April 1995. I inform the Minister for Fair Trading that on the same day the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported:

The creation of the authority—the largest restructuring of the New South Wales public transport system for five years—fulfils an election promise—

we forgot what they were all about—

to provide a more integrated and aggressively marketed transport system.

That was another promise broken by Labor. Fifteen years down the track we are fixing the mess, as we are fixing the Hills district with the North West Rail Link.

**Mr Chris Patterson:** And the South West.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** And we are fixing the South West, absolutely. We are fixing everything everywhere we go. It will take some time, but at least we can say that we are getting on with the job. In his reply to the budget the Leader of the Opposition asked how the Government intended to fund the North West Rail Link. After years of broken promises, for the Leader of the Opposition to have the hide to rip into what the Government is doing with the North West Rail Link is absolutely unfathomable and embarrassing. The North West Rail Link is one of the great things we are doing, and we are getting on with the job. For members opposite to criticise the Government for implementing its policies is bizarre.

One great aspect of the bill is the focus on the customer. The integrated transport authority, which will be created by this bill, will not only focus on the customer; it is fundamental to delivering outcomes for the people of New South Wales. The changes in this bill put the customer firmly at the centre of the transport task and will fundamentally change the approach to public transport in New South Wales. The intent is to create a team that will deliver changes that will affect people's lives in a positive way and to create a public transport system of which we are all proud. As I said, the most important element of the name "Transport for NSW" is the word "for", which demonstrates this Government's focus on providing a service for the people of New South Wales.

The bill ensures that the transport agencies act as one team, with every person across the transport portfolio playing an important role in shaping the results that will be delivered for the customer. It is about ensuring shared ideas, shared solutions and shared outcomes for public transport in New South Wales. The focus for Transport for NSW is the customer, whether that be a public transport user, a motorist, a pedestrian, a farmer or an importer. The bill means that the customer will be at the centre of everything the transport agencies do. The bill will result in a coordinated approach to public transport in this State for simple things such as ensuring that train and bus timetables provide seamless connections for customers through the delivery of integrated plans and major multimodal projects.

Transport for NSW will be responsible for improving the customer experience, planning, program administration, policy, regulation, procuring transport services, infrastructure and freight. This will free the operating agencies, such as RailCorp and the newly formed Roads and Maritime Services, to focus on providing safe, clean, reliable and efficient transport services to customers. I note the record of members opposite in terms of providing safe, clean and reliable transport services, especially rail. Back in 2007 the Rail, Tram and Bus Union bemoaned the fact that there were 500 vacancies on our railway stations. The union's press release of 19 November stated:

... 500 vacancies on stations that have resulted in lower cleaning standards and longer ticketing queues.

We are putting an end to that and to the mess left by members opposite in relation to transport in New South Wales. It is one of the most important things a State Government can get achieve and we are on the job. The Government wants to improve public transport so that people regard it as truly reliable, regular, clean and safe. This will mean that over time fewer people will feel the need to drive to work. Public transport will become the preferred option not only for commuters but for social and occasional users. As I have said, the Hills district does not have a rail line. I use the M2 every morning. The lack of a rail line obviously leads to congestion on our roads in the Hills and in my electorate of Castle Hill in particular. Castle Hill Road is an absolute car park every morning. Unfortunately the rail line will not come overnight, but it is something we can do to get people out of their cars and onto buses.

Many people from other areas who use the M2 could use train services on the northern line or the Chatswood line via Macquarie Park. But do not; they get into their vehicles. As a result, the M2 must be widened. People have said that the M2 was a Liberal initiative—it may well have been—but the Labor Opposition opposed the M2 when it was passed by the former Coalition Government. Now, after a short time, a major road network to the Hills district must be widened. I am proud to say that by moving towards an integrated authority we will ensure that more vehicles are taken off the roads and that more people move onto

public transport. Hopefully, in the not too distant future they will have further transport options with the introduction of the North West Rail Link. The organisation created in the bill will integrate not only transport services but also teams of people across the transport portfolio. Transport for NSW and the bus, rail, ferry and Road and Maritime Services agencies will be part of one team, delivering something that truly makes a difference to people's lives. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr CLAYTON BARR** (Cessnock) [11.28 a.m.]: The member for Orange once referred to me as steaming in off the long run. I am coming from the boundary today. I speak on the Transport Legislation Amendment Bill and the enormous hypocrisy of the O'Farrell Government. Where do we start? Let us start with the basics. It is hard to argue with the basis of this bill; it is Labor policy. In June 2010 Labor determined that there should be a single body overseeing transport in New South Wales. We started the ball rolling. I support and endorse the Coalition for holding on to this concept. Well done. On the surface this bill is easy to agree with, but what lies beneath this Coalition model for a single transport entity in New South Wales is vastly and distinctly different from the intention of New South Wales Labor. Clearly, it is the intent of this Coalition Government to do something more sinister.

True to form, that is its way of hiding from the truth, of forcing work, wage and employment conditions onto the worker. In the dark of night, under the name "Unknown", it strikes at the worker without an iota of courage or integrity, and without being open or transparent about its attack. To the Coalition Government I say, "Have the ticker, have the heart, have the courage of your convictions and stop this deceptive sleight of hand. If you believe in cutting the conditions of workers, if you believe that the hardworking public sector employees of New South Wales have it too good or too easy, then take them on—head-on. Put on your uniform and fight them on the front line. Stand by your policy, stand by your DNA, stand by your beliefs." But no, that will not happen.

We will not hold our breath waiting for courage from those opposite. In the week of the budget, they try to sneak this legislation through. It was introduced in the other place even before sufficient copies were made to distribute to members in that place: No courage, no conviction, no integrity, no honesty, no openness, no transparency, and no ticker. To the O'Farrell Government I say, "Hypocrisy is thy name." Let me explore this a little further by talking about waste and excess. Let me talk about money that is squandered senselessly and about name changes. We already have seen a monumental waste of money on one particular name change that had zero impact on the workings of the department to which it related. I speak of course of the Department of Attorney General and Justice, which was formerly known as the Department of Justice and Attorney General.

That was a complete waste of at least \$50,000, not to mention the hundreds of work hours that were involved in making the amendment to addresses, titles, templates, worksheets and other registers. In this case we have Transport NSW being renamed Transport for NSW—a one-word change that will again waste thousands of dollars and hundreds of hours of work to make one amendment. Egotistical waste in the extreme, senseless and meaningless, its sole purpose is to stroke the ego of this Government. To the O'Farrell Government I say again, "Hypocrisy is thy name." I draw attention to the ultimate hypocrisy—this bill. In support of my argument I refer to the fourth sentence of the speech that was delivered by the Minister for Roads and Ports when he introduced the bill in the upper House—prior to the members of the upper House being shown a copy of the bill. The Minister said:

In order to improve public transport services, to decongest our roads and to build vital transport projects we need to break down silos that exist in the administration of the entire transport sector.

Hear, hear! If this dialogue outlines the grand vision, then why have two Ministers? Why is the public service being asked to do what this Government clearly cannot do? Is this an admission of failings in ministerial talent? Pick any one of the Ministers—either one. Let us start breaking down the silos right here, in this Parliament—this grand old building to which people turn for leadership. But no, silos are alive and well under this Government, nestled closely with hypocrisy. The silos mentality is so ingrained in this Government that Ministers cannot let go of their power sources in the establishment of this new proposed single entity, Transport for NSW. No, we had to create some specially named and designated bodies so that both Ministers were happy. I point to the new Roads and Maritime Services as exhibit A.

One would think that I have identified the extent of the hypocrisy in the O'Farrell Government, but alas there is more. Let us consider the shackles of this new body, Transport for NSW. Will it have the power and control over the planning and implementation of infrastructure? I thought that a new body called Infrastructure NSW was being developed with the intention of being an independent decision-making body for infrastructure

in New South Wales. In spite of this Government's rhetoric and claims of independence a number of infrastructure items have been declared and will progress about which Infrastructure NSW has not deliberated. So to whom will Transport for NSW turn for advice? Is transport infrastructure part of the responsibility of Transport for NSW? Should Transport for NSW go to the Minister? And if so, which Minister? Should it go to the disgraced former Premier and head of Infrastructure NSW? Should it go to Premier O'Farrell? Or is the head of Infrastructure NSW the real Premier? Will the hypocrisy end? Will somebody please stop it? I am sorry to report that it will be further entrenched by the provisions of this bill.

This bill and Transport for NSW have been dressed up as a means to streamline and simplify transport in New South Wales but there will now be a number of bodies to juggle the various issues. I refer to the Department of Transport, RailCorp, Roads and Maritime Services, the State Transit Authority, Sydney Ferries, the Centre for Road Safety, the Ports Corporation, the Transport Construction Authority, the Country Rail Infrastructure Authority, the Independent Transport Safety Regulator, and the Office of the Transport Safety Investigator. These bodies will be joined by the soon-to-be-formed Transport Service of New South Wales, a transport advisory board, a maritime advisory council, an office of boating safety, and the integrated transport authority. The Government is disbanding two bodies to create five bodies. In all there were 12 bodies but there will now be 15. These 15 bodies will answer to one body that answers to two Ministers, who will answer to two Premiers or possibly just to Infrastructure NSW. Who knows?

There is an old saying about giving somebody enough rope. This bill in its current form will indeed be the rope for this dysfunctional Government. A single transport body is a good concept but this Government has bungled the implementation of that concept badly. The new director general will require enormous talent not only to manage this enormous body but also to manage the siloed and dysfunctional layers of government. Let me refer now to the North West Rail Link. Members need to understand one basic concept about space on a rail line. There is only so much space. I ask members opposite, through you Mr Acting Speaker, to please agree with me that there is only a certain amount of space on any train line.

**ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Geoff Provest):** Order! I do not think that is a question to be put.

**Mr CLAYTON BARR:** Assuming that I know the answer and that the answer is yes, let us consider for a moment that the train line is currently full and that the way forward is to build longer platforms that could handle 12-carriage trains, so we can move more people with fewer services on the line. If you are building a new North West Rail Link, it has to travel on a rail line. But it cannot travel on the existing line because there is no space. It has been reported already in the media—and in some respects this has been endorsed by the Minister for Transport—that space is indeed a problem. It is certainly an issue in my neck of the woods, as it is for yours, Mr Acting Speaker. CountryLink has very limited space and opportunity to come into the city because there simply is not adequate space on the line. If we want to create space on the line, we have to create infrastructure that will allow that to happen.

The answer is longer platforms and trains to free up space. At the moment we are talking about building a \$9 billion North West Rail Link that cannot operate because there is insufficient space on the line. That is incredible. I now wish to focus on customers. I have not heard one member from the Government speak about the bill without referring to customers. I ask the question: Who are the customers and which customers will have priority? I understand that packages, freight, cargo and everything else that is transported on road and rail are regarded as customers, but who will have priority? I site the example of a rail line that runs through my electorate to transport that very important product, coal. Historically, two lines have run from the coalmines in the valley down to the ports on the coast.

I am led to believe by the residents of Beresfield, a suburb in the north-east of my electorate through which the rail line travels, that at one stage a proposal was put by the coal industry that it have full access to, and take control of, the line to allow two services to run backwards and forwards all day to get the coal to port. It proposed further that all passengers be taken from the rail service and put on buses. The industry said that it would provide as many buses as were necessary to move those passengers. The previous Labor Government rejected that proposal and insisted that passengers would be a priority on rail. I ask the same of this bill. I ask that passengers, as customers, be given priority. If this Government cannot guarantee that, it will let down every rail network user in the State. I conclude on this note—

**Mr Paul Toole:** Thank God.

**Mr CLAYTON BARR:** I prepared material enough to speak for only five minutes. I expected more interjection from members opposite, but they have let me down. I wish the new director general all the very best, but fear that he or she will be weighed down by the slow-motion train wreck that is the O'Farrell Government.

**Mr PAUL TOOLE** (Bathurst—Parliamentary Secretary) [11.41 a.m.]: I support the Transport Legislation Amendment Bill 2011. I commend the member for Cessnock for his very colourful speech. It is obvious that he and his Opposition colleagues have taken acting lessons to sharpen up their performances in the House. Their efforts are starting to pay off. However, too much concentration is being placed on performance rather than substance. Most of them have forgotten that the Coalition has been looking at this issue for the past four years. If members of the Opposition think that it is such a great initiative, the simple question is: Why did they not implement it during their 16 years in government? They had no plans for this State; they had no idea where they were taking this State. The speech of the member for Cessnock has the edge over the speech delivered this morning by the Leader of the Opposition in response to the budget. What a defining moment this is.

Is there a challenge about to be launched in the Opposition camp? I wish the member all the best with his upcoming leadership challenge. However, I would not be surprised if all the members opposite did not have the same speech writer. Their contributions are not showing much depth—although this morning we did hear something about trampolines. When referring to waste and inefficiencies the member for Cessnock forgot to mention the City Metro proposal on which half a billion dollars was wasted—and that relates only to the legislation; there was more waste than just that half a billion dollars. I can think of many things from which my constituents would benefit if half a billion dollars were spent in my electorate. And I am sure the member for Murray-Darling, the member for Riverstone and the member for Albury could think of many things for their electorates that could be provided with such an enormous amount of money.

*[Interruption]*

I warn members opposite not to start me on the issue of hospitals; they would be embarrassed. I concur with the views of other Government members who have spoken in this debate that this bill is a commonsense approach and it is needed to ensure a better future for transport in this State. For 16 years the previous, inept Labor Government failed the people of New South Wales. It did not care about the people of the State. Now, finally, we have a Minister for Transport and a Minister for Roads and Ports who are concerned about the needs of the people of New South Wales and are prepared to act.

The electorate of Cessnock received welcome news from the budget in the form of funding for infrastructure upgrades and road improvements. We received more funding in this budget than we ever did under Labor. Last year we received \$43 million roads funding but this year we received a very welcome \$58 million to spend on upgrading the Great Western Highway and local roads in Blayney, Oberon, Lithgow, Portland, Wallerawang and Bathurst. Thank goodness we have a government that recognises where money must be spent in this State. All the previous Government did was look after its mates. We are looking after everyone in the State, whether they live in metropolitan areas or in rural and regional areas. We care about everyone in New South Wales.

The bill will deliver integrated transport services that have been talked about for so long. The Government is committed to improving public transport in this State for customers by ensuring better integration of all aspects of transport. This can be done only through the establishment of an integrated transport authority. Any attempt to achieve this without establishing an integrated authority would be a complete farce: the various transport agencies would be competing for resources based on their individual vision of the role they play in the transport task rather than working as a united team.

I understand that planning for Transport for NSW is well and truly underway. Members need only talk to people in their electorates—truck drivers, motorists, cyclists—to hear what is being said about the Roads and Traffic Authority. The excellent workers of that organisation have been held back because of the bureaucracy and red tape that was introduced by the former Labor Government. Now they can get on with doing the job that they are meant to be doing. We know that these people have had their hands tied and we are doing everything we can by the introduction of this legislation to ensure that focus is again placed on the customers of New South Wales.

I am advised that work already has commenced on a structure for the new integrated authority, which will have six divisions. The customer experience division will ensure that transport customer needs, preferences and opinions are paramount in our decision-making, planning, activities and operations. The member for Cessnock will be interested to hear this. It will develop a thorough understanding of the customer to drive evidence-based decision-making. They will not be the political decisions of the past that have not benefited people throughout the State. Under Labor, regional and rural areas were forgotten, and it is about time this State had a government that is concerned about regional and rural areas and is investing to open all areas of the State.

The customer experience division also will lead the organisation in ensuring that transport planning, policy, investment and services are driven by customer needs. It will shape and position public transport as the most attractive option for the people of New South Wales by making it seamless and easy to use. The division will be the advocate for public transport users and for road users in the operations of the integrated transport authority. The planning and programs division will bring together the planning of all modes of transport into one division and establish close links between planning and the development of transport investment programs. It will identify transport needs, produce integrated transport plans and manage the overall investment budget of Transport for NSW. The electorate of Cessnock has been after a fast daily return service from Bathurst to Sydney for many years. In the past when we met with the various transport Ministers all we got were excuses—excuse after excuse.

We were told, "There is no rolling stock; the timetable cannot be changed." We were told also that there were no plans for works beyond Penrith for the next 12 to 15 years. Thank goodness someone is at last listening to and addressing the needs of people living in regional areas. The planning and programs division will work with the New South Wales Government, the community and transport customers to develop integrated, strategic plans linked to land use. It also will manage and coordinate Transport for NSW's submissions to Infrastructure NSW. The Transport Projects Division will be accountable for the delivery of major public transport projects, including strategic procurement for rolling stock and fleet. The division will have a focus on delivery and planning, including accurate estimating and close monitoring of construction delivery.

The new freight and regional development division will ensure that New South Wales supports improved productivity, particularly in the regions, with an efficient and effective freight transport system. The division will be the central point of coordination for the Government's role in freight transport, distribution and servicing in New South Wales. It will, for the first time, consolidate the coordination of key freight system components such as road, rail, marine, ports and intermodal terminals, and will provide a single point of contact for industry.

The freight and regional development division will ensure that the New South Wales freight network supports regional development by connecting to the key locations where freight is generated and delivered. Under Labor investment in rail infrastructure was neglected, particularly with regard to grain lines. To open up the State's economy we need to ensure that we have efficient rail lines to the west so that products can be transported to the eastern seaboard in a timely fashion. In this way the economy will be opened up and productivity will be improved.

The policy and regulation division will be Transport for NSW's interface with industry stakeholders on policy matters and reform processes. It will shape the New South Wales contribution to the national agenda. Timetabling and integration is a very important component of this bill. Under the previous Government, there were many problems with timetabling. Over a period of six years the Labor government had six different transport Ministers. That meant that each time I went to speak to a Minister no-one knew what I was talking about because I never once got to speak to the same Minister, and each time I had to put my representations all over again. The present Minister for Transport and Minister for Roads and Ports should be congratulated; they already have spent a longer time in their roles as Ministers than the time spent by any transport Minister of the previous Labor Government. They certainly have delivered much more than their predecessors, and in much less time.

Timetabling is critical. Any bus service that drops passengers off at a train station must run to a coordinated timetable to ensure that passengers on the bus arrive at the train station shortly before the train they wish to catch is ready to depart. It is no good passengers having to sit around for two or three hours after leaving the bus waiting for their train. The same applies to people in the city catching a train to coordinate with a ferry service. It is pointless if such timetables are not coordinated. This bill will ensure a coordinated and integrated approach to these matters.

On behalf of the people of the electorate of Bathurst I thank the Minister for Transport for meeting with concerned local people about a Bathurst to Sydney return service. The Minister has given a commitment to a review of timetabling and of rolling stock availability. At last we have a Minister who is willing to consult with the people of our communities. The draft structure for Transport for NSW has been distributed to staff and that will be a part of this process. We welcome consultation. All this is in addition to the many initiatives that the Government already has introduced, such as Kickstart and Infrastructure NSW. It has the support of business leaders, community groups, mums and dads and passengers—everyone who uses public transport. Our primary focus is the customer, and that is why I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr JOHN WILLIAMS** (Murray-Darling) [11.54 a.m.]: Before turning my attention to the bill I wish to assure all those people from western New South Wales who have expressed concerns about King Billy Cokebottle that it is apparent after the speech today of the Leader of the Opposition that King Billy Cokebottle is alive and well and writing speeches for the Opposition. What we heard today from the Leader of the Opposition was a clear indication of where Labor has been and the where it is headed. For Labor it is back to the future. I am amazed by some of the contributions of members opposite about this great bill, which will integrate two principle transport departments and other associated agencies.

In the past, opportunities have existed to create cultures. Some members have spoken with great respect about the Roads and Traffic Authority; however, unfortunately, all I hear from my constituents and my councils is that the purpose of the Roads and Traffic Authority is to overregulate. If the Roads and Traffic Authority wanted to produce a document to give instructions about how to take the top off a boiled egg, the document would extend over 48 pages filled with regulations. Any shire that does contract work for the Roads and Traffic Authority will say that it spends more time on filling out paperwork than carrying out roadwork. It is an absolute joke. It has got to the stage where the tail is wagging the dog, and it is about time a Minister took charge of this organisation and steered it in the right direction.

We have a perfect opportunity to do this now, and that is being achieved by the present Minister for Roads and Ports, Duncan Gay, who is addressing the issue of inequitable speed limits throughout the State—and he has only just begun. I recall a saying that was used in the days that I was working in the aircraft industry: When the weight of the paperwork gets to the maximum takeoff weight, you can depart. That pretty well describes the Roads and Traffic Authority. Here is an opportunity to clean up some of the mess by establishing a department that can actually start putting some rubber on the road.

Maritime services will be placed under the same portfolio as that responsible for roads, and that gives us an opportunity to integrate an area that in the past was placed away from everything else, being run by the likes of Joe Tripodi. Then up popped Joe Scimone, who was paid a salary of \$400,000 a year. He did not know one end of a boat from the other yet he was tucked away on a \$400,000 salary. There will be no more of that. The departments will work under one umbrella to streamline decision-making. There will be no more duckshoving to another department causing delay after delay. We can now get on with business. That was the practice of the departments under the previous Government. Under Labor, the Minister for Lands virtually instructed his bureaucrats to allow the Hay Shire Council to secure State Rail Authority property. The council first asked about that land 16 years ago but nothing happened. The reason nothing happened was that inquiries had to be made of a number of departments and, as a result, the request was held up.

As the member for Murray-Darling I have continually been faced with similar situations. I would take a representative of a shire council to a Minister's office and the Minister would instruct his bureaucrats to get things done, but nothing ever got done. A way was always found to delay matters. The Roads and Traffic Authority specialises in that behaviour; it makes an art form of it. It never makes a decision. If it ever came close to making a decision, it would simply say, "We will let the shire make the decision and the burden can rest with them". In other words, it would say, "We are not going to make a decision. If the shire makes the decision, they will be responsible for it." That is not the way to do business. Somewhere along the line the Roads and Traffic Authority has a responsibility to meet the transport requirements of road users. I can assure members that that has not been the case.

The Roads and Traffic Authority has continually delayed opportunities particularly for people in the dairy industry by preventing them from having their product picked up by B-doubles and transported. The Roads and Traffic Authority has prevented that from ever happening; it has always found a reason to not allow these people B-double access. Some people in the dairy industry in my electorate are facing an incremental cost of about \$50,000 each year by being denied that additional transport opportunity. That is a classic example of the operations of this department. I am looking forward to a department that is administered by people who want to get on with the job. We want to make sure that these departments do what they are supposed to do, and that is provide a service for customers who need to use that transport link.

We will also see the integration of CountryLink. That will bring enormous benefit for CountryLink services out to Broken Hill particularly. Those services were always under threat from proposals put up by the previous Labor Government. We now have an opportunity to put those services under the eye of a Minister for Transport who wants to make transport services work in New South Wales. The result will be a more accessible rail link for those who rely on such a service.

**Mr CRAIG BAUMANN** (Port Stephens—Parliamentary Secretary) [12.02 p.m.]: I support the Transport Legislation Amendment Bill 2011, which will amend the Transport Administration Act 1988 to establish Transport for NSW and the Transport Service, and to make further provision with respect to the administration of public transport in New South Wales; and for other purposes. The object of the bill is to amend the Transport Administration Act 1988 and other transport legislation to establish new arrangements for the administration of the New South Wales transport sector.

These new arrangements provide for the establishment of a statutory corporation to be called Transport for NSW, which will have the central role in the governance of the delivery of transport services and infrastructure by public transport agencies; the establishment of a staff employment entity to be called the Transport Service of New South Wales, in which staff are employed to enable Transport for NSW to exercise its functions; the establishment of a statutory corporation to be called Roads and Maritime Services and the transfer to the new corporation for the functions, assets, rights and liabilities of the Roads and Traffic Authority; the Maritime Authority of New South Wales; and the abolition of the Roads and Traffic Authority, the Maritime Authority of New South Wales, the Transport Construction Authority and the Country Rail Infrastructure Authority.

Proposed section 2B lists common objectives and service delivery priorities of public transport agencies. These highlight the desperate state to which transport has sunk in the last 16 years. These objectives and priorities would seem to be obvious to those on this side of the House who have a real interest in the welfare of the people of New South Wales. The proposed section provides:

- (1) Public transport agencies are to exercise their functions in a manner that promotes the following objectives, which are the common objectives of public transport agencies:
  - (a) Customer focus
 

To put the customer first and design the transport system around the needs and expectations of the customer.
  - (b) Economic development
 

To enable the transport system to support the economic development of the State (with a focus on freight transport systems).
  - (c) Planning and investment
 

To ensure that good planning informs investment strategies.
  - (d) Coherence and integration
 

To promote coherence and integration across all transport modes and all stages of decision making.
  - (e) Performance and delivery
 

To focus on performance and service delivery, based on a strong purchaser-provider model with clear accountabilities for outcomes.
  - (f) Efficiency
 

To achieve greater efficiency:
 
    - (i) in the delivery of transport infrastructure projects, and
    - (ii) through improved coordination of freight, maritime and ports operations, and their integration into the transport system, and
    - (iii) by eliminating duplication of functions and resources, and
    - (iv) by outsourcing the delivery of non-core services.
  - (g) Environmental sustainability
 

To promote the delivery of transport services in an environmentally sustainable manner.
  - (h) Social benefits
 

To contribute to the delivery of social benefits for customers, including greater inclusiveness, accessibility and quality of life.
  - (i) Safety
 

To provide safe transport services in accordance with a safety regulatory framework.

Those nine common objectives and service delivery priorities should have been adopted 16 years ago. The objectives of Transport for NSW are to plan for a transport system that meets the needs and expectations of the public; to promote economic development and investment; to provide integration at the decision-making level across all public transport modes; to promote greater efficiency in the delivery of transport infrastructure projects; and to promote the safe and reliable delivery of public transport and freight services.

The bill provides for the abolition of four existing transport agencies: the Roads and Traffic Authority, the New South Wales Maritime, the Transport Construction Authority, and the Country Rail Infrastructure Authority. I have had minimal contact with the last two mentioned authorities but being from the Port Stephens electorate—which is known as paradise—and being a boatie, I have always had great service from New South Wales Maritime. Its staff are knowledgeable, courteous and friendly and make water activities throughout New South Wales much more pleasurable and obviously much safer.

I have always had a great relationship with staff at my local motor registries. They are always friendly, even though some of the legislation they work with can be rather odd. I shall relate to members an experience I had recently with my son, James, who undertook a gap year in his education last year. On the last night at his school in the wilds of Barnstaple, a burglar stole his phone, wallet and camera. His hosts took him to Heathrow, Qantas got him to Sydney and I got him home. Whilst he was overseas, he qualified for green P plates so on the way home we dropped by the Raymond Terrace motor registry to report the theft of his red P licence and sought to upgrade to his green P licence. However, we struck a problem. His passport was not sufficient identification to enable him to get his green P licence—and all his other identification had been stolen.

After some head scratching the registry officer said, "Craig, I can replace his red licence using his passport ID, and that will give him sufficient ID for his green licence." When I looked perplexed, the officer said to me, "Craig, we just follow the legislation; you write it." That is a true story. As I have said, the staff do a great job in somewhat trying circumstances. When I was first elected as the sole Hunter Liberal in 2007, I drove into Newcastle to introduce myself to the roads division of the Roads and Traffic Authority—the dirt pushers. The manager was unavailable at the time and I was told that he would get back to me. Well, I am pleased to say that last month I got a call from the Roads and Traffic Authority requesting a meeting. The manager did indeed get back to me, and it only took four years.

A few years ago the then member for Newcastle, Jodi Mackay, announced that the Labor Government would be building a new bridge over the Hunter River in Tourle Street to replace the old two-lane bridge. Although the bridge is in my electorate, the Roads and Traffic Authority refused to give me any details about the matter. On the opening day of the new bridge, I, along with everyone else in the Hunter, realised that the Roads and Traffic Authority had spent \$45 million building a new two-lane bridge to replace an old two-lane bridge, and that the bridge that was built was obsolete the day it was opened. It then spent \$5 million demolishing the old bridge—a bridge that I am reliably informed just needed a new concrete deck.

In his final year at university last year my son, Stuart, applied for various engineering positions with the Roads and Traffic Authority. When he applied to join the Roads and Traffic Authority, I did not have the heart to tell him that because of the bashing I had been giving the Roads and Traffic Authority over the last four years he would not be in the hunt. As it turned out, he was employed and he started work in February as a bridge maintenance engineer in Newcastle, and he is presently blowing up mountains on the Kempsey by-pass, which is in the Deputy Premier's electorate. He is getting experience from great young engineers, who have the opportunity to get rid of the toxic culture that developed in the Roads and Traffic Authority over the last 16 years and to make the organisation great once again. I should emphasise that Stuart did not speak out of school to me about his employer; he already has a strong sense of ethics, unlike those in the Opposition who need lessons with regard to ethics—starting with how to spell the word.

The Roads and Traffic Authority as we know it is completely dysfunctional. What it does is bureaucratic in the extreme and it is far more expensive than its private sector equivalents. A bridge designed and built by the Roads and Traffic Authority can cost \$3,000 per square metre of deck area whereas an equivalent bridge—such as those built on the M7—can be built by private enterprise for only \$1,000 per square metre of deck area. Why is that so? The reason is that the builders of the M7 bridges standardised spans and precast in a manufacturing-type environment. But there is hope. As I have said there are young, intelligent, hardworking professional engineers working within the Roads and Traffic Authority, and I take this opportunity to place on record some discussion points that have been suggested by one such young engineer.

He has suggested that internal requirements to report environmental incidents are too harsh; the Roads and Traffic Authority is not well defined and not realistic; some dirty water will always leave a site in a rain event, and that this does not need to be regarded as an "incident"; the Roads and Traffic Authority is too keen to please the environment sections of government; someone from the Office of Environment and Heritage should be accountable so that if the Roads and Traffic Authority decides to spend \$100,000 on a fauna crossing that has a very low chance of ever being used, it should be held responsible; a living away from home allowance should be paid to staff who are asked to undertake work more than 120 kilometres away from their homes for any period greater than 10 days; promotion should be based on an annual report from one's boss that is auditable; people should be made responsible for the promotion of idiots; an annual evaluation report using scores should be used to rank people for promotion; bring back the divisional engineer role—which used to be a role to aspire to, but it does not exist anymore.

He said also that the ranking system will help define who is best; that a great asset is the technical expertise of the people; that we should be prepared to fund research development of better materials; and that there is distinct lack of direction for the staff. In his view a "blueprint" document for nominal targets is rubbish—no-one reads it. He said that general managers and above need to get out and see the troops. Let us get real targets out there that mean something. He suggests also that the variety of roles undertaken by Roads and Traffic Authority is too wide; that the risk exposure one faces on a major site is not the same as that faced by staff in a regional office, yet all staff rely on the same reporting systems. He says further that a realistic assessment of risk for each facet of the business may result and drive down insurance of the workforce; that Google should be used for maps and for mapping software to investigate the use of Cloud technology for information technology storage; and that if a private industry developer has the software, we should use it, and develop only revolutionary software that cannot be sourced elsewhere.

In his view there will be a mass exodus of senior staff over the next five years. He contends that serious moves need to be made to allow staff to provide part-time mentoring roles if they or the business require it; we should be prepared to sack people for poor performance. We may have to do that, unfortunately. He says that we should move away from using engineering solutions only to overcome difficult issues; that we should be prepared to forfeit land or environment to get a solution that will eliminate issues, and make sure that cost is a factor in all environmental decisions; that we should possibly have a one-stop shop for all technical engineering solutions for the State rather than one for the Roads and Traffic Authority, another for Ports, another for RailCorp, and so on.

He suggests further that we should remove Road and Fleet Services from the Roads and Traffic Authority and make them a statutory company like Hunter Water Australia. This will force people to be responsible for their output. He says that we should make better use of pre-plan routes; that we should use straight lines instead of bends just to suit minimal clearing issues. In other words, if the most direct path is through the national park, just bite the bullet and make the decision and build a path through the national park. The savings in dollars will be massive, and the construction time quicker. Those are comments from a young Roads and Traffic Authority engineer. More engineers are retiring than there are entering the profession; they are a declining resource. The warning is: Treat them with contempt at your peril.

Members might remember the JetCat Manly service that plied the harbour for many years. I recall one evening I struck up a conversation with a gentleman from Queensland who was here to negotiate a modest ticket price rise on the Pittwater ferry service. His company was based in Queensland—one of the largest ferry companies in Australia. We chatted about the JetCats and I asked whether Queensland had an equivalent service. He said it did. When I asked him how long would it take to get a ferry down here and put it in service he said, "Tomorrow morning. It's on permanent standby if the JetCats break down." He had a fast cat, with a similar passenger load that used a fraction of the fuel, yet the previous Government was still running JetCats.

On a recent trip to Auckland, my wife, Victoria, and I took a cruise on a reasonably large ferry on a very windy day. Guess how many crew members were on that ferry? There were two: the skipper and a deckhand to throw the first rope out because the engines hold the craft against the wharf once that is done. And guess how many crew members are on our Sydney ferries? I do not know, but there must be a few, given that they need flat screen televisions in their crew quarters. We have been left with a \$5.2 billion black hole. This bill will greatly improve transport in this State. It will provide better services at lower costs. I congratulate Minister Gladys Berejiklian and Minister Duncan Gay—two hardworking and inspirational Ministers—who will be at the forefront of making New South Wales number one again.

**Mr ROB STOKES** (Pittwater—Parliamentary Secretary) [12.17 p.m.]: I support the Transport Legislation Amendment Bill 2011. I listened with interest to the excellent contribution of the effervescent member for Port Stephens and noted his comment about the Palm Beach ferry service. I commend the operator of that service, which is known as FantaSea. This terrific service links the Central Coast with Pittwater and Sydney. I noted also the member's various experiences, and those of his children, with a number of transport bureaucracies. However, I do not think that he is looking down the barrel of several hundred hours of learner driver training in the next few years—like I am. No doubt he has done all that.

This is a very sensible and overdue bill. Proposed section 2A will insert into the objects of the Transport Administration Act the self-evident objective of promoting the integration of the transport system. It strikes me as odd that this was not done some time ago; integration of the transport system is essential. Proposed section 2B provides for customer focus, economic development, planning and development, coherence and integration, performance and delivery, efficiency, environmental sustainability, social benefits and safety—all imperative provisions for an effective transport administration system.

The Pittwater community is increasingly reliant on the functionality of our main roads, and on efficient public transport options and management. With a growing and ageing community, there is an increasing need to ensure that our public transport options—particularly our buses in the case of Pittwater—are working well, that our main roads are maintained and upgraded and that there is clear and well coordinated integration between the public transport systems operating throughout our community and the variety of services and modes to which they are linked.

Many commuters in Pittwater travel on buses to the Sydney central business district, or catch a bus and then switch to a train or ferry, or even take a tinnie across the harbour, or drive to Manly and catch a ferry, or drive to the outer suburbs and connect with a train, or travel by bus to Palm Beach and then catch a ferry to the Central Coast. There is a huge range of intermodal transport options available to commuters living in Pittwater and as a result they are exposed to the different bureaucracies that manage those different options: therein lies the problem. This bill is designed to improve and better coordinate public transport services, to decongest our roads and deliver vital transport projects.

The bill is about putting commuters first and ensuring that our transport system and roads are designed around the needs and expectations of our growing communities. I note the commitment in yesterday's budget to provide \$3 million to complete a feasibility study for the introduction of a bus rapid transport system for the northern beaches—a proposal that presents enormous opportunities for our community and the thousands of Pittwater residents who commute via bus to the Sydney central business district each day. The community and I look forward to this proposal being explored.

The reforms outlined in the bill will promote coherence, integration and coordination across all transport modes and at all stages of decision-making, with a clear focus on performance and service delivery and much clearer lines of accountability for outcomes. Whilst Sydney has an array of public transport options and agencies, it is vital that they are all working towards the same objectives and overall vision for our city and our State. Having these objectives set out clearly in legislation is vital to achieving this outcome.

The bill establishes a new integrated transport authority, Transport for NSW, which will be responsible for the coordinated delivery of services across all modes of transport. This will mean that policy and planning experts from all transport agencies will be brought together to improve public transport services to ensure that we have a world-class transport system that people want to use. Whether commuters catch a bus, train or ferry, drive a car or ride a bike, Transport for NSW will be responsible for getting commuters from A to B in the quickest, easiest and most comfortable way. Under this legislation, Transport for NSW will bring together the coordination, procurement, policy and service delivery planning functions currently performed by the Department of Transport, RailCorp, the Roads and Traffic Authority, the State Transit Authority, Sydney Ferries, the Maritime Authority of New South Wales, the Transport Construction Authority and the Country Rail Infrastructure Authority.

More is spent each year on roads in New South Wales than on all modes of public transport combined, and 60 times as much is spent on roads than on integrated urban, regional and transport planning. While this disparity in funding reflects the different costs involved in the provision of various government services, the relative financial clout of each budget unit has an impact in transport planning—and much is dependent on the financial support of wealthy budget units, such as the Roads and Traffic Authority.

This Government is determined to improve and coordinate transport options throughout New South Wales, and this will be warmly welcomed by the Pittwater community. From a specific Pittwater point of view, I am optimistic that the new arrangements can focus on solutions to some of the structural issues facing travellers to and from Pittwater. Bringing these transport planning roles together will substantially enhance the capacity for truly strategic and economically deliverable public transport options.

The bill provides for the strategic policy, planning and port oversight functions of Maritime New South Wales to be transferred to Transport for NSW, with the remainder of New South Wales Maritime functions being transferred to Roads and Maritime Services. The bill abolishes the Roads and Traffic Authority and Maritime New South Wales and creates a new statutory corporation, Roads and Maritime Services, which will be the premier roads authority in New South Wales and will conduct road construction and maintenance, driver and maritime licensing, vehicle and vessel registration and property management functions. It will also be responsible for implementing road safety programs and laws and will make operational decisions about roads.

This new combined agency will take advantage of the close working relationship and similarity of functions between Maritime New South Wales and the Roads and Traffic Authority to deliver a more efficient and customer focused service. Importantly, the bill provides that each of the publicly owned service delivery entities—RailCorp, the State Transit Authority and the newly created Roads and Maritime Services—will continue to operate under their current statutory functions and powers in respect of service delivery. The bill is not just about fixing up the mess created by the tangled and somewhat ad hoc transport networks that exist throughout our cities and regional areas; it will also ensure that decisions are based on need—both now and in the future—and are economically responsible. Importantly, the bill will help to ensure that vital transport projects are identified, commenced and delivered on time and on budget.

There are intermodal challenges, of course. People who travel by car are not given an incentive to change to a more efficient means of transport. The comfort of their own vehicle makes them want to stay where they are until they arrive at their destination. We must bring about a cultural change so that people are given an incentive to, for instance, drive from their home in a peripheral area to a more centralised area and make a quick and easy intermodal transfer to public transport to get them to where they are going. There are great opportunities in Pittwater for better ferry transport services to the Central Coast. The early development of Pittwater was all about sea travel and the Newport wharf was the most popular place for people to go for transportation to and from the area. Pittwater has some wonderful ferry services—the Church Point ferry, the Hawkesbury River ferry and the Palm Beach ferry—but there are opportunities for those services to be better utilised. This bill will provide the frame work to explore those opportunities.

There is a ridiculous intermodal disconnect such that no incentive is provided to commuters to the Sydney central business district to switch from a bus to a train at Wynyard, even though the bus takes more than twice as long as the time it would take a train to travel a parallel course—to say nothing of the fact that buses unnecessarily clog our city streets. Because of these intermodal disconnects there is no incentive for commuters to make the switch to a more efficient means of public transport. This bill is all about ensuring that the many-headed hydra that administers transport services in this State is transformed into a cohesive unit, ensuring that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

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

## **GOVERNOR'S SPEECH: ADDRESS-IN-REPLY**

### **Eighth Day's Debate**

**Debate resumed from 24 August 2011.**

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET** (Castle Hill) [12.29 p.m.]: On the previous occasion I spoke about transport developments in the electorate of Castle Hill. In concluding my contribution to this debate today I wish to outline some aspects of the Five Point Action Plan, to which the Coalition committed itself during the election campaign and in relation to which we have been very active on a number of fronts since being elected to government. To rebuild the economy we established a special commission of inquiry into the sell-off of the electricity industry by the former Government and we have passed legislation to create 100,000 jobs through our Jobs Action Plan. This scheme provides incentive for employers to create new positions and to sustain them to reduce the unemployment rate. This is expected to increase economic activity by up to \$3.6 billion.

We also pledged to return quality services. We have commenced the implementation of our literacy and numeracy action plan with the provision of an additional 900 teachers across the State. We have introduced legislation to strengthen police powers by toughening moving on laws and reintroducing the offence of being drunk and disorderly. As a result of that legislation, police will be able to move on individuals, not just groups, behaving in a disorderly way. Move on orders have been given teeth. Police can now issue an infringement notice or court order to people who continue to act in a disorderly manner. Since the election I have met with officers in the regional command, all of whom have told me how happy they are with these measures, which are having a positive effect on the electorate of Castle Hill.

We have introduced legislation to toughen laws relating to graffiti vandals. Obviously, the legislation has not been passed yet and we will be debating it again shortly. But the legislation was promised by the former Government and introduced by us. While it has been hijacked by members opposite, I am sure the legislation will be passed. It will require vandals to clean up their mess. They will have their social privileges, such as their drivers licence, restricted as a result of their offence. An important part of the legislation is that the vandals will be made to see the seriousness of their offence by facing court. The third aspect of the Five Point Action Plan was to renovate infrastructure. We have already introduced legislation for the creation of Infrastructure NSW as well as establish Restart NSW, the New South Wales Government's infrastructure fund. This fund, drawn from reliable sources, will ensure that infrastructure funding will be efficient, impartial, and importantly, accountable.

I mentioned earlier in my address the preliminary work conducted on the North West Rail Link. With the Treasurer's budget we will now see for the first time funding for the North West Rail Link enshrined in law. We have got on with the job with the North West Rail Link. We have established a project team, a community information centre, we have briefed industry and we have awarded tenders. Yesterday it was great to be out there with the Premier, the Treasurer, the Minister for Transport and other members of the Government's team in the commencement of the geotechnical drilling. However, it was disappointing that I was not able to get involved in that at a practical level and jump on the drill. I hope that when the tunnelling commences I will get a guernsey there. It is pleasing to see how far we have gone with the North West Rail Link after only a very brief time in government. I know that our commitment is a great relief for the people of north-west Sydney.

The feedback I have got on the streets, as I have been doorknocking since the election, and being out and about in the community is that people see it as a great win for our area. It is much needed and I am very proud to be part of a Government that is delivering for the north-west, which has been neglected for so many years. Our fourth pledge involves restoring accountability. We have introduced legislation to ban success fees for lobbyists and to strengthen whistleblower protections in the Independent Commission Against Corruption. The commission recommended these measures over the past few years and this Government has acted straightaway, showing that it is serious about corruption. We have introduced legislation to eliminate taxpayer-funded political advertising. Our fifth pledge involves protecting our local environment and communities through scrapping part 3A. It was an honour to be elected to represent Castle Hill in this place and I am proud to be part of a Government getting on with the job.

**Mr ANDREW GEE** (Orange) [12.34 p.m.]: I express my appreciation to Her Excellency the Governor for her address on 3 May 2011. The Governor set out in her address elements of the Government's 100 Day Action Plan. One of the key planks in that 100 Day Action Plan is the establishment of Infrastructure NSW. The establishment of this body will take the politics out of infrastructure decisions in this State and implement a policy that New South Wales is crying out for, and that is to rebuild infrastructure. I note that 30 per cent of the funding for the body will be allocated to regional projects, which certainly gladdens the hearts of residents in regional New South Wales—

**Mr Bryan Doyle:** Hear! Hear!

**Mr ANDREW GEE:** —including the opal of the south-west: it is good news for Campbelltown as well. Like many regional electorates, Orange has been badly let down in terms of infrastructure, particularly with respect to roads. We need New South Wales to grow and prosper and we need Infrastructure NSW. I was delighted on budget day to see that in my electorate roads funding will be increased by 31 per cent. I doff my hat to the Minister for Roads on the outstanding job he has done for the Orange electorate. There are all sorts of road projects that need attention in my electorate, including the upgrading of the Wellington to Narrabri road, and, of course, the holy grail of regional roads, the new road over the mountains: the Bells Line of Road Expressway. I think all of my colleagues in the west speak with a united voice on that issue. The west is awakening economically. We need that road and we want that road, which will open up the west.

Rail infrastructure has also been eroded and I congratulate the Government on the initiatives it announced in the recent budget for rail infrastructure improvement in the Orange electorate. I congratulate the Government on delivery of this key promise to deliver Infrastructure NSW. I also congratulate the Government on its inspirational choice of Nick Greiner to head up that body. We need his valuable expertise to get this State moving again. I saw him only a couple of days ago and he certainly had a spring in his step. The Governor also drew attention in her Speech to the Government's mandate to bring graffiti offenders to account. I congratulate the Attorney General and the Government on taking a tough new approach to graffiti offenders. I was shocked and appalled that the graffiti legislation has not passed through the upper House. Graffiti is a blight on regional communities.

It is a blight in Orange, Wellington and Mudgee, and people in regional communities want this problem addressed. One of the highlights of the graffiti legislation was the provision to enable a court to suspend a licence and extend the time learners spend on their permit or provisional licence, and to reduce the number of demerit points that can be accumulated before the cancellation of a licence. I was saddened to see members of The Greens on television in my electorate crowing about the fact that this legislation had not passed through the upper House. People in regional communities want a tough line and I think the approach of The Greens on this matter is basically to give offenders a cup of herbal tea, maybe a bit of *Kumbaya*, and send them on their way with a free set of wind chimes. It is not good enough: people of regional New South Wales want action on this very important issue. I congratulate the Government on persisting with its commitment to see that legislation passed into law. I am pretty sure I just heard a *Kumbaya* from the member for Heffron. It is coming.

**Ms Kristina Keneally:** Don't mess with me, Andrew.

**Mr ANDREW GEE:** She is making threats over there, Madam Acting-Speaker.

**Ms Kristina Keneally:** I can deliver too.

**Mr ANDREW GEE:** I can deliver too. The Governor has also referred to the Government's Jobs Action Plan in her address and the Government's commitment to establish 100,000 new jobs across New South Wales with 40 per cent or 40,000 jobs in regional New South Wales. We need to support job creation in New South Wales. This State currently lags behind the rest of Australia in jobs growth. We need to be encouraging entrepreneurs to create wealth and jobs. This is a commendable reform.

The Jobs Action Plan will work by providing a payroll tax rebate of \$4,000 per full-time employee for the first 100,000 new payroll tax paying jobs created in New South Wales. The rebate will be in two equal parts—on the first and second anniversary of the hire of a new full-time employee. This will encourage the creation of long-term, sustainable jobs in New South Wales. During the recent State election campaign the Premier came out to my electorate and went to the firm of Jeff Hort Engineering, where this policy was unveiled. From speaking with employers such as Mr Hort, I can certainly attest to the fact that this Jobs Action Plan will have positive effects in regional New South Wales.

The Government is also supporting job creation in regional New South Wales through its \$7,000 regional relocation grants. This is a very positive initiative, and it will encourage decentralisation to regional New South Wales. I commend the Government on this worthwhile initiative, which was been very well received in regional New South Wales. The Governor also acknowledged in her address the rising cost of living, and in particular the stresses caused to many people by rising electricity prices. The Government has established the Special Commission of Inquiry into Electricity Transactions, which will look into events surrounding the electricity asset sale—a sale that caused widespread angst and anger in the electorate of Orange.

I congratulate the Government on taking swift action on this issue. The Government has also delivered on its promise to establish Destination NSW. Destination NSW has been established to unify tourism bodies in this State and to chart a course for the future expansion of tourism in the State. Regional New South Wales, and the Orange electorate in particular, welcomes the advent of Destination NSW because tourism is such an important part of the economies of regional New South Wales, and in particular my electorate. Increasing numbers of tourists are flowing into towns such as Mudgee on weekends. In that town you can hardly get a car parking space in the main street on a Saturday or Sunday.

**Mr Troy Grant:** Beautiful town. Great community.

**Mr ANDREW GEE:** As the member for Dubbo rightly points out, it is a great town, and it is a great and very strong community, as are the city of Orange and all the other towns and villages, many of them historic

towns and villages, in the Orange electorate. They are encouraging tourism to New South Wales. I noted recently in the Cumnock area the Animals on Bikes campaign. This innovative campaign establishes paddock sculptures over more than 100 kilometres, and this area will receive a funding boost to encourage tourists to travel through the Cumnock area on their way to Dubbo.

The Governor also spoke about community safety and law and order issues in her address. The Government has moved on its commitment to curb alcohol-related violence and antisocial behaviour. As part of the Government's Making Our Streets Safe Again policy it has strengthened the move-on powers of police, giving them a more effective tool to deal with drunk and disorderly behaviour. This legislation will be particularly well received in communities of the Central West that have been blighted by antisocial behaviour in recent years. One only has to go to any local court on any given day to see the human cost of alcohol-related violence. Often it is a cost that the community at large do not hear about and do not know about until it actually affects them.

As someone who has spent some time round courts in recent years I can attest to the fact that it is a real cost and there is real damage, and it really is a blight that needs to be brought under control. So I commend the Government for taking swift action to increase police powers to deal with intoxicated people, because the cost of alcohol-related violence can be devastating to individuals and their families. Towns such as Wellington have been blighted by antisocial behaviour in recent years. Crime there has been a real and significant issue. I think the residents of Wellington would welcome a strengthening of the options available to police to deal with antisocial behaviour. The people of Wellington also look forward to the Parsons review on policing. The Government's new three-strikes policy for licensed venues will further address the issues of antisocial behaviour and alcohol-related violence.

I also mention the Government's reforms of the draconian occupational health and safety laws. This one issue was a cause of much anger and distress amongst the business community in New South Wales for so long. The initiative to place the burden of proof in occupational health and safety cases back on the body making the complaint is a real step forward. Nothing angered the business community more than that particular law, and it was long overdue for an overhaul. I also commend the Government's commitments in the field of health. It was particularly welcome news in Tuesday's budget that there is a \$5 million commitment to the Gulgong Multi-Purpose Service.

**Mr Troy Grant:** Hear! Hear! Well done. Good member.

**Mr ANDREW GEE:** The member for Dubbo knows only too well how long and hard the people of Gulgong have fought for improved health services. So that announcement has been welcomed with open arms by the community of Gulgong—with \$4 million to be spent at Gulgong over the next year and \$1 million after that. Gulgong High School also receives more than \$400,000 for continuation of its upgrade. Public housing in Orange will receive \$3 million and millions will go to railroad capital works. Another significant election promise delivered in the budget is the long-awaited upgrade of the Cargo Road bridge at Nashdale—announced during the election campaign by none other than the Treasurer himself.

**Mr Troy Grant:** Hear! Hear! Good Treasurer.

**Mr ANDREW GEE:** He is a very good Treasurer. The Treasurer himself was at the bridge during the election campaign and made that announcement. I am pretty sure he even said, "This is a big announcement for the Cargo Road." There will also be \$1 million for the repair and painting of the Beryl Bridge, over Wyaldra Creek, \$600,000 for the Northern Distributor at Orange, \$3.5 million in grants for councils for road improvements in the Orange electorate, and at Orange TAFE a new Aboriginal Training Centre. The Government has a robust legislative agenda to re-energise New South Wales and to deliver long-overdue reform. I congratulate the Government on its active legislative program.

I also commend those at the coalface, such as the hard-working Government Whip, the member for Wagga Wagga, and all those supporting him, such as Rebecca Cartwright, for all the hard work that they do. They put up with a lot—including members forgetting their pagers sometimes! They are a hard-working team. They work through the night. They deserve our commendation. I conclude by saying that there are clearly better days ahead for New South Wales.

**Mr ANDREW ROHAN** (Smithfield) [12.48 p.m.]: It is with an enormous sense of pride and pleasure that I rise in this House today to deliver my contribution to the Address-in-Reply to the Governor's Speech.

Parliament was officially opened on 3 May 2011 by Her Excellency the Governor, Professor Marie Bashir. Before I go on any further I place on record my support for Professor Marie Bashir. She has been a wonderful Governor of New South Wales. It is unfortunate that she and her position were so undervalued by the former Labor Government. Professor Marie Bashir was appointed Governor in 2001, on the recommendation of Premier Bob Carr, by Queen Elizabeth II. She is the State's first female Governor, and the first Governor of any Australian State from a Lebanese background. She was sworn in on 1 March 2001 and on 30 March was appointed as a Companion of the Order of Australia.

As the longest serving State Governor, Professor Bashir holds a dormant commission to act as the Administrator of the Commonwealth when the Governor-General of Australia is absent from Australia. She has held that position many times in the absence of the former Governor-General Michael Jeffery and in the absence of Quentin Bryce, the current Governor-General. I look forward to the day that Professor Marie Bashir or possibly the next Governor of New South Wales is invited by this Government to return to where the Governor rightly belongs, that is, in the Governor's residence.

For more than a century our Australian Constitution has worked in the background ensuring that our young nation remains democratic and free. It is 100 years younger than the American Constitution, and far less cumbersome and politically invasive. In more than a century of existence as a nation Australia has had no civil unrest and no constitutional crisis, and has an unparalleled record of political and economic stability, which has ensured the development of our new nation into the magnificent country it is today. We are recognised as the seventh oldest continuous democracy and we are often listed within the top five developed nations of the world. There is no need to fix what is not broken. But I digress.

I was inspired by the tradition on display throughout the ceremony but also quite moved. It is a great honour to have been elected by the people of Smithfield to represent their interests in this Parliament, Australia's oldest parliament. Members opposite may be unaware but I am the first Liberal member for Smithfield. While my electorate of Smithfield was only created in 1988, the suburb of Smithfield and the surrounding area have been dominated by the Australian Labor Party continuously for the past 75 years, under the electoral boundaries of various other names. The Liberal-Nationals Coalition won seats such as Smithfield at the last election because of the Labor Party's betrayal of the working people. Smithfield is as working class as can be. It is home to the largest industrial estate in the Southern Hemisphere. The Smithfield-Wetherill Park Industrial Estate is the hub of manufacturing and distribution in the Greater Western Sydney region. More than 1,000 manufacturing, wholesale, transport and service firms employ more than 20,000 people. It was those manufacturing, wholesale, transport and service employees that rejected the Labor Party on 26 March 2011.

I remind the House that legislation to reduce payroll tax as part of a campaign to create up to 100,000 extra jobs has recently been passed by the New South Wales Parliament. Businesses are now eligible for a payroll tax rebate of \$4,000 per new employee, equivalent to the annual payroll tax bill for one employee on the average wage. The rebate will be paid in two parts, at 12 months and 24 months after the employee is hired. Having owned and operated a small business for the past 17 years, I know the pressure facing other small business owners and I am passionate about creating greater local employment and investment opportunities, especially for our youth.

In the Governor's Speech we heard a lot about the things that this Government is aiming to do to make New South Wales number one again. Appropriately, the Governor recognised the Liberal-Nationals Government action plan that it will be implementing during this parliamentary term. The people of New South Wales and my electorate of Smithfield have high expectations for real change, which we have committed to delivering in accordance with the clearly articulated Five Point Action Plan that was emphasised repeatedly in the lead-up to the election on 26 March. The five points are: to rebuild the New South Wales economy through lower taxes, cutting the cost of living, and business growth; importantly, to return quality services in areas such as health, transport, education and community safety; to renovate infrastructure to make a difference to our economy and to people's lives; to restore accountability to government by giving people a say on issues that affect their lives at a grassroots level; and to protect our local environment and return planning powers to the community.

Importantly, the Governor acknowledged the Government's 100 Day Action Plan, which will deliver key elements of the Five Point Action Plan. As I read the main points the Governor mentioned I am incredibly heartened to see that already we have made substantial progress on the plan. I refer particularly to the establishment of Infrastructure NSW and the important appointment of its chairperson, the Hon. Nick Greiner, who will be an excellent chair of that independent body, which combines public and private sector expertise, to

remove the politics from infrastructure decision-making and to plan professionally for the future of this State's infrastructure. I am excited about being part of a Government that puts such a focus on infrastructure. No-one understands the pain that results from a lack of infrastructure like the commuters from north-west and south-west Sydney.

Western Sydney residents who have to commute to metropolitan Sydney for work are victims of poor planning and politics. As a result, thousands are consigned to a frustrating daily grind to and from work in the city. Public transport is not much of an option for most due to the lack of a rail link in the south-west and north-west parts of western Sydney. However, this Government takes the people of western Sydney seriously and is committed to building both rail links. They deserve better. Spending up to four hours a day to get to and from work has a detrimental effect on the quality of family life. It is galling to hear that the Gillard-Brown Labor alliance is spending billions of dollars on feel-good green energy schemes and illegal immigrants but cannot find anything for an extra lane on the M5. They are trying to tell us we need faster broadband. Wrong: we need faster trains and faster traffic flow on our grid-locked road systems.

Labor does not have to search far to learn why it lost its heartland vote in outer western Sydney. History has caught up with the self-serving decisions it made to pacify its inner-city constituents. It started when the Wran Labor Government sold off land donated to it by the Federal Coalition Government for transport corridors in the 1970s. It continued with the Carr Labor Government's promise to scrap the tolls on the M4 and M5 in the lead-up to the 1995 State election. It got worse when Carr and Egan refused to allocate funds for a third lane in the M5 East tunnel. Western Sydney residents have suffered ever since. Former Premier Nick Greiner's appointment in charge of infrastructure offers some hope but it will take time to recover from Labor's neglect of our transport systems.

While the Labor Government was notorious at announcing, cancelling and re-announcing major projects such as the North West and South West Rail links, by contrast, following the New South Wales State election on 26 March 2011, Premier Barry O'Farrell announced that his first order of business would be to start construction on the North West Rail Link. True to his commitment, on 6 April 2011 Premier O'Farrell and Minister for Transport Gladys Berejiklian announced the project team that will be responsible for construction and delivery of the North West Rail Link. I am pleased to say that on 15 May 2011 the Minister for Transport announced that a tender had been called for engineering, rail systems and architecture services. I will be pushing for funding for the M4 East extension and the extension of Reconciliation Drive in the Wetherill Park Industrial Estate, which I want delivered to help rejuvenate the western Sydney economy. I understand that the Government is currently negotiating to increase the number of lanes on the M5 Motorway, which will reduce congestion there, and we will build the North West and South West Rail links. We take infrastructure seriously; we will build the infrastructure needed to make New South Wales number one again.

I continue on the topic of transport infrastructure by raising an issue much closer to my heart. As I mentioned in my inaugural speech, I think it is quite interesting that the last time the Coalition was in government a substantial allocation was made to complete the overpass on the Cumberland Highway at Fairfield West, and now the Coalition is back in government we will deliver the long-awaited and much-needed upgrade to the Polding Street and Smithfield Road intersection. The intersection under that bridge in Fairfield West was ignored by the Labor Party for the entire 16 years it was in government. I visited the site with the then shadow Minister for Roads and now Deputy Premier, the Hon. Andrew Stoner, and we committed \$3 million to this vital project in order to ease traffic congestion in the area. As members may be aware, this is one of the worst accident spots in Sydney, as identified by both what was formerly known as the New South Wales Roads and Traffic Authority and the NRMA.

Professor Marie Bashir touched on the issue of addressing the cost of living. She said that the rising cost of living, particularly the cost of electricity, is causing stress to many families. Nowhere is this truer than in my electorate of Smithfield. People in Smithfield are doing it tough. A large part of my electorate is within the boundaries of the Fairfield local government area—one of the most disadvantaged local government areas in New South Wales and an area with the highest number of residents suffering mortgage and rental stress. The Government has established a special commission of inquiry into the partial electricity privatisation undertaken by the Labor Government. The commission will determine what occurred through the sale process and make recommendations as to what actions would be in the public interest for the electricity industry going forward.

The Government is determined to do whatever possible to ease the pressure of living costs and will restructure the electricity industry by merging the three existing distribution companies into two. During the election campaign I said that my priority in this place would be to stop the increasing cost of electricity. As

I said in my maiden speech, the greatest threat to the increasing cost of electricity today is the carbon tax of the Prime Minister and the Labor Party. The carbon tax will hurt families in my electorate by raising the cost of living even further, and it will hurt industry and investment. I am opposed to any carbon tax, and will continue to campaign against its introduction.

On a final note, I also highlight that in her Speech, the Governor spoke about valuing local government. The Government values the contribution of local government to our democracy and understands the value of local people having the power to make decisions that affect their community. This Government understands the value of local government in a very real way because a significant number of members of the Government, including me, come from a local government background. The Government also recognises that local government faces significant challenges in maintaining its assets—local roads, footpaths, parks, sporting fields and community halls that are essential to local communities. To address this challenge a council-by-council audit will be established to identify infrastructure projects needed in each specific local community. The Government will support the upgrade of local infrastructure through the Local Infrastructure Renewal Scheme, which will reduce the cost to local government of tackling infrastructure backlogs through an interest rate subsidy.

In concluding my contribution to the Address-in-Reply debate, I note again that the New South Wales Government has been working hard to achieve everything that was set out in the 100 Day Action Plan. We have become the busiest government in Australia, delivering on commitments and initiatives to make people's lives better. Our first 100 days have seen us begin the task to rebuild the State's economy, return quality services, start the building and renovation of infrastructure, restore accountability, and protect our local environment and communities. Our early achievements include some of the key commitments made during the election campaign. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

A very high level of trust has been placed in us and we will not let the families of this State down. We are going to give families a reason to be proud of New South Wales once more by building infrastructure and restoring confidence in the State to make New South Wales number one again.

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

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

#### **DISTINGUISHED VISITORS**

**The SPEAKER:** I welcome Mrs Rosemary O'Farrell and Will O'Farrell, guests of the Premier, Minister for Western Sydney, and member for Ku-ring-gai. I hope you enjoy question time. I acknowledge Mrs Norma Beckly and Mrs Kathleen Bury, founding members of the Liberal Party of Australia, guests of the Premier and the member for Hornsby. I also acknowledge Mr Peter Cochran, former member of the Legislative Assembly, who served as the member for Monaro between 1988 and 1999 and is a guest of the member for Monaro.

#### **PARLIAMENTARY COUNSEL'S OFFICE BRIEFING**

**The SPEAKER:** I take this opportunity to remind members of the briefing on statutory interpretation and the role of the Parliamentary Counsel's Office in the drafting of legislation, which is to be held tomorrow, Friday 9 September, in the Macquarie Room, commencing at 1.15 p.m. The briefing will include a presentation by Mr Don Colagiuri, SC, the Parliamentary Counsel. I strongly encourage all members to attend.

#### **DEATH OF HAROLD DAVID MAIR, OAM, FORMER MEMBER FOR ALBURY**

**The SPEAKER:** It is with regret that I inform the House of the death on 7 September 2011 of Harold David Mair, a former member of the Legislative Assembly, who served as the member for Albury from 7 October 1978 until 22 February 1988. On behalf of the House I extend to his family the deep sympathy of the Legislative Assembly in the loss sustained.

*Members and officers of the House stood in their places as a mark of respect.*

**TERRORIST ATTACKS ON THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TENTH ANNIVERSARY****Ministerial Statement**

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL** (Ku-ring-gai—Premier, and Minister for Western Sydney) [2.18 p.m.]: Sunday marks the tenth anniversary of the September 11 terrorist attacks on the United States of America. None of us will ever forget the terrible images we saw on television and the people of different nationalities who died on that day. This Sunday is a time to remember and to pay tribute to all those Americans, Australians and others who lost their lives and their loved ones on September 11 2001. It is also a time to recognise and to celebrate the resilience of the American people, who remain steadfast in their commitment to a free, democratic society. The people of New South Wales appreciate and acknowledge the United States of America's ongoing commitment to public affairs and international diplomacy, and we affirm the commonality of purpose and mutual conviction that our two nations share.

In commemorating September 11 this year, a decade on, the people of New South Wales will have an opportunity to express support for, and solidarity with, the American people through the signing of the commemorative book. Madam Speaker, with your agreement and that of the President of the Legislative Council, the Government is making available a book for members of the public and members of both Houses to sign as an affirmation of our friendship and unity with the United States on this terrible anniversary. The book will be made available in the Fountain Court of Parliament House from today until next Friday. I am pleased to confirm that Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir, the Governor of New South Wales, agreed to be the first New South Wales citizen to sign the book.

To enable the participation of all communities across New South Wales, I am today also providing every electorate office with an electronic version of the signature pages from the book and I encourage all members to seek the support of their local communities in signing them. Those pages will be collected and subsequently collated in a book to complement the one in Parliament House, which I intend to present to the Consul General of the United States later this month. An interfaith memorial service will be held by the United States Consulate General at St Mary's Cathedral this Sunday. The doors will be open at 3.30 p.m. and all are welcome to attend.

**Mr JOHN ROBERTSON** (Blacktown—Leader of the Opposition) [2.22 p.m.]: I join the Premier and speak on behalf of the Opposition as we remember the tenth anniversary of the September 11 attacks. I remember in particular all those who lived through that event and who will always recall it as a day that truly changed the world forever. The terrible atrocities that were committed against the United States were the start of a chain of events that shape our world today and will continue to shape our future. The September 11 attacks sparked 10 years of debate and action on global terrorism, domestic security, war and international alliances. It has changed the way we travel and the way we think.

But as we approach the tenth anniversary of the September 11 attacks on Sunday, it is important that we use that time to share our regret, our sympathy and our sorrow for the thousands of people who lost their lives and the thousands of families who will never be the same again. We remember the emergency services workers who ran into those two towers as most people were leaving, never to walk out again. We remember the heroes on United Airlines flight 93 who stormed the cockpit to save others, knowing that their fate was sealed. We remember the husbands, wives, sons and daughters who sent text messages of love to say goodbye for the last time.

We will also remember on Sunday those Australians who lost their lives, like Yvonne Kennedy from Westmead who had retired from the Red Cross and was on a retirement holiday, and Lesley Thomas from the Central Coast who was working in New York as an options trader. There were many more from New South Wales who died that day and Sunday is a time for all of us to share our grief, our prayers and our sorrow with those who lost so much. The horror of the events unfolded slowly as more information and details were reported. We watched with disbelief as the images were replayed over and over. While Sunday is a day to remember, it is also a day to contemplate and think about a tragedy such as this and how it bonds us all as human beings across the globe. Across political lines in this House there are some things that together we should fight for and will fight for forever, and that is our democracy and our freedom.

**QUESTION TIME**

*[Question time commenced at 2.25 p.m.]*

**RURAL AND REGIONAL EMPLOYMENT**

**Mr JOHN ROBERTSON:** My question is directed to the Treasurer. Why is the Government spending \$280 million on a scheme that pays people \$7,000 to move from the Newcastle local government area down the street to the Lake Macquarie local government area rather than investing in creating sustainable jobs in regional communities?

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

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** I am amazed.

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

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** There is so much to talk about today. We have had a speech from the Leader of the Opposition, but that can wait. I am sure we will get an opportunity later in question time to talk about that. I know the Opposition put forward a plan today. It was an interesting plan. It was one plan, and it came about 20 minutes into the speech. But surely one of the things you must do if you are going to announce a policy—You have to start looking at the costings for that policy. Is that a fair assumption? I think it is a fair assumption.

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

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** Last night—the night before a speech about economics—what does State Labor do? Those opposite get into the kitchen—the oven is there and they are all around it, trying to put something together. But I am disappointed.

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

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** Members opposite had 48 hours to read the budget papers. Every member in the House has read them, they have gone through every page. There are some great opportunities for communities across this State. Right at the front of the budget papers, to make it easy—and I want to make it easy for the Opposition—we provided an executive summary so that those opposite can get to the critical facts they are talking about.

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

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** Would one not think that in 48 hours they would have read the executive summary? That is a fair proposition. I would have thought members opposite would have read the executive summary.

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

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** But I am not sure whether they have read the executive summary, because in his speech today the Leader of the Opposition outlined a new fund of \$280 million—\$70 million a year—

**Mr John Robertson:** That's right.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** That is right. It is going to come from the relocation grant and go to the new plan that they have modelled.

**Mr John Robertson:** Yes.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** The Leader of the Opposition said yes. If the Leader of the Opposition had looked at the budget papers before he replied to the Budget Speech—

**Mr John Robertson:** Point of order: For the benefit of Hansard I did say yes.

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

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** The Leader of the Opposition said yes.

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

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** The Leader of the Opposition said yes and he took a point of order to inform the House that he said yes.

**Mr John Robertson:** I want it in *Hansard*.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** The Leader of the Opposition read the budget papers and he found \$70 million a year that he will put into his new funds. On page 1 of the executive summary is a letter which I hope the Leader of the Opposition has read. On page 2 there are budget results which I might talk about later. When we get to page 3 of the executive summary we find that it states that the Regional Kick-Start Program will include \$47 million in regional relocation grants. So Opposition members have not even costed their only policy.

**Mr Michael Daley:** Point of order: My point of order relates to relevance under Standing Order 129. I refer to the Treasurer's agreement in principle speech on 22 June. Call me old-fashioned, but 40,000 grants times \$7,000 equals \$280 million.

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr Michael Daley:** It is your speech; it is your maths.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call the member for Maroubra to order for the second time. I remind members not to wave props around.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** Opposition members have got their basic maths wrong. The budget papers refer to \$47 million and they are taking \$70 million each year. If Opposition members cannot get the budget right on their one point of policy what can they do for the people of New South Wales?

**Mr Bruce Notley-Smith:** I ask that the Minister be given an extension of time to conclude his answer.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** Have you read the budget?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Treasurer and the member for Coogee will resume their seats.

**Ms Linda Burney:** You do not even know the rules of the House.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I thank the member for Canterbury for her interjection. I call the member for Canterbury to order. Only the member who asks the question may ask for an extension of time.

### MEDICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mr BRUCE NOTLEY-SMITH:** I address my question to the Premier. What action is the Government taking to provide world-class medical research facilities and hospital infrastructure in New South Wales?

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

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** While the teachers unions were outside Parliament House defying the Industrial Relations Commission this morning to protest at Labor's wages policy, which we are simply implementing—and I have to say that it was an extraordinary protest; I was out on the balcony listening—

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

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** I was listening in particular to the speeches from the Domain when I noticed something—people were drifting away.

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

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** Were they unionists? No, the unionists, or those people representing all those unions, stayed. The people drifting away were the 22 people opposite. I saw the member for Mount Druitt and the member for Wallsend coming back into Parliament House. For the first time this session I took my family to lunch in the dining room because we are looking after a public school student today, as are other families across the State, where I saw half the Labor caucus having lunch. So today's protest was in the following terms: What do we want? Relief. When do we want it? After lunch.

**Ms Linda Burney:** Point of order: My point of order relates to relevance under Standing Order 129. We drifted away and stood on the front verandah.

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

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** Lest I be accused of hypocrisy, I enjoyed my lunch. But I have to say that on a day of chaos one would have thought that at least the parliamentary Labor Party would have stayed with the workers. I have never seen the member for Wollongong eat so much cake in the dining room.

**Ms Cherie Burton:** Point of order: My point of order relates to relevance. We have been listening to the Premier for over two minutes and the question that was asked related to what this Government is doing for health, which clearly is nothing—

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

**Ms Cherie Burton:** It is doing absolutely nothing.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call the member for Kogarah to order. The Premier will return to the leave of the question.

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** As I was saying when I was so rudely interrupted, I also noticed at lunchtime the member for Kogarah at the table of knowledge of the member for Wollongong.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Premier will return to the leave of the question.

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** When the protesters were gathering to exercise their democratic right the Minister for Health and I were inspecting the new medical research centre that is being constructed at Randwick. This type of facility puts things into perspective; it was a classic example of where governments can make a difference, especially for cancer sufferers and others who rely on medical breakthroughs as they battle chronic disease. Neuroscience Research Australia is building a facility at Randwick. Today, as part of the Government's commitment to medical research, we provided \$6 million to assist in completing that facility and to give light on the hill to those who suffer from the affliction of autism or any other neurological diseases. It reflects the commitment that we on this side of the House have to medical research and to the hospital system. The health capital works program is 50 per cent greater than was previously planned.

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

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** A billion dollars is being set aside this year alone for infrastructure in rural and regional hospitals across the State. The Government is backing medical research, not only in the Peter Wills review, which will provide a new framework to ensure that every taxpayer dollar directed to medical research is effective, but also by increasing the amount of funding for medical research institutes. The Government is determined that the medical research institutes in this State are as valued as those in other States. We have world-class researchers who earn as little as \$50,000 per year. They could earn a lot more elsewhere, but they do not do that because of their commitment to science and their determination to find cures for some of these terrible diseases that afflict people across the State. Whilst those opposite play political games this Government will continue to focus on the real game and direct public funds into real avenues.

## STATE BUDGET

**Mr JOHN ROBERTSON:** I direct my question to the Treasurer. Why has the Treasurer underfunded his own election commitment by almost \$100 million in the budget? As referred to in his speech introducing the bill, "... the bill introduces \$7,000 grants for families and 40,000 grants will be payable over the life of the scheme."

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I warn the Leader of the Opposition about the length of his question but I will allow it.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** The Leader of the Opposition has to be kidding. I know that he has not read the budget papers—we have already worked that out—but did he read the speech from which he just quoted?

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

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** Did the Leader of the Opposition read every line of that speech?

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

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** Did the Leader of the Opposition see in that speech the \$280 million figure?

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

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** The Leader of the Opposition did not see that \$280 million figure. Opposition members failed, which is not unusual for Labor.

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

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** This Government has costed that policy, which is something that those opposite did not do. If they had paid attention to the budget papers they would have seen that this Government has assumed a take-up of the relocation grants and the stamp duty benefit which Opposition members ignored.

**Mr John Robertson:** So you lied.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** Did Opposition members take into account the stamp duty benefit?

**Mr John Robertson:** You lied to the people.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** Not at all.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Leader of the Opposition will be careful with his language.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** Our policy on that is about looking after people in regional areas of New South Wales. The costing is in the budget papers.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Canterbury will cease interjecting.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** The costing of that policy is \$47 million. What did the Leader of the Opposition do? He made up his own costing to go with the policy set up by the member for Maroubra. No doubt members opposite have read the speech.

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

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** There is no figure of \$280 million in the budget. The costing for the policy is \$47 million, and that is what it is.

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

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** The policy is not underfunded at all. If the Leader of the Opposition had read our costing policy before the election he would not have seen \$40 million against this policy. If members opposite had read the costing policy they would know that the figure has been adjusted to \$47 million. We need to understand how the Leader of the Opposition can come out on his economic high horse and pretend to the people of New South Wales when he delivered a speech today that was supposed to provide an economic principle and framework for this State. What did we hear?

**Mr Nathan Rees:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I cannot hear the point of order. Which standing order has been breached?

**Mr Nathan Rees:** Standing Order 129. We could solve this with a Parliamentary Budget Office.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! That is a far cry from a valid point of order and the member knows it.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** I recommend that the inventions of Eric Roozendaal be left alone. What we heard from the Leader of the Opposition today is that he agrees with me, more than other members of this House. I should read what the member for Toongabbie said about the Leader of the Opposition. We are proud to outline in the budget a fiscally responsible strategy that takes this State back to surplus. That is the exact opposite of what we heard from the Leader of the Opposition. Members opposite have lost any credentials to talk about how they would turn around the State's finances. Clearly, not only have members opposite not read the budget papers; they have not understood in any capacity how to return this State to surplus. We will get on with the job because the community demands improved services and better infrastructure, and that is what we will deliver.

### STATE BUDGET

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN:** My question is directed to the Treasurer. Is the Treasurer aware of any alternative proposals to return the State's budget to surplus and the effect that would have on the State's fiscal position?

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** I thank the member for Cronulla for his incredible work for his community in such a short time. He is making a difference in the shire. In the budget we took some tough decisions to return the State to surplus. We were in a difficult position because of what was left behind, but we decided to put the interests of the State ahead of political interests. It is time we got back to an economic path. The Leader of the Opposition has been very critical of our budget. Today he had an opportunity to outline his alternative proposals for the State. He was critical of all our savings measures. Indeed, he was critical of the whole budget. He has been on radio talking down the budget at every opportunity. Today he had an opportunity to put his economic credentials to us. If he were to be graded, I could only give him an F. He failed his economic leadership test purely and simply because he did not put forward any dollar savings. How many dollars of savings did he put forward?

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

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** The Leader of the Opposition did not put forward one dollar of savings in his speech. Is that the path of someone who wants to be Premier of this State? How can he not put forward one dollar of savings? If members read his speech—it does not take long to read the speech—they will see that two words are missing. What did the Leader of the Opposition fail to mention in his speech? He failed to mention the black hole. He did not mention the black hole because it has been confirmed. There it is.

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

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** Members opposite have gone quiet. We are waiting for the attacks about the black hole but there is nothing. That is because the black hole exists.

**Dr Andrew McDonald:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I remind Opposition members that some of them are on two, possibly three, calls to order. Those who are on two calls to order will be placed on three calls to order very shortly.

**Dr Andrew McDonald:** Standing Order 73 relates to improper motives and personal reflections on other members. The Treasurer is making allegations that are clearly a personal reflection or improper motive.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I draw the Minister's attention to that point.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** I love this budget paper because there are so many good things to read out. It confirms that Labor left behind a black hole. The Leader of the Opposition has not explained why he did not tell us about the black hole. Without a savings strategy, the Leader of the Opposition has put a fairly clear path before us. If no action is taken by the Opposition, then we have deficits going all the way up to \$2.7 billion in 2014-15 and \$5.2 billion overall. So I ask the Leader of the Opposition this: Has he endorsed every savings measure we have taken, or is he sending the State into financial ruin? Those are the two choices that the Leader of the Opposition has left us with.

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

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** There are no dollars for health, transport or infrastructure. Indeed, it took the Leader of the Opposition 20 minutes before he said anything of substance. Most importantly, his speech was a slap in the face for the member for Heffron. I thought that was harsh but that is what he did.

**Dr Andrew McDonald:** Point of order: My point of order relates to relevance under Standing Order 129. Clearly the Treasurer is about to make a personal attack on the member for Heffron.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! As the member knows, I cannot rule on something that is hypothetical.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** In the last election campaign we heard a lot about a policy called Fairness for Families. Members remember Fairness for Families. Where was the fairness for families?

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

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** Two members like this the most—the shadow Minister for middle management and the member for Toongabbie. They loved the speech of the Leader of the Opposition because they know that one of them will be delivering the speech next year. And thank goodness for that.

### ILLAWARRA EMPLOYMENT

**Ms ANNA WATSON:** My question is addressed to the Treasurer. How does sacking thousands of public servants and scrapping the Illawarra Advantage Fund help the people of Wollongong who are already devastated by the recent announcement of massive job losses at BlueScope Steel?

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** Opposition members need to understand that this Government got the State's finances under control because it can prepare for economic shock. Earlier today the Leader of the Opposition enunciated his plan. He either endorsed all this Government's proposals—and we do not know whether or not he has done that—or he put us back on the path to financial ruin because our triple-A rating is lost, we have a \$5.2 billion deficit and he has done nothing about it. Those are the choices with which the Leader of the Opposition is faced. This Government needs to get the budget back in order so that it can get on with the job to which it is committed—that is, building infrastructure and improving front-line services. That is exactly what this budget will do.

**Ms Anna Watson:** Point of order: My point of order relates to relevance under Standing Order 129. I asked a very clear and specific question.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I understand the member asked a very specific question, but I cannot direct the Minister how to answer the question; I can only ask him to be generally relevant.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** This Government supports the Illawarra region and it is delighted to stand alongside the Federal Government and BlueScope Steel in contributing to the \$30 million fund to look after the region. There is no doubt that we want that region to grow. We are happy to support the Illawarra region at this critical time and we have done so through contributing to that fund. That is a start but much more needs to be done. This Government clearly outlined its plan for job creation which will result in the employment of 940 additional front-line nurses, 150 additional police officers and 200 additional teachers. And that is not all. This Government is delighted to help all those delivering front-line services by providing the necessary infrastructure. The Minister for Health announced earlier that this Government had allocated \$4.7 billion for health infrastructure—

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

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** —which is 50 per cent more than was allocated by the former Labor Government. This Government's record spend on health infrastructure will look after hospitals in rural and regional areas and help our front-line workers.

**Ms Anna Watson:** Point of order. My point of order again relates to relevance under Standing Order 129. I again ask you to direct the Treasurer to answer the question.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I have already ruled on that point of order. I have no power to direct the Treasurer how to answer the question, merely that his answer be relevant and at the moment his answer is entirely relevant to the question.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** I have answered the question. This Government will continue to work alongside the Illawarra to improve services in that region. Contrast this Government's funding this year for Wollongong Hospital with the funding allocated last year by the former Labor Government—only half the funding.

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

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** We are not pretending that all the work has been done, but we want to support that region.

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

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** Opposition members should take a chill pill and relax as it will all be okay. It is fascinating that the Leader of the Opposition, who made such a point about jobs in his reply to the Budget Speech, did not address today's rally. Did he go out and address the rally?

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

**Mr Paul Lynch:** Point of order: My point of order relates to relevance under Standing Order 129. This is now significantly different to what the Treasurer was saying earlier. He is clearly outside the standing orders.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! It is not clearly outside the standing orders. I draw the Treasurer's attention to the question and remind him that his answer should be generally relevant.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** Did the Leader of the Opposition in his reply to the Budget Speech say anything about the 5,000 voluntary redundancies? Not one word. Either he is supporting them or he is sending this State down a financially perilous path. It is very clear.

**Mr Paul Lynch:** Point of order: I ask you to invite the Treasurer once again to be relevant.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Treasurer will return to the leave of the question.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** We will look after the Illawarra, as we will every region in this State, by getting our finances back in order and delivering the services and infrastructure that we need.

## STATE BUDGET

**Mr ANDREW GEE:** My question is directed to the Deputy Premier. Has there been a response to the budget in regional New South Wales? Is the Deputy Premier aware of any alternative policies?

**Mr ANDREW STONER:** I acknowledge that the member for Orange is a passionate advocate for the Central West. It is budget week and today the Leader of the Opposition finally discovered the regions. However, he is a bit late. If he had a look at the electoral pendulum he would discover that almost every member of The Nationals and every regional Liberal member of Parliament is sitting on a margin of over 20 per cent. In contrast, Labor's primary vote in seats such as Tamworth is only 4.7 per cent; in Dubbo, 6.4 per cent; and in Clarence, a seat held not that long ago by Labor's Harry Woods, just 10.2 per cent. If Labor wants to claw back regional New South Wales it is starting a long way behind the eight ball. The Leader of the Opposition could have campaigned in the regions during the election instead of sandbagging himself in and drawing in all those resources around the seat of Blacktown. However, if he had not done that, members would not have had the benefit of his wisdom which was outlined today in his reply to the Budget Speech.

The one minor budget measure outlined today by the Leader of the Opposition was a regional fund of about \$70 million a year, which could be called the "Robbo fund for the regions." However, he issued no guidelines as to how it was to be spent, where it was to be spent or who would be responsible for spending that money—a bit like Craig Thomson's credit card. We are all for regional funds, which is why we have the Regional Industries Investment Fund, which will see \$53 million in funding for the regions. In addition, we have \$77 million in the State Investment Attraction Scheme, not to mention the \$30 million Illawarra fund to which this Government and the Federal Government are contributing. Compare that with the \$70 million "Robbo fund for the regions." To be honest, our schemes have to be backed up which is why we are kick-starting the regions with up to \$40,000 in payroll tax rebates and billions of dollars worth of infrastructure.

**Dr Andrew McDonald:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I remind the member for Macquarie Fields about my ruling on spurious points of order. What is the member's point of order?

**Dr Andrew McDonald:** The fact that the Minister is clearly about to use a prop.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I remind members they are entitled to quote from a newspaper article as long as they name the source.

**Mr ANDREW STONER:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. If ever there were a premature point of order it would have to be that point of order. I am reading from a great rural newspaper, the *Land*, of which Dr Andrew McDonald is probably not aware:

Regional New South Wales has fared well in the first O'Farrell Government budget with money being spent on hospitals, roads, dam upgrades and more. It will also get its share of a move to appoint hundreds more police, teachers and nurses throughout the State.

The *Port Macquarie News* carried an article entitled, "Big budget bucks in the Hastings". The *Western Advocate* had an article entitled, "Government delivers on 24-hour service promise. Budget funding for fire stations. Well done the member for Bathurst." The *Dubbo Daily Liberal*, had an article entitled, "Dubbo scores big with budget" and the article in the *Wagga Daily Advertiser* was entitled, "Hospital delivered". I could go on. In contrast, today the member for Blacktown—

**Government members:** Go on!

**Mr ANDREW STONER:** There is way too much. In contrast, today the member for Blacktown outlined how he would spend \$70 million, or 0.1 per cent, of a State budget of nearly \$60 billion. What we heard today from the Leader of the Opposition was 0.1 per cent budget reply. I wonder what the commentators thought. One such commentator was the member for Heffron who blogged, "The key to understanding the O'Farrell Government's first budget is to follow the politics". Now there is a bit of wisdom for us all. Similarly, the key to understanding the 2011 election is to follow the politics; that is, that the Keneally Labor Government was the worst government in the history of Australia.

Despite leading Labor to its worst defeat ever—69 Government members and 20 Opposition members—the member for Heffron obviously thinks she has the right to run a commentary. I am informed that the most points the South Sydney Rabbitohs conceded in a game was 66 points, on 25 June 2006, against the New Zealand Warriors. If she were Souths coach that day, presumably the member for Heffron would have walked into the post-match press conference to pat herself on the back and give the winners some unsolicited advice on how to do better next time.

#### **PREMIER, AND MINISTER FOR WESTERN SYDNEY**

**Mr JOHN ROBERTSON:** My question is to the Premier. Has he become so arrogant, conceited and out of touch that he thinks it is appropriate to berate and insult ordinary workers who are worried about their jobs—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I rule the question out of order. The Leader of the Opposition will resume his seat. Those who write those sorts of questions should refer to the standing orders on the nature of questions.

#### **PRESCHOOL FEES**

**Mr CHRIS HOLSTEIN:** My question is to the Minister for Education. What action has the Government taken to keep preschool fees low for disadvantaged families and their children?

**Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI:** I welcome the question from the member for Gosford, and commend his keen interest in early childhood education. There is a Department of Education and Communities preschool in the electorate of Gosford. Many of the member's Central Coast constituents, along with many other families across New South Wales, have long considered it inequitable that they have been paying fees in community-based preschools whilst a minority of families with sufficient means have had access to a Department of Education and Communities preschool but have paid no fees.

For the benefit of the House, there are 100 Department of Education and Communities preschools, in most instances co-located on the grounds of a Department of Education and Communities primary school, and those preschools charge a voluntary fee. We would all accept that the purpose of preschools is to get the children of low-income and disadvantaged families into an early childhood setting prior to starting school—a

virtue that we would all support. Those 100 preschools, which have been constructed over the years, were targeted at disadvantaged and low-income communities. But over the years those communities have changed. For example, some Department of Education and Communities preschools in the inner-west of Sydney that were once filled with disadvantaged and low-income families are now filled with the children of people with reasonable incomes and in many cases high incomes.

**Ms Anna Watson:** So let's sock 'em.

**Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI:** What an interesting interjection.

**Ms Anna Watson:** You are a disgrace.

**Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI:** Is it only me? But every time the member for Shellharbour walks past I get a shiver down my spine.

**Ms Anna Watson:** You don't have a spine, Godzilla.

**Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI:** I have never seen her after the sun goes down. I'll leave it at that.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I draw the Minister back to the leave of the question.

**Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI:** Department of Education and Communities preschools were designed to support low-income families, to encourage them to send their children to preschool. We have many of them in western New South Wales and they are doing a fantastic job, particularly for Aboriginal communities. For those disadvantaged families, nothing will change. But to those who can afford to pay fees and who send their children to Department of Education and Communities preschools, we will be charging a fee along the lines of the fees that other not-for-profit preschools and community-based preschool providers charge within that area. If you are a member of Parliament or a journalist earning a decent income—as we are, and we appreciate that—and you send your child to a Department of Education and Communities preschool, you will be paying more than \$5 or \$10 a day; you will be paying the preschool rate for the suburb in which you live.

But if you are a disadvantaged family, or you have a disadvantaged child or Aboriginal child, and you are now paying a minimal fee, or in some Department of Education and Communities preschools no fee, that situation will continue under the Government's proposal. Our number one priority is to support disadvantaged students by encouraging them into high-quality, early childhood places, like those in Department of Education and Communities preschools. We are supporting those families, and we will continue to support them. But people who can afford to pay fees and choose to send their children to Department of Education and Communities preschools will be charged a fee. By the end of third term, the Government will have announced its fee structure, which the department is still working on.

Parents will have plenty of time to have a look at that fee policy and consider what they might do with their children next year. But, most importantly, the Government will be continuing to support disadvantaged families. The Minister for Aboriginal Affairs has set up a task force, and I congratulate him wholeheartedly on his terrific initiative, to address Aboriginal disadvantage particularly. In the preschool sector, we will be supporting Aboriginal families, getting those children into high-quality preschool classrooms. I visited one of them at Dubbo West. They do a great job for that community, making sure children get a great start to their education. We will continue to do that. And we will continue to support the fantastic teachers in those public schools, particularly those supporting disadvantaged children in our Department of Education and Communities preschools.

#### **KINGS CROSS LATE-NIGHT TRAIN SERVICES**

**Ms CLOVER MOORE:** My question is to the Minister for Transport. Given that thousands of young vulnerable people, equivalent to the numbers in Martin Place at peak hour, are stranded in Kings Cross late at night every weekend because transport has stopped, will the Minister commit to running trains to enable these young people to get home?

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** This is a very important issue, and I thank the member for Sydney for raising it in the House today. I take the opportunity to share with the House what the New South Wales Government is providing for those people who need to get home from Kings Cross and the central business

district late at night. This Government understands that the New South Wales travelling public deserve safe, reliable and accessible public transport services, particularly late at night, and particularly in those locations outlined by the member for Sydney. I am pleased to say that during the election one of the key commitments that we on this side of the House made was to increase Nite Rider services for young people. I am pleased to say that in the State budget handed down this week we delivered on that commitment.

The 2011-12 budget increases funding for this service by a substantial 28 per cent, to \$8.6 million, compared to last year. We will deliver an additional \$7.6 million for Nite Rider services over the next four years. Nite Rider bus services start from Town Hall and provide late-night services from the central business district to key suburban locations. Our funding boost means the Nite Rider system, for example serving Kings Cross, which is the N100, will receive extra services. This will mean Thursday night Nite Rider services will be increased to weekend frequency. In many cases, this means the frequency of services will be doubled. We will introduce a new Nite Rider service to Richmond, providing a new service to customers from Marayong, Quakers Hill, Schofields, Riverstone, Vineyard, Mulgrave, Windsor, Clarendon, East Richmond and Richmond.

**Mr John Robertson:** Do you know where that is?

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I caught the train out there. Have you? The New South Wales Government will increase the frequency of weekend Nite Rider services to Macarthur, that is, from Town Hall to Macarthur. This new service will give people living between Liverpool and Macarthur a half-hourly service. We will also introduce a new hourly weekend Nite Rider service along the Carlingford line, and increase Nite Rider services to Parramatta.

**Dr Geoff Lee:** Hear! Hear!

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I thank the member for Parramatta. This will mean that customers living along the Carlingford line will benefit from a late-night service for the first time. Work on introducing these services is well on the way, and the new Nite Rider service will begin on the Carlingford line and Richmond branch lines very soon. For the benefit of the member for Sydney, there are also buses that connect Kings Cross to Town Hall, where Nite Rider services depart. In the early hours of Saturday and Sunday mornings, during times that trains do not run, RailCorp runs half-hourly services, again the N100, from Kings Cross into the city, leaving from Bayswater Road. There is a security guard on both the N100 and the 999 services. Also, I would like to mention that when it comes to taxis this Government is delivering 197 new annual taxi licences and 30 replacement licences for Sydney for 2011-12. This is a 3.6 per cent increase in taxi licences, and they are expected to be on the road by Christmas.

I am pleased to advise the member also that the New South Wales Government is reviewing the CityRail timetable. The review will look at the options to provide train services where demand dictates. This is measured by regular passenger counts on trains and buses, counts of customers arriving at and departing from stations and bus stops, and also ticket sales. We will consult with stakeholders and community organisations, and receive feedback from customers on how best to improve these services. We want public transport services to match passengers' needs and we are also happy to work with the City of Sydney to examine how to further improve these late-night transport options. The New South Wales Government is increasing late-night transport options through Night Ride services and will continually look for other ways to improve options for late-night travellers.

While the Government is increasing services, it knows that Labor cut and slashed services. Those opposite slashed 416 daily rail services, that is, more than 2,000 services a week. They refused to increase Night Rider bus services, but we on this side of the House are doing just that. The people of New South Wales lost faith and confidence in the ability of Labor to provide public transport. This Government will always put customers first. I am pleased to inform the member for Sydney how it intends to do that for people enjoying the central business district.

## UNION DAY OF CHAOS

**Mr BART BASSETT:** My question is addressed to the Premier. What is the Government's response to today's rally?

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** I thank the member for Londonderry for his question. I know that in his electorate, like other electorates across the State, people were inconvenienced today because the Teacher's

Federation decided to ignore the very body it claims to be protecting. We saw 20,000 people rally legitimately in the Domain for their rights. There is no argument—no ifs, no buts—about that. That is their democratic entitlement. During this so-called day of chaos protest we also saw Labor members of Parliament desert that process to have dessert in the Parliamentary Dining Room.

That is despite the fact they had a particular interest to be out in the park with those 20,000 people today, because that is about the sum total of votes they got in the last election. The day of chaos protest also sent a mass SMS message "Not happy Barry". Unfortunately it did not come to my phone and to whoever got those SMS messages, whoever's system has been blown, I apologise profusely, and I am happy to give that person Mark Lennon's phone number later to take it up with. It is one thing to democratically exercise your rights but it is another to scandalously and disgustingly tell lies. Last night I got a message.

**Ms Linda Burney:** You should know.

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** The member for Canterbury ought to listen to this and learn something. The message was from a 40-year-old single mother with two children, one of whom suffers from autism. The message was: Why are you shutting down autism classes? This morning I checked again with the Minister for Education and Minister for Disability Services—I knew last night it was untrue. We are not closing autism classes. I inquired from where this rumour came, this rumour to a parent who is putting up with all the things that a family in which there is a child with disabilities have to put up with—all those extra pressures. The answer that came back was that it came from a federation representative. That is on a par with the lies being told by Nurses Association representatives who claim we are about to take away maternity leave and other entitlements.

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

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** I again point out to this House and to the public of New South Wales that this wages policy is the same wages policy that Labor introduced. It offers to every public servant a 2.5 per cent wage increase and it can stay there if it wants to stay there.

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

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** There is no cutting of entitlements. There is no sacrificing of any of those things, unless, as happened under those opposite, there is an agreement made by those workers through their union with the Government. In that situation, there can be wages paid in excess of the 2.5 per cent. As I have said time and time again, we will not do what those opposite did: enter into voluntary agreements with their union mates, pay the extra dollars but not actually deliver those productivity increases because that cost taxpayers a billion dollars, a billion dollars that could have been spent on improving services in our hospitals and in our schools, and providing more autism classes and more police in our communities.

We are simply ensuring that whatever voluntary agreement is entered into, normally between a union and the Government, will in future be honoured. There is no compulsion. There is no forcing. We are not out there to cut conditions, and that is the second lie that I have put to bed. What we are seeing by the union bosses and by public sector bosses desperately trying to cling to the power they exercised during the 5,840 days of chaos under the reign of those opposite is a last desperate attempt to cling to power. On 26 March the people of this State voted for a Government to clean up the mess that was New South Wales. They wanted a government to put economic responsibility back into our finances.

They wanted a government that invested in infrastructure and the services that they provide to people across this State. We will do that. This policy is responsible. This policy was enunciated by them in 2007 when the present Leader of the Opposition was head of the union movement. We will continue that policy. People in the park today exercised their democratic rights, but those ferry workers and their act of bastardry in going out on a protest without any notification has inconvenienced people across this State. The Teachers Federation has earned the undying scorn of parents across this State, and all for what? All for nought, because it is not going to change.

## STATE BUDGET AND JOBS

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY:** What a tactical blunder was that answer.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Does the member have a question to ask?

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY:** My question is directed to the Premier. What does it say about the faith he has in his Treasurer when his budget is only planning to achieve half the rate of jobs growth that Labor had when it left office?

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** I thank the champion of middle management for that question. I am concerned that the champion of middle management, according to others, wants to be executive over there, he wants to join the chief executive service process over there. I will not enter into a debate with the member for Maroubra about the Federal economic policies pursued by Wayne Swan. As the member for Maroubra might one day know if he stays in this place long enough and returns to this side of the Chamber, States are not immune from national economic circumstances nor Federal economic circumstances. On the weekend I heard the Leader of the Opposition refer to the May estimates of the surplus as being \$2 billion, and indeed they were accurate Treasury figures. But what was the result in the budget? It was just over \$1 billion. Why? Because there is a flat national economic condition and because there is enormous uncertainty internationally, and those things have an impact.

Let us think about what the Government is doing. We came to office and have put in place a payroll tax rebate for workers. We encouraged 100,000 new jobs to be created across New South Wales, 40 per cent of which are to be in regional areas so that people in regional New South Wales can enjoy the opportunity to grow up and live in those areas. We have also put in place a payroll tax rebate for those with disabilities because we are determined to ensure that economic prosperity and jobs are available to all. We will continue to do that because we on this side understand that it is about providing people with opportunities, it is about providing a stimulus for economic growth.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Maroubra will come to order. That is his final warning.

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** As I said to my friend Deborah Cameron yesterday on radio, one of the benefits of the changes to the stamp duty arrangements we have made since we have been elected was extending the stamp duty concession to the 55-year-old and over age group—the empty nesters—that is, when they get to that stage in life apparently their children have sometimes grown up and left home and they might want to downsize to a smaller dwelling. If they buy a new dwelling, whether it be a unit or a house, they can get a stamp duty holiday. We have changed the first home owners' stamp duty arrangements to do the same.

We are determined to stimulate the construction sector. Why? Because, firstly, it will create jobs, even in the Illawarra. It will create apprentice opportunities and, importantly, as that economic growth continues it also continues to create that revenue flow that the former Labor Government had for 10 years, but it failed to invest in infrastructure and services to secure the future of this State. Today the Leader of the Opposition had a chance to demonstrate his economic credentials. They are about the size of a pea—they would certainly not trouble the member for Wollongong's plate. The fact is that he failed to do so. As the Treasurer has so expertly detailed—

**Mr Michael Daley:** Point of order: I refer to Sanding Order 129. I did not ask the Premier to comment about any member on this side of the House. My question was simple.

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

**Mr Michael Daley:** Why are the Government's jobs targets so wrong?

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

**Mr Michael Daley:** Standing Order 129.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member will resume his seat. The Premier will return to the leave of the question. He is being relevant at this stage.

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** I was talking about jobs; in fact, I was talking about the job that the member for Maroubra wants—the position of Leader of the Opposition. In his reply to the budget today the Leader of the Opposition sought to mirror the Government's commitment to Regional Kickstart and payroll tax rebates designed to stimulate jobs growth in the city and the country. We have also made changes to stamp duty to stimulate construction jobs, including apprenticeships. What was the Leader of the Opposition's response? It was a \$280 million program—I think the Leader of The Nationals said that is about 0.01 per cent of the budget—and he made a \$100 million mistake.

He covered 0.01 per cent of the budget and made a \$100 million mistake. What would have happened if he had covered the entire budget? That is the issue. He made no commitment to infrastructure or to the North West Rail Link or the South West Rail Link. He presented no plan to control expenses that ran out of control under the Labor Government or any plan to invest in Western Sydney roads, hospitals or schools. It is clear that after 16 years he has failed to learn anything about how not to run the State or how to appeal to the Government. This Government is committed to growing jobs in this State and it will do that. The key to that is getting the economy right and getting the State's finances back under control.

**Question time concluded at 3.21 p.m.**

## **SOCIAL POLICY COMMITTEE**

### **Reference**

**Mr BRUCE NOTLEY-SMITH** (Coogee) [3.22 p.m.]: In accordance with Standing Order 299 (1), I inform the House that the Social Policy Committee has received a referral from the Premier and Minister for Western Sydney to conduct an inquiry into international student accommodation in New South Wales, the full details of which will be available on the committee's home page.

## **PETITIONS**

**The Speaker announced that the following petitions signed by fewer than 500 persons were lodged for presentation:**

### **Calderwood Urban Development**

Petition opposing a zoning and concept plan for the Calderwood urban development project, received from **Mr Gareth Ward**.

### **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**.

### **Shoalhaven River Recreational Fishing**

Petition requesting restrictions on netting by fishermen on the Shoalhaven River system and for visitors fishing licences to be fast-tracked, received from **Mr Gareth Ward**.

### **Community Housing Mental Health Services**

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

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

### **State Budget and Western Sydney**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES** (Mulgoa) [3.24 p.m.]: This motion should be accorded priority because for 16 long, painful and frustrating years the Labor Government ignored the hardworking people of New South Wales and specifically the people of Western Sydney. For 16 years we heard promise after promise, but we were delivered failure after failure. It was said that under Bob Carr's leadership in the 1990s the then Labor Government went walkabout. What changed over 16 years? Nothing changed, and that was demonstrated when the former Premier Kristina Keneally declared, "We walked away from the people of New South Wales." They did a lot of walking, but they did not do a lot of working for the people of New South Wales.

This motion should be accorded priority because of the election defeat delivered to the Australian Labor Party. It was a huge battering after years of incompetence and it demonstrated that the people of this State wanted a government that would deliver a budget for them. The once-great Labor party is now reduced to a remnant of disillusioned, demoralised and depressed souls. That once-great party is now the all-time loser party. This motion should be accorded priority because this Government respects the people of Western Sydney and their vote, which was loud and clear on election day—they wanted real change. This motion should be accorded priority because this Government's budget demonstrates real commitment and accountability to the people of Western Sydney.

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

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES:** Finally the people of western Sydney have a government that is focused on delivering the services and infrastructure that the former Labor Government repeatedly failed to deliver. The former Government axed 340 front-line nursing positions from Nepean Hospital.

**Mr John Robertson:** Point of order: I met with those nurses and they are filthy on you.

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

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES:** They do not want to learn. Members opposite claim that their party represents front-line workers. Does it?

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

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES:** The Labor Government axed 460 daily rail services and 1,500 weekly bus services, but it claims that it represents the front-line workers of New South Wales. The Liberal-Nationals first budget is about the people of New South Wales and their future. This motion should be accorded priority because the Government's budget focus is significantly different from that of the former Government. The Labor Government's budget focus could not be more clearly demonstrated than by the comments made by the member for Maroubra during question time on 4 August. While the Attorney General was speaking the member for Maroubra loudly yelled, "It was our money." That is in *Hansard*; members opposite should check it.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The members for Toongabbie, Keira and Canterbury will come to order. I remind members that some of them are on three calls to order. They will be out of the Chamber for the rest of the day if they are not careful.

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES:** This Government's budget is about delivering fiscal responsibility to the people of New South Wales. It will invest in their future, address the mountainous backlog of infrastructure projects and return taxes to the people by providing necessary services and facilities. This budget is about delivering real change for the people of western Sydney. This motion should be accorded priority because the people of western Sydney told me time and again that they felt taken for granted and ignored by that lot opposite. The voters of western Sydney chose the Coalition on 26 March in their droves—so much so that we now have 12 Western Sydney members representing the Liberal Party. I could cite many examples of the Labor Government's failure to deliver infrastructure, and I am pleased to say that the Coalition's budget represents real action to address those failures.

### **Investment in Jobs**

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY** (Maroubra) [3.29 p.m.]: The House should note that there is free NoDoz for everyone in the Clerk's office after that contribution.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I warn the member about making those kinds of comments.

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY:** The member for Mulgoa should talk to the nurses from western Sydney to whom we spoke today. If she did she would get a rude shock. My motion deserves priority because this Government has made a complete hash of investing in jobs in this week's budget. The previous Government created 195,000 jobs in its last three years in office and left a 4.9 per cent unemployment rate. However, six months into this Government's term in office, 30,000 full-time jobs in New South Wales have already gone up in smoke. That was before the Government moved to sack 5,000 public sector workers. Those regular mums and dads were out in the Domain today. They had no idea before the election that the dreaded tap on the shoulder from Barry O'Farrell was coming.

We have learned this week that we have a very special Treasurer, a budget novice who fumbles the ball at the first opportunity. The Government's budget sacks 5,000 people; cuts wages and conditions; gouges our State's most vulnerable and slugs a billion dollar stamp duty tax on first home buyers; yet still somehow miraculously manages to bungle the State's financial position. After all that pain—picking petty fights with war widows, pensioners, pensioners in public housing—the Government cannot even manage to maintain a 1.3 billion budget surplus gift that was bequeathed to them by Labor. Worst of all, it is a budget that presses the snooze button on jobs and the initiatives that are needed to build the skills and the working capacity of our State's people.

**Mr Darren Webber:** What would you do?

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY:** What would we do? Well, we had 15 budget surpluses in 16 years.

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

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY:** Madam Speaker, are any of those guys over there on three calls to order?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! If members continue with this type of behaviour they will soon find themselves on three calls to order.

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY:** Well they should be, Madam Speaker: what is good for the goose is good for the gander.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Wyong will come to order. The Minister for Education will come to order.

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY:** Members opposite need to ask the Treasurer about the maths: 4,000 times 7,000—\$200,000 million? You need to go and get some of those teachers from the park and go and sit down with your Treasurer because he needs to do some maths training. You are the Minister for Education. Go and educate him.

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

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY:** This motion deserves priority because New South Wales deserves better than a hopeless 1 per cent employment growth rate over the next financial year, a rate that does not even keep up with population growth. A budget deficit might be justifiable if done in pursuit of a bold expansionary jobs plan, but the Government's plan to cut 5,000 jobs and no doubt thousands more to come—thousands more to come—will contract the economy, smash household incomes and smash business confidence. The Government has pulled the wrong lever in this budget. It is as simple as that. It does not have a clue as to how to fund the North West Rail Link bar the impending sale of all the poles and wires in the electricity sector in New South Wales. That is how the Government plans to fund the North West Rail Link.

I can give it some advice. Rather than slash and burn, Treasurer, rather than rip jobs out of the economy, think of ways to grow the economic pie. At a time of global economic anxiety, with agriculture and manufacturing under real pressure because of the high Australian dollar, the Government should have been bursting at the seams with job creation ideas for New South Wales. Instead, to its eternal shame, it has abolished regional specific initiatives such as the Illawarra and Hunter advantage funds, despite the proud record of those funds in creating jobs. The Government has abolished the Business Employment Fund in western Sydney and the Central Coast. By contrast, the Government's rebadged Regional Industries Investment Fund represents a sneaky \$11 million cut, another cut to funding for the development of regional business.

My motion deserves priority because this is a Government only interested in jobs when it comes to ripping them away or—in the immortal words gifted to us by the Minister for Health—deleting them. As if you can just press a button and delete thousands of jobs of people who have no faces and no names. That is why Labor today calls on the O'Farrell Government to adopt the \$280 million Regional Agricultural and Manufacturing Promotion Scheme announced today and paid for by scrapping the Government's rorts.

**Question—That the motion of the member for Mulgoa be accorded priority—put.**

**The House divided.**

**Ayes, 65**

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

**Noes, 22**

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

**Pairs**

Mr Bromhead

Mr Furolo

**Question resolved in the affirmative.****STATE BUDGET AND WESTERN SYDNEY****Motion Accorded Priority****Mrs TANYA DAVIES** (Mulgoa) [3.44 p.m.]: I move:

That this House supports a budget that provides improved services and infrastructure for western Sydney.

In March 2011 the people of western Sydney voted for real change after years of broken promises, record-breaking waste and failed projects. The people of New South Wales, particularly those of western Sydney, saw no tangible improvement to their road networks, rail systems and critical health facilities under the former Labor Government. The funding allocations in the 2011-12 budget delivered this week are proof that the Liberal-Nationals Government is wasting no time in getting on with the job of building critical infrastructure and delivering transport solutions while also rebuilding essential services to the level that the people of western Sydney expect, and rightly deserve. Budget funding for major rail infrastructure projects for outer western Sydney include \$314 million to develop the 23-kilometre North West Rail Link between Epping and Rouse Hill; and \$292 million to continue construction of the South West Rail Link, which includes 11.4 kilometres of twin track between Glenfield and Leppington.

When I hold my regular early-hour visits to St Marys railway station the commuters in my electorate ask me to deliver air-conditioned carriages for the western train line. Under the former Labor Government, as the commuters of western Sydney sweltered in cramped, non-air-conditioned carriages, those opposite were chauffeur-driven from media opportunity to media opportunity in order to dribble more lies about what they were promising to deliver. While the elderly and the pregnant mums sweltered in non-air-conditioned carriages the former Labor Government presided over millions of dollars of waste: for example, \$500 million on the Rozelle metro, the \$100 million failed T-Card project, and who can forget the reprint of the MyZone brochures because those opposite could not proof read.

Unlike the former Labor Government, which axed 416 daily rail services, the O'Farrell Government will restore the vital transport services that western Sydney commuters and the people of New South Wales deserve. Commuters will benefit from \$152 million in funding to buy and upgrade new train carriages; the purchase of 261 new buses worth \$118 million for metropolitan and outer metropolitan areas; and \$110 million to start the rollout of electronic ticketing. In this year's budget more than \$348 million will be invested in western Sydney roads to improve safety and reduce frustration for motorists.

As the member for Mulgoa I am pleased to announce funding has been allocated for the commencement of commitments made in the lead-up to the election by the Government for my area, including: Colyton intersection upgrade at Roper Road and Carlisle Avenue, \$300,000 for design; Glenmore Parkway, \$525,000 to upgrade lighting, remove roadside hazards, poles and drainage structures between The Northern Road and Mulgoa Road; Werrington Arterial, \$1.5 million to commence planning for the Werrington Arterial network; and Bringelly Road upgrade between Camden Valley Way and The Northern Road, \$150,000 for planning. In the neighbouring electorate of Smithfield—Mr Andrew Rohan has the honour of being the first Liberal Party member in that electorate—Erskine Park Link Road construction, \$16 million to service the Western Sydney Employment Area.

The Government has already signed the contracts for something those opposite promised three times under three Premiers in seven years yet did not deliver. What those opposite failed to do in 2,555 days the O'Farrell Government has delivered in 52 days. Western Sydney is a key growth area and this investment represents a strong commitment to improving the road network for thousands of motorists who travel through the region daily. Key road investments in the wider region in this year's budget includes planning work for the upgrade of the M5 between King Georges Road and Camden Valley Way; \$100 million to continue upgrades of the Great Western Highway in the Blue Mountains at Lawson, between Woodford and Hazelbrook, and at Wentworth Falls East; and \$25 million to complete construction of the joint-funded F5 Freeway widening between Ingleburn and Campbelltown.

It includes \$15 million to continue construction of the four-lane upgrade of Camden Valley Way between Cobbitty Road and Narellan Road; and \$2 million towards the replacement of Windsor Bridge over the Hawkesbury River. The O'Farrell Government is working to rebuild the New South Wales health system, with a \$136 million investment in health infrastructure in western Sydney this year alone. This includes the commencement of major projects and election commitments totalling \$479 million. Unlike the former Labor Government, which cut 340 front-line nursing staff from Nepean hospital, the O'Farrell Government is restoring front-line nursing staff. In our first budget we will deliver 2475 more nurses.

In addition to beginning the restoration of front-line nursing staff to support our nurses, who are run off their feet, and to provide the timely health care the people of western Sydney deserve, the O'Farrell Government has allocated \$129 million for works in progress, including the Nepean Hospital stage 3 and stage 3A redevelopments, and the Liverpool Hospital stage 2 redevelopment and hospital car park; \$45 million in capital grant funding for redevelopments at the Westmead Millennium Institute, including \$25 million for 2010-11 as part of a \$30 million election commitment; and \$20 million for the Children's Medical Research Institute.

It has also allocated \$7 million to commence the Campbelltown Hospital redevelopment and emergency department; \$500,000 towards planning for the expansion of Blacktown Hospital as part of the \$125 million election commitment; and planning for the car park expansion at Nepean Hospital as part of our election commitment. The Government is making other investments in its first budget. It has committed a total of \$659.6 million to provide improved services for people with a disability, their families and carers, and for older people in western Sydney. Our budget is about taking direct action to rebuild New South Wales, repair the State's finances, improve essential services and build essential infrastructure to make New South Wales number one again.

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY** (Maroubra) [3.50 p.m.]: The Opposition would gladly support a budget that provides improved services and infrastructure for western Sydney but, sadly, this week we have not seen one. So I am forced to move an amendment to that wayward motion. I move:

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

this House notes that the budget not only fails to invest in jobs, services and infrastructure not only in western Sydney but all over New South Wales, but also raises taxes, provides for mass sackings, attacks the most vulnerable in the community, and plunges the budget into a debt binge.

**Mr Greg Smith:** That's a direct negative.

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY:** I do not know where the Attorney General, and Minister for Justice learned his law. If we are talking about families in western Sydney and improving their lot, I concede that the Government has introduced a far-reaching and hard-hitting policy in the budget, that is, removing the first home buyer stamp duty exemption. It is a fact that an estimated 70 per cent of the people hit by the Premier's first home buyer stamp duty hikes will be from western Sydney, according to Office of State Revenue figures. The Leader of the Opposition was right to point out today that young families in western Sydney will well and truly cop the brunt of this \$1 billion brazen and wayward tax grab. Government members would be well advised to listen to this. Fourteen of the top 20 suburbs hit by the first home buyer cuts are in western Sydney. I note that the member for Campbelltown is in the Chamber.

**Mr Bryan Doyle:** Hear! Hear!

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY:** We will see whether the member says "Hear! Hear!" when the young kids in shopping centres get hold of him on the weekend. Westmead, Liverpool, Blacktown, Auburn, Parramatta—the member for Parramatta is not in the Chamber—Campbelltown and Homebush all feature in the top 10 suburbs that claimed the first home buyer stamp duty exemption last year. I am not talking about ancient history; these young people claimed the exemption last year. Further, Bankstown, Merrylands, Quakers Hill, Mount Druitt, Seven Hills, Cabramatta and Hoxton Park round out the top 20 suburbs, confirming western Sydney's worst fears. I am sure members will agree that with house and property prices the way they are in Sydney these days families need all the help they can get to purchase their first home.

But members opposite are only paying lip service to them. If they are dumb enough to do mobile offices or street walks on the weekend they will cop it, just as the Premier copped it yesterday on 2BL when a guy rang up and told the Premier that he felt the Premier had stabbed him in the back. This guy rang up unprompted; it was not organised by anyone to our knowledge. It was apparent from the call that the guy was dripping with emotion and fury. His language was carefully constructed and incisive. And the Premier copped it. The Premier did not like it: he had a massive dummy spit and started to attack the host because one person, presumably from western Sydney, had the gall to ring up and tell him the truth. That was a very telling moment—a moment that was not lost by the *Daily Telegraph* in its story on the subject this morning.

Losing more than \$10,000, or possibly \$20,000, in stamp duty for families from western Sydney is the biggest movement of the goalposts I have seen in the history of government. Two nights ago the Premier, who wants everyone to believe that he is a sports nut and a rugby league fan, went to the Dally M Awards—congratulations to Billy Slater. If there was an award for moving the goalposts it would have gone to the Premier by a country mile. Families in western Sydney have done overtime, scrimped and saved, not gone on holidays, forgone the family car, walked to work and done everything they had to do to save, to do what all young people in the city find particularly difficult to do—or at least those of us who were not born with silver spoons in our mouths—and that is to save money for a deposit on a house.

All of the benefits offered by the former Labor Government to assist people with buying their first home were taken up with gusto. Now the pin has been pulled. The Premier has well and truly moved the goalposts. Once again young families in western Sydney will be years away from being able to buy their first home. The policy is discriminatory because it says this: If you live in western Sydney buy off the plan or consider buying a one-bedroom or studio apartment somewhere in the city in an infill development. Young people in western Sydney in particular want to do what we in this place should be encouraging them to do, and that is to start families. They want to start a family but not in a studio apartment somewhere in the central business district.

Young people want to start a family somewhere near where they grew up and attended school, where their mums and dads can mind their kids, close to their family ties and roots. However, they cannot do so. They should not bother looking at a fibro house in Blacktown, which is a nice cheap option for people to start a family. They should forget about the modest brick semi somewhere in Campbelltown to start a family. The Premier said they are not worthy of that, that they will not get it, that he will not give them any incentive to do that. Indeed, not only has the Premier not provided an incentive; he had a program that people could almost put their fingers on. People could see the prize but the Premier has snatched it out of their grasp. It has gone. The goalposts have moved to the end of the field. The Premier should be ashamed of himself. [*Time expired.*]

**Mr GLENN BROOKES** (East Hills) [3.57 p.m.]: I support the motion because I am proud to be the member for East Hills. For too long the East Hills electorate and western Sydney were taken for granted by the

Labor Government, which simply did not care. For 16 years the Labor Government took the people of East Hills and western Sydney for granted. I am happy to say that those days are over, thrown into the bin, along with many of the former Government's hollow promises. The Liberal-Nationals Government is delivering on its election promises and commitments. Unlike the former Government, we will not shy away from the hard decisions. We will make the hard decisions because, more than anything, New South Wales needs a strong government capable of making decisions.

New South Wales needs a government that is determined to make this State number one again—a government that is able to look beyond petty politics and build this great State, not just for the people of East Hills but also for all those who live in western Sydney. The O'Farrell Government is spending big on maintenance for traffic lights, signs and road markings, not just in East Hills but also in western Sydney. The O'Farrell Government is spending \$2.5 million on maintenance works on State roads in both East Hills and western Sydney. The first budget of the O'Farrell Liberal-Nationals Government which was delivered last Tuesday is about rebuilding New South Wales and East Hills. Rebuilding New South Wales means repairing what was left behind, improving services and building the infrastructure that the people of East Hills and western Sydney need.

**Pursuant to standing orders business interrupted and motion lapsed.**

### **MARINE PARKS AMENDMENT (MORATORIUM) BILL 2011**

#### **Agreement in Principle**

**Debate resumed from 23 June 2011.**

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE** (Bega—Minister for Ageing, and Minister for Disability Services) [4.00 p.m.]: Earlier the member for Maroubra was talking about winning votes but I do not know which votes he was talking about. After March he should know about winning votes.

**The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George):** Order! The Minister will return to the leave of the bill.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** At the time this debate was interrupted I was referring to the grey nurse shark breeding grounds and I was making the point that Cate Faehrmann, a member of The Greens in the other place, felt the need to claim on far South Coast radio that Montague Island was a breeding ground for the grey nurse shark. I have not been able to get hold of that statement, but a number of people from the fishing fraternity rang me to let me know that Cate Faehrmann tried to imply that Montague Island was a breeding ground for the grey nurse shark. Since I made that statement in this Chamber, Cate Faehrmann—whom I am sure lives somewhere in the inner city of Sydney—has been on far South Coast radio demanding that I apologise to Parliament about my claims relating to grey nurse sharks on the far South Coast.

On behalf of all those that I represent in this place I will not tolerate members of The Greens, who obtain scuba diver licences and who think they are instant experts on the marine environment—making claims on radio that Montague Island should be locked up as it happens to be a grey nurse shark breeding ground. I find interesting the member's demands that I apologise to Parliament. Guess what Cate? I will not apologise. Cate Faehrmann misled communities on the far South Coast, as she has a habit of doing elsewhere around this State. It would be particularly galling for Cate Faehrmann that ABC Radio, instead of interviewing me as the member for Bega to get a response to her calls for an apology in relation to grey nurse sharks, talked to a marine biologist and grey nurse shark expert, Dr Nick Ottway, who had this to say about Montague Island and grey nurse shark breeding activity:

The findings at Montague Island suggest it is an aggregation site.

Cate Faehrmann does not know the difference between an aggregation site and a breeding ground. Dr Ottway went on to say:

When it is occupied, which is generally in the later part of summer, when the waters are at their warmest, they have generally larger sharks there—a mixture of males and females, mainly females.

He also said:

But generally of a size of 2-3 metres, so larger animals.

The local people at Narooma, some of whom happen to dive off Montague Island on a regular basis, have never seen any grey nurse pups there. Cate Faehrmann is creating the public perception that Montague Island is a grey nurse shark breeding ground when it is an aggregation site, which brings into question what The Greens are all about. This legislation is designed to put independent scientific experts in charge of assessing the science behind this State's marine parks. If people such as Cate Faehrmann were running this program—as I said earlier she obtained a scuba diver licence and she thinks that that makes her an instant marine expert—we would end up with the same results as we did under Labor; that is, disenfranchised communities, displaced fishing families involved in both the commercial and recreational sectors, and a lot of angst in communities across this State.

I am the first member in this place to say that if there is scientific justification for an area or for a species not to be targeted I would be happy to back it. I know that the fishermen would do so too because they do not want to see the marine environment harmed. However, when members of Parliament, in particular, The Greens, make claims without any scientific justification in the interests of a precautionary principle and their desire to see everything locked up, knowing full well that it will displace families—salt of the earth people who are trying to make a living—the new Government has every right to put in place processes to bring fairness into the equation.

When the Batemans Marine Park was established it was done without any local science, which led to 16,000 hectares of an 86,000-hectare park being locked up to fishing. I consistently called on The Greens and members of the Labor Party to produce local scientific evidence, which has not been forthcoming. Those fishermen felt incredibly disenfranchised and some people suffered enormously financially and socially. When this park was established I recall the member of one family becoming suicidal as a result of what had occurred. We must ensure that any process in which we engage is fair and is backed by science, and we must ensure that we consult with the community. That is what this new Government will do, which is why it sought to amend this legislation to bring about change that will recognise the outcomes of that independent scientific audit.

Changes need to be made to the sanctuary zones in the Batemans Marine Park because when those opposite were in government they went way too far; they locked up 70 to 80 per cent of the fishing grounds without scientific justification. The Department of Primary Industries now has responsibility for marine parks in recognition of the fact that a lot of the science that exists relating to fisheries management is housed within fisheries and not within the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water. Fisheries have been managing stocks for decades so we are determined to ensure that science underpins our decisions. I am keen to see fairness restored in this area. There is a strong push by the fishing communities in the region I represent for better and more equitable access. That means changing the zonings which were not based on local science: it was done as horse trading between The Greens and the Labor Party.

As I have said, fishers do not have a problem if there is a justifiable reason for putting in place a no-take zone to protect a marine species or an ecosystem. The fishers themselves want greater fairness and balance in the debate. That is why people like Professor Bob Carney who have done peer reviews and looked closely at this issue argue that there is significant and serious evidence to suggest that much of the damage to marine ecosystems is being caused by land-based activity. I am somewhat bewildered that Cate Faehrmann argues aggregation sites off Montague as breeding grounds, yet is not prepared to stand up to the Eurobodalla Shire Council in relation to an ocean outfall that discharges sewage straight into the marine park. These types of things gall many families in my region. I support the bill because it is about enshrining in law a process that is fair to all. The O'Farrell-Stoner Government will base its decisions on good local science and appropriate consultation with local communities to ensure this issue is properly addressed.

**Mr NICK LALICH** (Cabramatta) [4.11 p.m.]: I speak against the Marine Parks Amendment (Moratorium) Bill 2011. The bill provides for a five-year moratorium on the declaration of additional marine parks and prevents the Government from making a regulation that would extend the area within a marine park that comprises a sanctuary zone during that period commencing on the commencement of the proposed Act. The Opposition opposes the bill. In stark contrast, the principal objectives of the former Labor Government's Marine Parks Act 1997 are the protection of marine biodiversity, ecological processes and marine habitats, while at the same time allowing within marine parks recreational and commercial activities that do not violate those primary objectives.

Fishing is permitted in more than 93 per cent of the marine jurisdiction of New South Wales and on average in 80 per cent of marine park waters in New South Wales. Marine parks and sanctuaries help to restore and replenish fish stocks, boost the number, size and breed potential of fish, and strengthen the ability of the marine environment to respond to human pressures such as climate change. Although the Opposition opposes

the bill, it would be wrong of me not to acknowledge that the Shooters and Fishers Party have maintained a clear and consistent policy on the matters included in this bill. During the term of the previous Labor Government the Shooters and Fishers were strong advocates of their policy, and they continue to be strong advocates under the current Coalition Government.

As I mentioned earlier, the Opposition respectfully disagrees with this policy and opposes this bill. What we do not respect are the backroom deals being done by this Coalition Government so that it could ram through its punitive industrial relations legislation. This is a Government that will sell out the people of New South Wales to achieve its ends by any means necessary. This is a Government that wants to punish honest public servants with a sledgehammer. The only reason that we are debating this bill today is because of another backroom deal struck by the Premier. The bill was elevated on the *Notice Paper* in the other place as a thank you for the assisted passage of the Coalition's shameful industrial relations laws.

I think everyone in this House remembers the Premier solemnly stating before the election that he would not do deals with the minor parties. The people of New South Wales believed him. The community bought it hook, line and sinker. And what do we have now? Barry O'Farrell is now going back on his word, making backroom deals when he clearly stated previously that he would not. This shows a complete lack of honesty and integrity from the Premier, and it shows that he is a politician that cannot be trusted.

**Mr Andrew Constance:** Point of order: There are two points of order. First, the member has sought to impugn the reputation of the Premier by labelling him dishonest. That is entirely inappropriate. I seek a withdrawal of that comment. The second point of order is that the member has gone well beyond the leave of the bill.

**The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George):** Order! I have heard enough on the second point of order, and I uphold that point. In relation to the first point of order, the member has been asked to withdraw his comments about the Premier.

**Mr NICK LALICH:** Mr Deputy-Speaker, which comment am I asked to withdraw?

**The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George):** Order! The reference to the Premier being dishonest.

**Mr NICK LALICH:** I withdraw that, Mr Deputy-Speaker.

**The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George):** Order! As to the second point of order, I draw the member back to the leave of the bill.

**Mr NICK LALICH:** Mr Deputy-Speaker, I am speaking on the marine environment and waterways. Even worse than this complete betrayal of trust by the O'Farrell Government, where does the Minister for the Environment, the Hon. Robyn Parker, stand on this issue? While backroom deals are being done that will trash the marine environment of our great State—

**The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George):** Order! The member for Cabramatta will confine his comments to the leave of the bill.

**Mr NICK LALICH:** The Premier has gone to war on the environment, downgrading the importance of the portfolio by his immediate abolition of the former Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water.

**Mr Andrew Constance:** Point of order—

**Mr NICK LALICH:** Mr Deputy-Speaker, I am speaking on water and the environment. What do you want me to do?

**The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George):** Order! What is the member's point of order?

**Mr Andrew Constance:** Mr Deputy-Speaker, the member is deliberately canvassing your ruling. The bill relates to marine parks, not to ports or waterways. The member deliberately ignored your upholding my previous point of order, and I request that he be asked to either come back to the bill or resume his seat.

**Mr Richard Amery:** To the point of order: I have listened to some of the debate on the monitor. The contribution being made by the member for Cabramatta is well within the leave of the bill. This is the agreement in principle debate on the legislation, not a Committee discussion on its various clauses. The bill is before the Parliament having been brought forward by a crossbench member in the Legislative Council, and the Government is supporting it. The motives behind the Government's support for this bill is a matter of public debate, and it is well within the standing orders that those issues be canvassed in the in-principle stage of debate on this legislation.

**Mr Andrew Constance:** Further to the point of order: The bill amends the Marine Parks Act 1997 to impose a moratorium on the declaration of additional marine parks and for the alteration or creation of sanctuary zones within existing marine parks. The bill does not relate to ports or waterways, or anything else of that nature, or deals, or the dynamics of the upper House. The bill relates specifically to marine park sanctuary zones, and I ask the Deputy-Speaker to uphold the ruling previously given.

**The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George):** Order! I have heard enough on the point of order. Whilst the member for Mount Druitt might consider the debate to be wide ranging, I have directed the member for Cabramatta to come back to the leave of the bill. The member will restrict his comments to the Marine Parks Amendment (Moratorium) Bill 2011.

**Mr NICK LALICH:** Barry O'Farrell talks about starting the change in New South Wales. All I can say is that he is sending the State backwards.

**Mr Brad Hazzard:** Where is that in the bill?

**Mr NICK LALICH:** It is all part of the bill. I get back to talking about the fisheries. The restrictions at Fish Rock in Coffs Harbour have been reversed—restrictions that were specifically designed to protect a critically endangered species. The grey nurse shark is an endangered species. Scientific research tells us this. Yet the Government thinks it knows better than science and, in the face of evidence, is happy to remove protections for critically endangered species so that it can push its disgraceful industrial relations laws through. Backroom deals are exactly what Barry said he would not do prior to being elected.

**The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George):** Order! I have heard enough. The bill has nothing to do with the industrial relations legislation, and the member's contribution is now concluded.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD** (Wakehurst—Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Infrastructure NSW) [4.20 p.m.]: The Marine Parks Amendment (Moratorium) Bill 2011 has its origins in the Legislative Council and was introduced in this Chamber with certain amendments that the Government is supporting. We should not for one moment diminish the importance of the protection of our environment and critical ecosystems. My first professional qualification was in environmental science when I undertook a great deal of work in the environmental area. I spent many happy hours obtaining ecological samples in marine environments and in other areas of vegetation up and down our coastline. I have no doubt that it is absolutely necessary for the Parliament to enact and enforce legislation that has an adequate, transparent and open regulatory framework to protect our environment. I remember more than 30 years ago—

**Mr Jamie Parker:** It couldn't be that long.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** I thank the member for Balmain for thinking that. More than 30 years ago when I was undertaking the study of ecology and environmental science it was considered to be an alternative type of study. That would probably not surprise many of my colleagues.

**Ms Carmel Tebbutt:** Too much information.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** I recollect getting the message loud and clear from those academic studies that it is critical for communities to protect our environment but it has to be based on scientific evidence. We cannot simply embark on an ideological position that does not have a sound, scientific base. I learnt the professional way through my degree of the importance of scientific evidence and that one has to understand the facts before one draws a conclusion. The Marine Parks Amendment (Moratorium Bill) 2011 reflects some of the

frustration across the board that has gone on in recent years since the original legislation passed through this place in 1997. I think some people in the environmental movement and in the scientific community believe that whilst that legislation was well intended it was broad brushed and did not necessarily achieve the sort of outcomes that we needed to achieve. Others in the business, tourism and fisheries world believe that it has not necessarily addressed some of the real needs of the community.

I recollect visiting a local community—which I will not name because it inflames passions in this place and in the broader community—where tourism and fishers had a combined and definite view that the marine park that had been established in their area was located in the wrong place. It was largely in an area that did not achieve the necessary outcomes and, more importantly, it was destroying local tourism and fishers economic opportunities. The Government supported an initiative of a member on the crossbenches and, through the Marine Parks Amendment (Moratorium) Bill 2011, sought to address some of those shortcomings. New section 48A is the most crucial part of this bill.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Murray-Darling will have an opportunity to speak in debate on this bill.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** New section 48A states:

**48A Independent scientific audit of marine parks**

- (1) As soon as practicable after the commencement of the *Marine Parks Amendment (Moratorium) Act 2011*, the relevant Ministers are to arrange for the carrying out of an independent scientific audit of marine parks.
- (2) A written report on the results of the audit is to be given to the relevant Ministers and forthwith made publicly available by the relevant Ministers.

We are not hiding anything. This is the same way in which the Government is approaching my portfolio of Planning and Infrastructure. The rules are transparency, integrity and honesty. With that new section we will be bringing those rules into the establishment and continuation of marine parks, which is critical. How disappointing it would be if our young people and our children thought we were simply locking up areas and defining them as marine parks without a scientific basis. That would not leave the community with any real certainty.

**Mr John Williams:** Trust.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** As the member for Murray-Darling said, we need trust. Where would it leave this Government if it did not address these issues and get them right with those who earnestly believe we need to protect our environment? We need ongoing assurances for those who come after us that we will protect their environment. We must ensure there is a sound and scientific basis for the decisions that we make. That assurance must be passed on to the next generation which will be making those decisions in the future. Having studied environmental science more than 30 years ago I understand there was a phase when most of the community had real reservations about whether we needed to protect the ecosystems that make up our community, but that is no longer the case. I think there is broad agreement across the political divide that we need to protect our environment.

This bill does not seek to remove the Marine Parks Bill 1997; it simply seeks to bring some validity to it with scientific underpinning. I welcome this initiative and I am surprised and concerned that this bill does not have bipartisan support. I have a professional qualification in environmental science and I am concerned that in the Legislative Assembly some can argue against provisions that require scientific evidence to underpin the security of marine parks. I have no problem with marine parks being established if they are absolutely necessary and they are doing the job of protecting our marine environment and securing it for the long term. However, I want to know that that is what is happening, otherwise where is the balance in providing the economic output for our community, tourism, fishers, and so on? We must have some balance. I believe this bill gives members on both sides of Parliament an opportunity to achieve that balance. Earlier the member for Cabramatta said that the Opposition would oppose this bill, which surprises me.

**Ms Carmel Tebbutt:** You shouldn't be.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** The member for Marrickville said that I should not be surprised. She is right. After 20 years I should not be surprised, but I am. I am also disappointed. If there were something really radical,

improper or not based on transparency, openness and scientific evidence in this bill I would echo the concerns of the member for Marrickville, but I do not have those concerns. This is a very good bill. Opposition members should rethink their position, in particular members of the Australian Labor Party. I do not understand their opposition to this bill at all.

**Mr JAMIE PARKER** (Balmain) [4.29 p.m.]: I speak on behalf of The Greens in debate on the Marine Parks Amendment (Moratorium) Bill 2011. Members may have read the comments that were made by my colleagues in the Legislative Council. We do not support this bill and I want to take this opportunity to talk through the reasons why we do not support it. This bill raises some serious questions about our understanding of science. I will not deal in detail with every provision in this bill.

Members have asked why concerns have been raised about this legislation. There are two reasons for those concerns. First, the bill was introduced in the Legislative Council without any notice having been given, and that coincided with significant debate and discussion between the Coalition and the Shooters and Fishers Party about legislation. I am not suggesting that that was an issue, but concerns were raised and it is legitimate that that be noted. Secondly, the standing orders were suspended on the last day of the parliamentary session to introduce the bill and no-one knew what was happening. Understandably people were concerned about what the bill would do and why the Government had prioritised a crossbench member's bill. I take on face value the statement made by Minister Hodgkinson, who said:

The New South Wales Government is committed to common sense marine parks policy that is based on science, not politics.

Hear! Hear! We all agree with that. I will spend some time today examining not the politics of the issue but the science to express The Greens belief that rigorous science was applied not only during the parliamentary inquiry but also in the ongoing process. Fishing is permitted in about 90 per cent of marine jurisdictions in New South Wales and on average in about 80 per cent of marine park waters. We are not talking about prohibiting fishing in 99 per cent of all waters; people can fish in a vast majority of our marine jurisdictions. Over the past decade or more marine scientists from across the world have been meeting and talking about the decline in the state of our oceans, the collapse of our fish stocks and the need to protect some ocean areas so that fish can breed and stocks can recover. It goes without saying that protecting some areas of our coastline from fishing has great merit, and that concept is supported by a broad range of people in our community.

People of course understand that by protecting key areas of our oceans we are preserving marine life for future generations and protecting the future of both recreational fishing and the commercial seafood industry, both of which are admirable objectives and The Greens support them. The science is clear on these matters and the benefits of marine parks are widely recognised. We know that marine parks play a crucial role in conserving marine biodiversity, maintaining valuable ecosystems and supporting sustainable use of the marine environment. As I said, they most importantly ensure the future of workers and their families who are involved in commercial and recreational fishing and who are a key component of the availability of fish stocks. Of course, we know that in many communities overfishing and destruction of breeding and resting habitat has posed a significant threat not only to the marine biology but also to those involved in fishing.

The Hon. Robert Brown chaired the upper House committee that inquired into recreational fishing. A document was tabled by Professor Booth—whom I think all members will agree is eminent in these matters—during the committee's hearings referencing the final report from the Australian Marine Science Association impressing upon the committee the volume of scientific literature concerning the efficacy of marine parks. Professor Booth provided the committee with a bibliography of 1,098 articles produced around the world and locally in New South Wales dealing with marine parks. That is 1,098 peer-reviewed articles that have demonstrated the benefit of marine parks and sanctuary zones.

I will take a few minutes to outline the evidence available on this matter. These hundreds of peer-reviewed articles and studies show that marine protection zones result in increases in the abundance and average size of many marine species, particularly those that are heavily fished. I know that some members question the science of marine protection zones, so I will outline just a few examples of this body of evidence. P. A. Butcher et. al., presenting at the World Congress on Aquatic Protected Areas, described how in terms of estuarine species within the Solitary Islands Marine Park in New South Wales the abundance and mean size of mud crabs is consistently greater within sanctuary zones compared to the fished areas within the same estuary. That is important evidence.

N. Barrett et al., in a Tasmanian Aquaculture and Fisheries Institute internal report, described increased abundance and size distribution of red morwong in sanctuary zones relative to fished areas at the Jervis Bay Marine Park. M. Westera et al., in the *Journal of Experimental Marine Biology and Ecology*, found that at the Ningaloo Marine Park in Western Australia five sanctuary areas contained significantly greater biomass, size and abundance of legal sized emperors, the most targeted fish family in the area. D. H. Williamson et al., also in the *Journal of Experimental Marine Biology and Ecology*, found that the four sanctuary zones around the Palm and Whitsunday islands contain four to six times the density and abundance of coral trout compared with similar fished areas.

The studies go on. They examine both local and international evidence demonstrating the benefits of marine sanctuary areas. F. R. Gel and C. M. Roberts, in *Trends in Ecology and Evolution*, found that at the Scandola Nature Reserve in Corsica, which is a leading example of effective management of fish resources, densities of 11 fish species were five times higher than fishing sites after 13 years of protection. Again, at the Maria Island Reserve in Tasmania, lung fish were three times more common after six years of protection. This is a small selection of the peer-reviewed scientific research conducted over decades that highlights the effectiveness and importance of marine parks and sanctuary zones. A literature review from Dr Melissa Nursey-Bray of the University of Adelaide states:

... evidence is clearly showing that abundance, biomass, economic value, habitat and migration routes are all enhanced by the declaration of marine protected areas.

We are talking about relatively small areas. Restrictions on small areas can ensure the future of fisheries, and I am sure that all members support that objective. If the Government wants to protect fishers then it must protect biodiversity. The argument that further research is required to prove the effectiveness of sanctuary zones is dubious. The evidence exists and it is overwhelming. The science is in and fishing must be restricted in certain areas to ensure the protection of biodiversity and the future of the fishing industry. The Government has claimed that the former Government did not consult about the fishing restrictions. Given the hundreds of submissions made by a wide range of stakeholders, it would appear that there was extensive community consultation. I am the first to say that I am no fan of the community consultation undertaken by the former Government—I have been at the receiving of that so-called consultation.

However, the community involvement in and contribution to this process seem to be significant. It would appear that the stakeholders were involved and many years of work was undertaken by staff from the Marine Parks Authority. They expended a great deal of energy in implementing the rezoning process in a transparent and diligent manner. Another significant concern about this bill relates to the survival of the already critically endangered grey nurse shark. The Government has revoked the fishing closures at Fish Rock at South West Rocks. These closures were vital measures put in place to protect the endangered grey nurse shark and black cod following many years of requests from conservationists and marine scientists and from government reports. It is very concerning that the grey nurse shark, which is under significant threat, is not being protected by a fishing prohibition at Fish Rock.

According to the government discussion paper the grey nurse shark population numbers just 1,500. Anything under 5,000 for a species is well below its replacement rate. Grey nurse sharks will become extinct if we do not get their numbers above 5,000. This magnificent shark is so critically endangered that every single death is significant for its survival. The Greens are obviously disappointed and concerned that the Government recently revoked the very recent gains achieved by the conservation movement, which was not satisfied with the zoning changes for the Solitary Islands Marine Park and Jervis Bay Marine Park. Government members in the other place referred to marine science as "voodoo science" and "voodoo environmentalism". The Hon. Duncan Gay said:

We will remove the voodoo environmentalism and voodoo science and we will use proper environmentalism based on real science, not political science ...

Of course, I am concerned when politics plays a part in this area. However, I do not believe that the scientists who worked on the parliamentary review into marine parks—which was far reaching—were involved in voodoo science. If the Government has concerns about consultation we should accept that. However, the science is legitimate and valid, and those who have been working on it have dedicated a number of years of their life to that work.

I hope that the Government, if it feels that it would be able to do a more thorough job of consultation, can recognise that the science is not the matter in question, despite the issues raised by the upper House member

to whom I referred. This Government has questioned years of peer-reviewed science and has damaged the reputation of many of those involved in marine science by saying they are practicing "voodoo science" when those scientists have entered the discussion in good faith, despite the fact, for example, that the recent parliamentary committee was chaired by the Fishers and Shooters Party.

The peer-reviewed research that has come out of globally accepted consensus—which we must recognise—will secure fish stocks for recreational and commercial fisheries. It will also defend the marine and estuary environment, which is critically important for the future of not only the industry but also recreational fishing and our marine ecology. I began this discussion by stating that the bill was introduced in the upper House. I take on board the issues raised by the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure in his contribution to this debate. I hope that it is not correct to say that standing orders were suspended to bring on this bill and usher it through the upper House on the last sitting day to reward the Fishers and Shooters Party and to enable the Government to attempt to get other bills through.

I am confident that the science, as demonstrated by the upper House inquiry—a very thorough and professional inquiry—will stand. It demonstrates that marine parks are a critical part of supporting the industry and our marine ecology. We do not support this bill. The Government will have the numbers in this House to pass this bill. However, when the independent review is completed we look forward to the Government recognising, supporting and adopting the science where there is consensus recognising the importance of marine parks. I thank the House for the opportunity to address this critical issue.

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST** (Tweed) [4.43 p.m.]: Mr Deputy-Speaker—

**Mr Richard Torbay:** The member is 100 per cent for the Tweed.

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST:** Absolutely, I am 100 per cent for the Tweed. I will make a brief contribution on the Marine Parks Amendment (Moratorium) Bill 2011. The bill enshrines in legislation the undertaking of an independent scientific audit of New South Wales marine parks. The Government clearly set out its commitment to undertake the audit in its Recreational Fishing Policy. This was conveyed to the electorate before the election on 26 March and it received overwhelming support in my local area. We have a marine park around the fabulous Cook Island and the concern was that greater areas would be locked up under future marine parks.

I give credence to the different scientific studies, but I also give credence to the criticisms from the people in my electorate—recreational and professional fishermen as well as the wider community—who did not realise they had input into the future of the marine parks. Their view was that people in Sydney were locking up vast areas as marine parks. As an example, in the electorate of Ballina the marine park around Byron Bay and north to Brunswick Heads was expanded, and that destroyed the tourism industry in Brunswick Heads: fishing charters; small boats on the Brunswick River and so on. It decimated the town and the tourist industry. It had a negative effect on the community, which was concerned that more marine parks would be established. That is why I fully support the conducting of a scientific audit.

I have spoken with peak bodies such as Ecofishing—Ken Thurlow and Merve McFin are very active members in my local area with Ecofishing. It is a great bunch of people with a deep concern for the future of the area. It is incorrect and unfair to say that fishermen want to rape and pillage the seas at their whim. They have a full understanding of the importance of saving the environment for the future. That we have a school represented here today is symbolic of that. Members on both sides of the House want a pristine environment for our children. We want children to enjoy the great marine environment and be able to catch a fish. The same applies to the wider community in my area.

The moratorium period defined in the bill is either five years from the commencement of the Act or a shorter period linked to the completion of a scientific audit, whichever occurs sooner. This will allow flexibility in considering and implementing the recommendations of the audit. It ensures that any changes resulting from the audit can be implemented readily, without having to wait for five years. That is a crucial part of the bill. We should be open and transparent and put forward the scientific recommendations to the whole community, not sectionalise small parts of the community. Members have said that a large amount of scientific research has been done—it probably has been—but has that been conveyed to the wider community? Members are elected to represent the wider community, not just little focus groups, and it behoves us to convey this information to the communities we represent.

I see from the bill the way in which the scientific audit will be conducted, but the wider community and the key stakeholders must be given the scientific information and the time to digest and understand it before they can put forward their views. I talk to fishermen, and members of local communities on the beaches and the estuary, and I talk to boat users on our great waterways up north—their views are important. They need to be able to understand the issues and to convey their opinions to the Government. They have been locked out of a lot of the previous marine park studies; they have been locked out of a lot of previous Government decisions. I have sat on the other side of the House and I have seen what happened to other environmental issues. They were decided on political expediency, not on scientific fact. That is why I fully support this bill.

The amendments in the bill will ensure that those responsible for statutory reviews of zoning plans or class of zoning plans can still comply with legislative requirements. The amendments also provide for regulations to modify the time in which requirements under section 17D for a zoning plan or class of zoning plan can take place during the moratorium period. These are relevant issues. The scientific audit is being undertaken because of our concerns about marine parks. The policy aims for the right balance—and this is the crux of it—between protecting the marine environment and allowing appropriate access to fishing areas. The audit will also enable decisions to be made that will achieve the right balance for marine parks.

The audit will use scientific information as a basis for sound evidence-based recommendations for marine parks. The audit incorporates the wider community and I want to ensure that the information is not put out as though it is in a scientific journal, but that it is put out in basic English so the mums and dads, the hardworking people, young and old, in New South Wales can digest the information. This is what the Liberal-Nationals Coalition stood for and this is why we were successful. We went to the election on that platform to provide information to local people. I am 100 per cent behind the bill.

**Mr GREG PIPER** (Lake Macquarie) [4.48 p.m.]: I am mindful of the time limit imposed on the speeches on the Marine Parks Amendment (Moratorium) Bill 2011, and I will limit my comments in order to assist. I am concerned about the way in which this bill was introduced and the intentions of the bill. However, I am not surprised that there is concern about the application of information that has brought about the creation of marine parks across New South Wales. Much of the information is clouded by known scientific facts and anecdotal beliefs from both sides of the debate. I believe that best science is the only thing to be applied to decision-making on important issues such as marine parks. From my observations of the creation of marine parks, including marine parks such as Solitary Island off Coffs Harbour, the best science has been used.

I would be concerned if there were any interruption to the reasonable consideration of the creation of new marine parks on the basis that there has to be some moratorium placed on them while new scientific evidence is promulgated. As we move forward we should use contemporary science. There is no justification for this not to occur. I am also concerned that there may insufficient funds to allow studies to be done to underpin any future decision-making. In deference to the need of the member for Northern Tablelands to speak about the Northern Tablelands Marine Park—full of trout and mosquito fish—I conclude by saying that I do not support the bill.

**Mr RICHARD TORBAY** (Northern Tablelands) [4.52 p.m.], in reply: Before I speak in reply to the Marine Parks Amendment (Moratorium) Bill 2011 I take this opportunity to thank the Deputy-Speaker for his kind acknowledgement of the students from North Star Public School. Before I entered the Chamber this afternoon I asked how many of them had travelled to Sydney before and more than half of the 20 students said they had not visited Sydney before. This is a big deal for them and they should be acknowledged. I welcome you all to the New South Wales Parliament. The Marine Parks Amendment (Moratorium) Bill 2011 was introduced in the other place. The member for Strathfield is wildly nodding in agreement and support of this bill. Unfortunately, due to time constraints, he was not able to contribute to the debate.

It cannot be argued that the bill has not stimulated a great deal of debate, which has been very constructive and included contributions from three Ministers, shadow Ministers, parliamentary secretaries and others. I thank the member for Maitland, the member for Shellharbour, the member for Lismore, the member for Coffs Harbour, the member for Marrickville, the member for Bega, the member for Cabramatta, the member for Wakehurst, the member for Sydney, the member for Balmain, the member for Tweed and the member for Lake Macquarie for their contributions. I will not mention all the issues raised during debate because most of them were responded to as the debate flowed. But I will remind members of two aspects. The long title of the bill says a great deal:

An Act to amend the *Marine Parks Act 1997* to impose a moratorium on the declaration of additional marine parks or the alteration or creation of sanctuary zones within existing marine parks.

Section 48A deals specifically with the scientific audit of marine parks:

- (1) As soon as practicable after the commencement of the *Marine Parks Amendment (Moratorium) Act 2011*, the relevant Ministers are to arrange for the carrying out of an independent scientific audit of marine parks.

A lot more debate is to be had, but the bill will facilitate that opportunity.

- (2) A written report on the results of the audit is to be given to the relevant Ministers and forthwith made publicly available by the relevant Ministers.

That is an open and accountable process. I commend the bill to the House.

**Question—That this bill be now agreed to in principle—put.**

**The House divided.**

**Ayes, 65**

Mr Anderson	Mr Flowers	Mr Roberts
Mr Annesley	Mr Gee	Mr Rohan
Mr Aplin	Ms Gibbons	Mr Rowell
Mr Ayres	Ms Goward	Mrs Sage
Mr Baird	Mr Grant	Mr Sidoti
Mr Barilaro	Mr Hartcher	Mrs Skinner
Mr Bassett	Mr Hazzard	Mr Smith
Mr Baumann	Ms Hodgkinson	Mr Souris
Ms Berejikian	Mr Holstein	Mr Speakman
Mr Brookes	Mr Humphries	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 Owen	Mr Ward
Mrs Davies	Mr Page	Mr Webber
Mr Dominello	Ms Parker	Mr R. C. Williams
Mr Doyle	Mr Patterson	Mrs Williams
Mr Edwards	Mr Perrottet	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Elliott	Mr Piccoli	Mr Maguire
Mr Evans	Mr Provest	Mr J. D. Williams

**Noes, 20**

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

**Pairs**

Mr Bromhead	Mr Furolo
Mr Fraser	Ms Hay

**Question resolved in the affirmative.**

**Motion agreed to.**

**Bill agreed to in principle.**

### **Passing of the Bill**

**Bill declared passed and returned to the Legislative Council without amendment.**

## **COURTS AND OTHER LEGISLATION FURTHER AMENDMENT BILL 2011**

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

## **TRANSPORT LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2011**

### **Agreement in Principle**

**Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD** (Wakehurst—Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Infrastructure NSW) [5.05 p.m.]: I support the Transport Legislation Amendment Bill 2011. There can be no question that transport in New South Wales has many good people working in it, and many of them individually make a great effort to service the customers. But the system has been extremely frustrating. During my time in this place I have observed on many occasions the frustrations of constituents of Wakehurst and more broadly across the State who are concerned about the lack of focus on the customer as part of the system, the lack of focus on the customer to achieve the best possible outcomes—

**Mr Nathan Rees:** Does the L90 come down your way?

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** Yes, the L90 comes down my way. It does not work very well.

**The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George):** Order! Members will direct their comments through the Chair.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** The member for Toongabbie is asking me whether the L90 comes down my way. Yes, it does. Unfortunately, under the former Government—the member for Toongabbie was not the leader so I cannot blame him personally—it was often a problem. The member for Toongabbie caused most problems.

**The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George):** Order! The Minister will direct his comments through the Chair.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** As late as yesterday I received letters from constituents in my area saying that they have been enormously frustrated about bus services on the northern beaches over the previous 16 years. We have two depots on the northern beaches: Brookvale and Mona Vale. The individual drivers do a great job: they work very hard, often in difficult circumstances. The people in the depot do a good job. One thing the former Labor Government did for the northern beaches was fund an upgrade of the Brookvale depot. However, there was so little interest that Labor did not formally open the depot upgrade. No Minister visited the depot to formally open it or see what was going on, or got their head around the issues that faced the customers on the northern beaches.

The Minister for Transport is addressing and improving services on the northern beaches. One avenue to do that is to get the system right. One frustration on the northern beaches is the lack of services. The former Labor Government undertook a couple of reviews. I think the last one was called Better Buses. That resulted in worse services than we had previously. Many of the routes that were previously operational disappeared. One

frustration for people on the northern beaches is that the bus to the Manly ferry does not arrive in time for passengers to catch the ferry: the ferry would have just gone when they arrived. And people who catch a ferry back to Manly at night find that the bus has just gone.

**Mr John Robertson:** When did you catch a ferry last?

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** I love catching ferries—probably about a month ago and I have taken buses regularly.

**Ms Kristina Keneally:** What bus do you get?

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** I am not going to tell you the bus because you might be on it causing grief. I could not work it out but I got a travel 10. In fact I gave the remaining one of my travel 10 away to my son's girlfriend just recently. Interestingly, I will just tell the former Premier that I went down to the train station because I had been told you could get tickets for the buses down there and you could get an integrated ticket. The poor people down at the inquiry centre at Wynyard had no idea of what services were available to the people of the northern beaches on the various buses and no idea of the pricing structure.

So again Labor failed to get the integration right and they failed to get the customer service right. This is no reflection on the individual workers down there, because they were very helpful, but it was very frustrating to try to get the right ticket and the right service and to try to make the right connection for 16 years under State Labor. Kristina Keneally seems to be suggesting all was perfect. She did not make too many right connections, as is evidenced by the fact that there are 30 members that have disappeared from the Chamber. I have been distracted by the very few members left in this place while I have been trying to contribute to the debate.

**ACTING-SPEAKER (Ms Melanie Gibbons):** Order! The member for Heffron will come to order.

**Ms Kristina Keneally:** I think we have established that the Minister doesn't buy bus tickets.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** I think the member for Heffron has well and truly missed the bus.

**Ms Kristina Keneally:** You can't miss something that wasn't there.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** The integration of services must happen. When I was looking at what should happen in regard to transport and infrastructure generally I had occasion to visit various other State services and also services overseas. I met with the people from Transport for London two or three years ago and the message I got was that they had a far more integrated approach to delivery of services across their transport network. This Minister, who has been in the job for only five months, is doing a fantastic job because she has recognised the need to focus on the customer. She has done what a succession of transport Ministers under Labor failed to do. The customer must be at the centre of every thought process, every change in administration, every aspect, every idea that goes into getting our transport system right. In the name Transport for NSW the emphasis is on the word "for". We want to make sure the services are for the whole of New South Wales, but we certainly have some major challenges.

**Ms Kristina Keneally:** Is there a ticketing basis to it?

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** The member for Heffron keeps talking about ticketing but she failed time and again. What did she do? She spent half a billion dollars on the light rail to nowhere. She announced it by press release and killed it by press release. She should be embarrassed to walk into this Chamber. Two years ago, or 18 months ago at a conference in London, the Italian company that was involved in delivering light rail in Sydney announced to a consortium of companies from across the world that it did not intend to do any more business in New South Wales as a consequence of having to put up with the incompetence of the New South Wales Labor Government. And the member for Heffron is still smiling about it. I find it amazing. If she keeps interjecting I will keep responding.

**Ms Linda Burney:** Point of order: I refer to Standing Order 76. I am sure the Minister for Transport would like this Minister to come back to the leave of the bill so we can get on with it.

**ACTING-SPEAKER (Ms Melanie Gibbons):** Order! The Minister will return to the leave of the bill.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** It is hilarious and farcical that the former Minister for Planning, the former Premier, could not even get light rail integrated into the MyZone ticketing. What a challenge that was—tick, tick, tick. What did she do except lose most of the Labor Party somewhere in the wilderness? They are not here now. When I look across the Chamber I am disappointed we do not have a greater number of people there to hold us to account, because it is an important part of democracy. You may have some positive attributes in your personal demeanour but when it comes to being able to deliver any sound infrastructure, sound planning or sound policy—

**ACTING-SPEAKER (Ms Melanie Gibbons):** Order! Members will direct their comments through the Chair.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** Members can see that I am getting a bit too excited. Obviously, the Transport Legislation Amendment Bill will be the start of a whole new phase. The member for Heffron is enthusiastic in attempting to interject.

**ACTING-SPEAKER (Ms Melanie Gibbons):** Order! The Minister will be heard in silence.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** I think she is reading the interjections from her iPad. This bill is a clear indication that this Government is committed to getting transport right. We will make sure through this much more integrated alignment of services that the customer will get a much better deal. I thank the Minister for Transport. She has the capacity, the skill and the foresight to be able to make a difference. We all come into public life to make a difference, and she is doing that. I trust that the Labor Party will take a few lessons from the way this Minister has gone about achieving a lot of changes already. Having the Transport Legislation Amendment Bill passed in such a short time with such glowing support augurs well for the State under her stewardship. I support the bill and I trust that we all think the world is a better place now that Kristina Keneally is not the Premier.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN** (Willoughby—Minister for Transport) [5.17 p.m.] in reply: The importance of this bill is reflected in the number of members who have contributed to the debate. I acknowledge all members who have spoken. I particularly thank the members representing the electorates of Hawkesbury, Londonderry, The Entrance, Campbelltown, Camden, Newcastle, Drummoyne, Granville, Mulgoa, Tweed, Coogee, East Hills, Myall Lakes, Gosford, Strathfield, Barwon, Wagga Wagga, Pittwater, Parramatta, Port Stephens, Heathcote, Oatley, Castle Hill, Lake Macquarie, Cessnock, Bathurst, Murray-Darling, Smithfield, Canterbury, Keira, Bankstown, Fairfield, Sydney, Cabramatta, Mount Druitt, Balmain, Charlestown, Terrigal, Cronulla, Blue Mountains, Wakehurst, Vacluse and Penrith for their contributions to the debate. It is heartening to know that so many speakers, especially those on this side of the House, appreciate the importance of this legislation, and I thank them. I thank members from both sides for their contributions.

I have already spoken at length about the benefits of Transport for NSW. This bill is the culmination of at least three years of work in opposition and obviously the time in government to bring this bill to fruition. The new integrated transport authority is a milestone for this State in relation to the administration of public transport. I stress again the groundbreaking nature of such a move to an integrated transport model—groundbreaking for New South Wales, that is, although this model is tried and tested in many parts of the world and we know that such integration has been alive and well in cities such as London, Zurich and Vancouver for some time. Sydney is a global city. New South Wales is the most populous State in Australia. It is about time we made sure our transport administration addressed the needs of commuters and put the customer at the heart of everything we do. That is why in 2008 the Liberal-Nationals announced we would develop an integrated transport authority if elected to government. The people gave that policy a resounding tick of approval in March. I am so pleased we have come to the point of passing this legislation today.

The creation of Transport for NSW will mean that, for the first time in New South Wales, the objectives of all the public transport agencies will be one, and the focus will be on the customer. Transport planning and policy across all modes will be done by Transport for NSW, and this will allow transport operating agencies such as RailCorp, State Transit and the newly-created Roads and Maritime Services to focus solely on delivering those quality services which customers deserve and customers should expect. Transport for NSW will therefore have a division dedicated to identifying customer needs and improving customer experience. While

I was a shadow Minister it was very unsatisfactory to observe the lack of appreciation given to customer experience and customer service. That is why I was adamant the new authority had within it a customer experience division to champion customers, ensuring that their needs are a driving force in the management of transport services and in the delivery of transport infrastructure.

Improving the public transport experience for customers is a priority for the Government, no matter which electorate customers live in, whether they live in cities or rural and regional areas. It is key for us to ensure that the customer is at the heart of every action and decision we make in public transport. We are committed to working closely with passengers and listening to what they have to say in order to better understand where improvements can be made. The job of the new Transport for NSW customer experience division will be to ensure the top priority for transport is to identify and satisfy customer needs, no matter who the customer is, whether they are someone who catches a train, a bus, a ferry, someone who cycles, someone who walks or someone who is a motorist. The decisions of the integrated transport agency will be informed by customers, first and foremost—front-line staff and services will be focused on the needs of our customers. That goes without saying.

We on this side of the House have been concentrating our efforts on this integration since day one. I am pleased to advise the House that on 27 May I announced the opening of an integrated information centre at Circular Quay to help customers plan their public transport journeys. I encourage members who have not been to visit the integrated transport information centre at Circular Quay to do so. The old CityRail information office has been transformed into a one-stop information shop for public transport across all modes. This rebranded information centre is a microcosm of our plans for a fully integrated public transport system in which trains, buses and ferries will no longer operate in silos. When we first announced we would do this there was some hesitation by our front-line staff about whether it would work but I am pleased to advise the House that feedback we have received from staff has been fantastic and staff have said it has given them great satisfaction to be able to provide that customer satisfaction. They are now urging us to replicate that model in other parts of the transport network. This is a great example where motivated staff, front-line workers, can be empowered in helping the customer and in so doing receive greater job satisfaction.

Circular Quay is a major train, bus and ferry interchange and more than 550,000 passenger journeys are made through that precinct each week. It was simply illogical that the only public transport information office at the quay was for train inquiries only. This expanded and improved information office, combined with better signage at the station, illustrates our determination to ensure customers are the focus in public transport. For those customers who are interested, the space at Circular Quay is a wi-fi hot spot, allowing them to catch up with the latest news, browse their favourite websites, check their email or get the latest transport information. This is, again, a microcosm of what can be replicated throughout the entire network. The Government is making a difference to customers of our public transport services.

Already in our first five months in office we have incorporated light rail into the MyZone fares system; incorporated the Pensioner Excursion and Family Funday Sunday tickets to make them now valid on light rail; introduced a free Live Traffic NSW mobile application to give details and advice about the road network and introduced a separate mobile site for the latest smart phones; reduced monthly, quarterly and yearly train tickets by at least 9 per cent; called 15 tenders for the North West Rail Link; opened the North West Rail Link Community Information Centre; laid the first section of track associated with the \$2.1 billion South West Rail Link; and announced a tender for taxis, which means an extra 197 taxis will be on Sydney's streets by Christmas. We have also established an independent school bus safety advisory committee to assess the status of school bus safety in regional and rural New South Wales. Many members representing rural and regional communities are pleased with this development. The committee will consider the full range of school bus safety measures and recommend the most effective ways to make school bus travel as safe as possible.

Further, we have seen the extension of CityRail guardian services operating on the Eastern Suburbs and Illawarra, Bankstown, Hunter, inner-west and North Shore lines, as well as to Richmond. In addition, we have just announced a State budget that delivers billions for public transport, with record expenditure. Also, the 2011-12 budget will make a real difference to commuters, including allocations of \$340 million for the North West Rail Link; \$292 million for the South West Rail Link; \$51 million to build the Wynyard walk to link passengers to the western side of the central business district; \$103 million for a light rail network in Sydney; \$110 million to start rolling out electronic ticketing—and I will have more to say about that in the near future; \$119 million for 261 new buses; \$76 million, at least, for commuter car parks and transport interchanges;

\$30 million on Easy Access upgrades, which is a boost; \$69 million on general station upgrades; \$8.6 million on brand new NightRide bus services, so that people can get home safely at night, an issue addressed in the House today, as well as many more initiatives. We have funded our commitments, and we are getting on with the job of delivering better transport services for the people of New South Wales. I have had the opportunity to listen to the contributions made by members in relation to this bill. I would especially like to thank the members of the Liberal and National parties for their contributions.

**Mr Ryan Park:** What about ours?

**Ms GLADYS BEREJKLIAN:** I am coming to those. But members on this side of the House have aptly highlighted the challenges that their constituents face in relation to public transport across all regions of the State, and have articulated what this bill does to ease the burden for customers. I know that members opposite have the same sentiments, even if they did not express them during the debate, because I am still receiving a lot of correspondence from them about changing bus routes, and about reinstating services that their own Government cancelled. Even though those members opposite perhaps were not being completely honest about how grateful they are that this legislation has come before the House, I acknowledge their contributions to the debate and assure them that, no matter where people catch public transport, whether they are constituents of members on that side of the House or this side of the House, this bill will help everybody across the State, because that is the kind of government we are. We make sure that every change we make in public transport is in the best interests of the people of New South Wales.

A number of members who spoke in debate on the bill asked for clarification. As the member for Keira is in the House I will specifically address some of the issues that he raised. He asked about the Transport Advisory Board. I advise him that it is clearly an advisory board, not a statutory corporation. It will provide advice, hence its name—Transport Advisory Board. That is how it was referred to in the legislation, but I do not know whether he read it. The member for Keira also wanted to know whether the Transport Management Centre was part of the new integrated authority. I can advise the member that the Transport Management Centre will indeed be part of Transport for NSW, and that it will report to the Deputy Director General of Transport Services. In addition, the member for Keira raised concerns about passenger information and the coordination of customer messaging. I am pleased to advise the House that we take such matters seriously, and \$12 million has been provided in the 2011-12 budget to improve passenger information systems. I will have a lot more to say about that. I do not want to put everything out there today, but there is a lot more good news coming.

The member for Canterbury is in the Chamber so I will address some of the issues that the member raised. She accused the Government of dumping the bill in the other place with "virtually no notice", and she accused the Government of trying to ram this legislation through Parliament. But we have had this measure out there on the record not for three weeks, not for three months, but for more than three years. This has been Coalition policy for more than three years. So I do not know what the Opposition is referring to. The member for Canterbury raised one serious issue, and I would like to refer to that. She said that changing the name of the organisation by adding the word "for" will not lead to better services. For once, I agree with the member. What will lead to better services is a fundamental reform to the administration of transport in this State. That is what will make a difference—not a name change, but a fundamental cultural change, which this bill will allow. It will ensure that everybody who works in public transport and makes decisions about public transport puts the customer first. This is what this is about, and I am so pleased about that.

I noted at the outset of this response the contributions made by members from both sides of the House. I deeply appreciate the contributions that they have made to the debate on this bill. But there was a notable exception, and that is that the Leader of the Opposition could not bring himself to speak on this bill. That is a real shame, because it would have been good to hear his views on our positive reforms to transport in this State. Things that he was not able to achieve we have already achieved. We will make sure our transport systems meet the needs of our State, now and in the future. I am extremely pleased to thank all members of staff within the department, all the people who have supported us in putting this legislation together, all the workshops we conducted involving staff, for the feedback they gave us and their enthusiasm for and acceptance of this reform package. I thank all of them. In doing so, I commend this historic piece of legislation 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 Ms Linda Burney.**

### **Consideration in Detail**

**ACTING-SPEAKER (Ms Melanie Gibbons):** By leave, I will propose the bill in groups of clauses and schedules.

**Clauses 1 and 2 agreed to.**

**Ms LINDA BURNEY (Canterbury) [5.30 p.m.],** by leave: I move amendments Nos 1 and 2 in globo:

No. 1 Page 21, schedule 1 [43], lines 20 and 21. Omit all words on those lines.

No. 2 Page 21 schedule 1 [44], lines 22-29. Omit all words on those lines.

The Opposition is seriously concerned about the amendments to new section 99D of the Transport Legislation Amendment Bill 2011. These amendments, if passed, will remove the current priority given to passengers and prioritise instead freight services on our rail network. Currently, the Transport Act requires RailCorp and the Country Rail Infrastructure Authority to give priority to passenger rail services when undertaking service planning. That means that when developing timetables and train-path allocations, passenger services on CityRail and CountryLink must be the first priority in decision-making. The change in this bill will, at the stroke of a pen, relegate the one million rail passengers from priority, as stated in the bill, to reasonable priority. Reasonable priority in that context means that freight will come first and passengers will come second. The Government has talked endlessly about its so-called commitment to the customer and customer service and to placing passengers at the centre of the system. In his second reading speech the Minister for Roads and Ports said:

These objectives are putting the customer first and ensuring that the transport system is designed around the needs and expectations of the customer ...

The provision in this bill makes the talk of improving services to passengers a sham. The CityRail network is a complex system on which more than one million people rely to get around every workday. Freight trains, on the other hand, are inherently unreliable. In practice, the only way RailCorp avoids significant disruptions on the network is because freight trains are largely not allowed to run during the peaks. With this bill this is something that the Minister for Transport seems determined to overturn. Passengers are literally priority number two under this legislation. Last year the member for Willoughby spoke in debate on the Transport Amendment Legislation Bill 2010 and stated:

We believe the Government should principally ensure that people in the community ... have the reliable, safe services they deserve.

That was all talk. The Government's own briefing on this legislation states:

Commonwealth funding of railway infrastructure for freight is dependent on the Government being able to give long-term commitments to giving priority to freight rail movements in exchange for that funding ...

... Accordingly, the bill contains an amendment to section 99D of the Transport Administration Act 1988 to permit RailCorp and the Country Rail Infrastructure Authority to allocate priority between rail passenger services and freight services in accordance with the terms of Commonwealth funding agreements.

The previous Labor Government was urged by bureaucrats to prioritise freight over passenger rail but it refused because it knew the disruptions that would occur on the rail network. It refused because the passenger must come first. The fact that the amendments to section 99D are contained in this bill demonstrates the rank hypocrisy of the Minister for Transport. Had the previous Labor Government attempted to give freight rail priority over passenger rail the then shadow Minister for Transport would have been horrified. Angry media releases expressing the disgust of the member for Willoughby on behalf of commuters would have blown into the press gallery offices on level 6 of Parliament House. Now in government, the first piece of legislation of the Minister for Transport literally makes the commuter priority number two. I am genuinely shocked that it has taken only five months for the Minister to abandon commuters.

By putting up this insidious amendment to section 99D, we know where the Minister stands. My question is: Where does the member for Goulburn stand on this matter? I ask that because the member for Goulburn sent a number of stern letters to the former Minister for Transport regarding freight trains breaking down and causing disruption to commuters in her electorate. He took those letters very seriously and thought that the member for Goulburn was genuinely standing up for commuters in places such as Moss Vale, Bowral and Mittagong. Now is her chance to show that she really stands up for her constituents. She has an opportunity to support our amendments that rightly put the passenger first. If she does not, how will the member for Goulburn defend her Government's decision to her constituents? How will she explain that she supports more delays and more disruption for passengers?

It is not just the member for Goulburn who must face up to her constituents. Where do the members representing the electorates of Campbelltown, the Blue Mountains, Wyong, Newcastle, Gosford, The Entrance and Maitland stand in relation to this matter? During the election campaign every one of them promised better transport services for the people in their electorates. Were they just words or did they really mean it? Today is the day we find out. I challenge them all to support the Opposition's amendments to maintain the policy of giving passenger rail priority over freight rail. If they do not I assure them that we will guarantee that every commuter in their electorates knows that they supported legislation that makes passengers priority number two. As I said, the success of this bill will be measured by the service improvements, enhanced and increased infrastructure, greater security on the transport network and improved customer service and communication with road and transport users.

Ultimately the passengers will decide the success of this bill. We support the intentions of this bill, and the Government's aim to have a more integrated approach to transport. We have moved amendments, but these amendments in no way impact this goal. We have moved amendments to protect the working conditions of thousands of our hardworking transport workers. The Opposition supports the amended bill currently before the House with one exception. Under the current legislation passengers are the priority. Unless these amendments are passed, passengers will no longer be the first priority. I encourage those opposite to think seriously about whether they are prepared to vote for a bill that relegates rail passengers to priority number two. I urge members opposite to support these amendments.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN** (Willoughby—Minister for Transport) [5.37 p.m.]: Regrettably the Opposition clearly cannot read the text of the bill. The bill makes a small amendment giving passenger services reasonable priority over freight. Those opposite seem to think that "reasonable priority" means no priority. Obviously passenger services will continue to have priority over freight services on our rail system. Labor's assertions to the contrary are completely wrong. Regrettably it demonstrates how little those opposite know about running a rail system. But, again, 16 years of incompetence has already demonstrated that. It is ludicrous to think that any sensible administration would not give priority to passenger services over freight. On Tuesday the member for Fairfield, who is not in the Chamber but I hope he is listening, said, "Imagine the effect on the commuter network if a freight train stalls during the peak period."

**ACTING-SPEAKER (Ms Melanie Gibbons):** Order! The member for Canterbury will come to order.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** More mindless opposition and scaremongering from Labor. CityRail does not allow freight trains onto the suburban network during the peaks and that will not change.

**Ms Linda Burney:** We know that. It is not about the peaks.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** The member for Canterbury said she knows that but that is what one of her colleagues said during the debate. In reality the existing rail network is a shared railway system. The movement of both passengers and freight is important to the success of our community and its economic good, and we all appreciate that. It is also important that we encourage appropriate investment in our rail system by freight providers. If they were to make that investment and provide additional infrastructure it would seem reasonable for them to be able to use such infrastructure for freight rail.

The Government is about growing the transport system and encouraging the participation of stakeholders. Our networks have suffered through lack of investment and we want to provide the framework to maximise that opportunity. By proposing this amendment the Opposition is trying to discourage investment in, and support for, new freight rail projects. The only possible reason it would have to do this is that it wants to discourage the movement of freight on rail and support more trucks on the roads. If the Opposition does not

support this measure it is saying that it does not support the transfer of freight to rail. The irony is that the Labor Party wants more carbon-emitting trucks rather than using environmentally friendly rail. I could speak for hours about that, but I will not.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** Please do.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJKLIAN:** No, I am keen to get this legislation passed. There are clear circumstances when new rail lines may be proposed and funded by investors or by the Federal Government for freight. I stress that even in those circumstances the legislation will ensure that reasonable priority will still be given to passengers. I emphasise that the bill as it stands ensures that the Government will give priority to passenger movements, but we will also develop the economy through moving more freight on rail.

**Question—That the words stand—put.**

**The House divided.**

**Ayes, 67**

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

**Noes, 18**

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

**Pairs**

Mr Bromhead	Mr Furolo
Mr Fraser	Ms Hay

**Question resolved in the affirmative.**

**Opposition amendments Nos 1 and 2 negatived.**

**Schedule 1 agreed to.**

**Schedules 2 to 5 agreed to.**

**Consideration in detail concluded.**

### **Passing of the Bill**

**Motion by Ms Gladys Berejiklian agreed to:**

That this bill be now passed.

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

## **VETERINARY PRACTICE AMENDMENT (INTERSTATE VETERINARY PRACTITIONERS) BILL 2011**

### **Agreement in Principle**

**Debate resumed from 24 August 2011.**

**Mr RICHARD AMERY** (Mount Druitt) [5.45 p.m.]: I lead for the Opposition in debate on the Veterinary Practice Amendment (Interstate Veterinary Practitioners) Bill 2011, which the Opposition does not oppose. The main purpose of the bill, as outlined by the Minister for Primary Industries, is to allow vets registered in other States to practise in New South Wales, without having to go through the process of registering separately in this State. The other purpose of the bill is to give effect to the National Recognition of Veterinary Registration model which has been endorsed by the Ministerial Council of Primary Industry Ministers.

The objects in this bill are the result of a continuing process to recognise professions and skills earned in one State to be recognised around the country. They have their origins in the mutual recognition laws that have been worked out by national and State governments since the 1990s. In veterinary practice the issues involve more than just convenience and are of greater importance than cost saving and reducing red tape which the Government has put forward as one of the benefits of the bill. Australia has always had a proud record in protecting our livestock and our residents from diseases that can wipe out industries and in extreme cases can even kill our residents. One of the reasons for this bill is that veterinary officers play an important role in the biosecurity of this country. State agencies, like primary industries, are an important link in this national effort and anything that can be done to eliminate laws that restrict the movement of professional people across State borders is important and needed if we are to play a role in the biosecurity of this country.

Veterinary officers enjoy a high level of support in our community as well as in our farming communities. Most Australians deal with vets through the care of their domestic pets. The practice of the vet, particularly in rural areas, has changed over the decades since the Second World War. These days a vet's income would come primarily from the care of domestic animals—dogs, cats, horses and an assortment of other animals—that get the individual attention that does not occur on the broad acre farms of the regions. The perception of vets has been enhanced by the success of television shows such as *Harry's Practice* and books by the most famous of vets, Alf Wight, better known through his pen name, James Herriot. These books and programs have been useful in highlighting the human side of the veterinary profession but it is in the role of disease control that the work of vets is not fully recognised in the community.

I note in the documentation for this bill a reference to the potential delays that could occur with the outbreak of disease emergencies. This was taken up by a ministerial council meeting in 2007 which endorsed a National Recognition of Veterinary Registration model to overcome any potential problems in this area. Between 1995 and 2003, during my time as Minister for Agriculture, I had plenty of opportunities to deal with some of these emergencies and to see firsthand the work of veterinary officers as they dealt with an immediate problem whilst at the same time carrying out preventative measures to stop any further outbreaks. One outbreak with which they dealt was Newcastle disease, which affected the poultry industry throughout New South Wales. This emergency hit western Sydney, the Central Coast and later Tamworth and other areas. It required the full cooperation of just about every government agency and was directed from the Department of Agriculture under

the excellent leadership of Dr Dick Jane, the then Government Veterinary Officer whom I was pleased to honour at a presentation evening held by the Department of Agriculture in Orange. Upon his retirement, Dr Jane was replaced by Dr Bruce Christie.

During this period the Australian authorities were on alert regarding outbreaks of disease overseas. In particular, the United Kingdom was struck with mad cow disease and foot and mouth disease. Australia was unaffected by mad cow disease, as our policies had prevented the problem from occurring in this country. However, our veterinary authorities and farming communities were very concerned about the threat posed by foot and mouth disease as it had shown that it could leap continents and travel great distances around the world. In 2002 I arranged for forums to be held in which every government agency was involved to inquire as to whether New South Wales and the nation were prepared for an outbreak of foot and mouth disease. The Department of Agriculture sent our vets to the United Kingdom to work with and to monitor the massive operation there.

Foot and mouth disease cost the British Government \$6 to \$7 billion and it cost the economy of the United Kingdom \$84 billion. Through ministerial council meetings, reports were presented by our State veterinary officers relating to the need to look nationally at how rules and regulations can hamper these sorts of operations. This bill does not profess to address all those issues but it was good to see in the report of the Legislation Review Committee a reference to disease emergencies as one of the reasons for this bill. In closing, I highlight some of the work in which our veterinary officers are involved. They provide an essential role for nearly all of us and they play a crucial role in protecting our country, farmers and citizens during emergency disease outbreaks. Veterinary officers have a responsible role in our community. I have always considered their work to be of the highest order.

When I was Minister I was very pleased to appoint a woman to the executive of the then Department of Agriculture, Dr Helen Scott-Orr. I recall being proud to announce that she was not only the first woman appointed to the executive; she was also a qualified veterinary officer—a profession that had not been in the leadership of that department for many years. In 2010 Dr Scott-Orr also achieved the Public Service Medal for outstanding service to the public. I commend the Minister for introducing this important bill and I recognise all our veterinary officers in both public and private business. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned on motion by Mr Andrew Cornwell 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.**

## **ROAD AND HELICOPTER MEDICAL RETRIEVAL SERVICES**

### **Discussion on Petition Signed by 10,000 or More Persons**

**Mr ANDREW GEE** (Orange) [6.04 p.m.]: On 28 August 2011 I lodged this petition calling for the introduction of a 24-hour retrieval service for the Central West. It was no ordinary petition: 30,349 people signed it, making it the largest petition ever tabled in this Parliament. I also have a further 600 signatures here waiting to be tabled. This petition has galvanised and united the people of the Central West in an unprecedented way. The petition represents a clear and united voice from the west. Those who have signed it come from all walks of life and many different organisations. Even fringe minority groups, like Labor Party supporters, have supported the campaign. People signed this petition because they are passionate about obtaining a 24-hour retrieval service for the Central West. They signed this petition in their tens of thousands because they want their voices heard in this House, on this day.

For the benefit of members I will take a moment to explain what this petition is all about. Prior to 2007 the Central West was serviced by a CareFlight helicopter, which was based at Orange. That service had the overwhelming support of the communities of the west. People fundraised and supported the service at every turn because they knew how vital it was to the people of the Central West. But the former Labor Government axed CareFlight and moved it to the Ambulance Service of New South Wales at the end of 2006. The helicopter

service was then contracted to a Canadian company, which operates it from the hours of 8.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m. It currently serves all or part of six electorates. Now after 6.00 p.m.—sometimes earlier—helicopters performing retrieval missions from accident scenes have to come from Sydney or beyond, if they can get there at all.

The petition is about what the medical profession refers to as "the golden hour": the hour in which a real difference can be made to saving a life. It is about providing a life-giving service, but it is also about equity. After 16 years of Labor neglect, the great electorates of the Central West are awakening. The budget handed down last Tuesday has highlighted the increasingly important role played by mining in propping up the economy of this State in troubled times. The rush is on. Many of the mines at the heart of the mining boom are located in the electorates serviced by the helicopter based at Orange. Just as the mining royalties from these electorates are sustaining this State financially, so the farmers of the Central West are sustaining this State by producing food for the tables of New South Wales. The Central West pays its way. It makes its contribution.

It is regrettable that this issue has been unnecessarily politicised in the Central West. The work that has been done by Orange City Council and other councils in the Central West is commendable, and I thank them. I also thank those councillors who have pursued this issue out of genuine concern. However, hypocrisy has crept into the debate. After the recent election some Labor-aligned Orange City councillors lined up to put the boot into the new Government over the retrieval service. Even The Greens decided to get in on the act. Some critics, even some sitting in this House, have had the effrontery to suggest that a 24-hour retrieval service was a campaign promise. It was not. Many stood by in mute silence—doing their best Marcel Marceau impersonations in their black-and-white skivvies—while Labor axed CareFlight and locked the New South Wales Government into a long-term contract with a foreign company that does not expire until 2014, and then left us with a budget black hole.

The silence continued when the former Labor Government gave Wollongong a 24-hour retrieval service—that is Wollongong—a 10-minute flight from Sydney—a political decision to shore up its flagging fortunes in the Illawarra. Now that Labor has departed the scene, the black-and-white skivvies have been cast off and the mime artists have finally found their voices. But my question to them is: Where were you? Where were you in 2006 when the people of the Central West really needed you? Why did you not speak out earlier? No doubt the critics will be in full voice again tomorrow but my message to them is to stop the political gamesmanship. The public is not interested in it. They can see through it; they have had enough. The public wants constructive progress. Times are tough in New South Wales but my colleagues, led by the Minister for Health, are working through the issues to find a solution. I thank the Minister for her leadership on this issue.

In 2009 the Ambulance Service of NSW conducted a major review into the need for a 24-hour retrieval service at Orange. The review found there was "no case for the cost-effective extension of the operating hours of the Orange helicopter to 24 hours". But here is the rub: The review also found that if Orange had a 24-hour retrieval service it would be as busy or busier than Wollongong, and busier than Lismore, Canberra and Tamworth, which all have either a full-time 24-hour retrieval service or a 24-hour on-call service. The people of the Central West deserve the same emergency medical services as the rest of the State and until they get it they will continue to ask whether a life in other parts of New South Wales is being more highly valued than a life in the Central West. It really is that simple.

Statistics are all well and good, but the need for a 24-hour retrieval service is not only illustrated in statistics. That need is illustrated in the real-life stories of people from all walks of life who have needed the service. Lawrence Balcomb, a farmer from Toogong, thanks his lucky stars that when he suffered numerous fractures and burns to 70 per cent of his body in April 2010 the call to the Orange-based helicopter was placed 10 minutes before it was put to bed that night. One afternoon in April this year, 32-year-old Joel Kitto severely fractured his pelvis in a road accident. Joel and his wife Sally—who is President of the Central West Law Society—were eventually transported by road. Joel waited until 3.30 a.m. in excruciating pain for a helicopter that never arrived—a 10-hour wait.

There is also the story of June Taylor, who had to wait six hours for a helicopter to arrive from Royal Prince Alfred Hospital in Sydney after she developed a serious infection following head surgery. She drifted in and out of consciousness, and when she finally got to Sydney she spent two days in intensive care, where she was diagnosed with meningitis. It was a near run thing. In October 2008 grandfather Alan Campbell tragically lost his son-in-law in a horror road accident in Lucknow about 11 kilometres east of Orange. It is an accident the citizens of Orange will long remember. In the accident Mr Campbell's daughter and four grandchildren were seriously injured. The call to the Orange helicopter came in 20 minutes before it was due to close for the night.

Three helicopters were needed for the critically injured. Had only two been available, which would have been the case if the 000 call had been received after 6.00 p.m., one of those critically injured victims would have been left behind.

The people of the Central West live in close-knit communities. These people are our friends, our neighbours, our relatives. They are our fellow regional Australians. Their stories are real and they illustrate why this service is so important to the people of the Central West. It is the reason we fight for this. In the months and years ahead the victims of accidents, trauma and illness in the Central West will also likely be our friends, our neighbours, our relatives, people we know, or know of. From their elected representatives they deserve our best. And so, on this vital issue we should not flinch and we should not falter. We should give them our best and work to make this life-giving service for the people of the Central West a reality. Their lives are as precious and as valuable as the lives of those living in any other part of this great State. [*Time expired.*]

**Dr ANDREW McDONALD** (Macquarie Fields) [6.11 p.m.]: It gives me great pleasure to speak on this petition because, as the member for Orange said, there is a clear and united voice from the west. The member gave an eloquent speech about the need for this service. I note that the Minister for Health, and Minister for Medical Research is in the Chamber. She is able to fix this with the stroke of a pen. The question the people of Orange have is: What will she do? We shall soon hear. On 23 June I asked the Minister question No. 402, which stated:

1. With a view to enhancing the neuro-trauma unit at Orange Base Hospital, has the possibility of an "on call" (i.e. on standby, rather than ready on site) after-hours helicopter service for Orange been considered?
2. If such a service has been discounted, what reasons were given?
3. What other considerations would preclude this possibility?
4. How much would such a service cost?

The reply on 25 July was:

1. ... The Auditor-General's report in September 2010 stated that NSW Ambulance had reviewed the need to extend the operating hours of the Orange helicopter during 2009. That review identified there was not a sufficient demand at that time to warrant an increase to a 24 hr service.
2. Prior to the election, the government committed to again review the need for a move to a 24 hr aeromedical retrieval service in Orange. This has been done.
3. ...
4. The advice received shows there has been no change in aeromedical activity in the Central West, which is why there is no need to commit to a 24/7 operation at this stage.
5. In line with the Auditor-General's report, a statewide review will be carried out before the regional helicopter contracts expire in December 2012.

This will determine if there is a need to switch to an extended service in Orange.

In pure political terms—and the Minister is a master of politics—this is a so-called clever answer because it deliberately does not answer the question. The question was not about what is happening now but what can be done to enhance the service for the people of western New South Wales. It is the future of health care west of the sandstone curtain that needs to be examined. As John Maynard Keynes, the famous economist, said:

When the situation changes, I change my mind. What do you do?

As we all know, the reality is that things in Orange have changed. The new \$250 million Orange Base Hospital, built largely by the previous Government, has extra intensive care capacity and capability, for example, to do more for neurological intensive care patients. Now that the intensive care unit for Orange is a fully accredited level 5 intensive care unit it has seven-day-a-week registrar cover and essentially full-time permanently appointed intensive care unit specialist cover, with three intensive care specialists living in Orange. The unit also provides a critical advisory service six days a week. This service provides critical care advice to smaller sites, and often aids in guiding retrievals originating in the Western New South Wales Local Health District.

Orange hospital is the official regional trauma centre for the Western New South Wales Local Health District. At present 100 per cent of all but the most simple neurotrauma needs to be moved to the city. The question the Minister needs to answer tonight is whether it is better to have an on-call service for 10 per cent to 20 per cent of the patients who will need to be moved, or to move 100 per cent of neurotraumas, which is

currently the case. That is because 80 per cent of the patients with neurotrauma, who could be looked after at Orange, will never need to be moved; but if they need to be moved, it is at short notice, hence the need for a rapid response based in Orange. The answer to this question, and the one I have just asked, is on the Minister's desk. What she has so far shown to the Parliament and the 30,349 people of western New South Wales who signed the petition in a four-week period is a pale imitation of the information that is available to her. Tonight she can reveal all that she knows.

**Mrs Jillian Skinner:** I will.

**Dr ANDREW McDONALD:** I note the Minister's interjection that she will. I look forward to it. To do otherwise would confirm that the Minister is doing yet another complete U-turn now that she is in government. She committed to reopen Gulgong Hospital, despite knowing that that would never be possible. There are other examples of her claiming that what was "completely unacceptable" in opposition is now, by her standards, "good care" in government. In a press release dated 19 August 2010 she committed to publish "full, honest and regular reports to show how our hospitals are performing" and, according to a press release dated 15 June 2009, this would include "information about health service management, including budget allocations, spending, medical errors, infections and other patient outcomes". I ask the Minister: Will this ambulance review, sitting on her desk, be publicly released? The cost to release all the reviews on this issue would be nil—not a brass razor—and could be done easily.

I hope that this petition, gathered over a four-week period, will result in an answer from the Minister tonight. Prior to the election the Minister indicated that what was needed was greater transparency in Government. She gave every impression that if elected she would look closely at any question that was asked. I understand that another review is in train. Will the Minister confirm that this will be released by March 2012 to allow a 24-hour service to begin in January 2013? This 24-hour, on-call option should at least be explored. The results of the review into this option should be made public. As Marge Taylor said, "denying regional areas like the Central West a 24-hour retrieval service is simply slack. You can't put a price on a life." Tonight we will see whether the Minister will tell the people of Orange what she knows and what she plans to do. [*Time expired.*]

**ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward):** Order! Before I call the next speaker I remind all members that when they are in the House they must have their mobile phones turned to silent. It is disorderly to talk on your phone, as well as to answer your phone or to allow it to ring while people are speaking. I reinforce previous Speakers' rulings in that regard.

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER** (North Shore—Minister for Health, and Minister for Medical Research) [6.16 p.m.]: I am pleased to have the opportunity to participate in this discussion about the Orange helicopter medical retrieval service. In relation to the patient stories that have been told, I express my sympathy to all concerned. But the question we must ask is whether changes to the Orange helicopter medical retrieval service would have made a difference to their treatment. In relation to the tragic case of jockey Reece Potter, who fell at Tottenham races—the story has been raised in the local papers—I am advised that the director of aeromedical and medical retrieval services spoke directly to Mrs Williams on 5 May about the unsurvivable head injury her son had suffered.

I convey my thanks and admiration to all the wonderful staff—the nurses, doctors, paramedics and others—who work in Orange in this hospital that now caters for the majority of patients in the region and elsewhere in providing excellent care for their patients. Daytime helicopter operations commenced in Orange in 2001 and at that time were provided by NRMA CareFlight. There has never been a 24-hour helicopter capability in Orange. When the current service provided by CHC Australia started in 2007, the service was again established as a daytime operation. There was criticism of a number of factors relating to the service, including helicopter reliability, take-off limitations, rescue limitations related to winching and Labor's departure from the original plan to run the service 24/7.

I add that the Parliamentary Secretary for Health at the time was none other than Dr Andrew McDonald, who has just made the most hypocritical speech I have heard in this place. This was considered in 2009 following a Cabinet meeting involving the former Labor Government. I am advised that at that review, consultations occurred throughout the region. In 2010 a further review was done by the Auditor-General—an independent umpire whom I have always found to be honest and reliable. I attended the Auditor-General's briefing when his review was released and I questioned him specifically about his recommendations regarding Orange. I note for the record the summary from his fact sheet:

Ambulance reviewed the need to extend the operating hours of the Orange helicopter during 2009. The review identified there was not sufficient demand at this time to warrant an increase to a 24 hour service.

Before the March election I gave an undertaking to again review the operations at Orange in regard to the 24/7 operation and to seek to vary the contract should the extended operation be warranted. I have done that. The advice relating to that review is that there is no increased demand, but that should there be a change in demand before the current contract expires in May 2014 consideration could be given to changing the current operation that provides daytime helicopter and medical retrieval services with after-hours support 24/7 from helicopters in Sydney, Wollongong and Canberra and the Royal Flying Doctor Service fixed-wing and medical retrieval service in Dubbo. At present the response time performance to emergency medical retrievals in the Central West is exactly the same as it is for rest of the State.

If we did make a change what could we have? We could have an after-hours on-call road retrieval service. This option involves developing an on-call roster of Orange Base Hospital critical care clinicians, but given that most patients require retrieval to a Sydney hospital the actual clinical utility of a road-only service is limited; an after-hours on-call helicopter retrieval capacity using staff to form an on-call roster and the advice I have received is that such a service would have a low utilisation rate, approximately one per week; and a 24-hour on-duty helicopter retrieval capability that would involve extra pilots, crewman, doctors and paramedics being on base and responding from an on-duty position.

I am told that the lead time to establish this would be six months and given that most inter-hospital referrals are to Sydney hospitals there are no significant savings from reduced flying hours for inter-hospital transfers. The cost of that service would be \$7 million for the remainder of the current contract. So it is the status quo for now. However, I advise the House that I have asked for the Director General of Health to call for external consultants to conduct a review of the whole ambulance service and also to again consider the uro-medical operations for the whole State before the contract expires and is up for renewal.

I am happy to read more of that onto the record, but as I am the second speaker I have only five minutes. However, I am very happy to make that information available. I will make it available to the local paper, which has constantly refused to provide my full commentary. I look forward to meeting the mayors of the Central New South Wales Councils next week to provide them with this update on the current and future situation. The people of the Central West deserve to have an excellent helicopter service. They will have that, just as the rest of the State has. I guarantee that the future review conducted by external consultants will ensure that that is the case.

**Mr TROY GRANT** (Dubbo—Parliamentary Secretary) [6.21 p.m.]: I wish to make a contribution to the discussion on the petition requesting 24-hour road and helicopter medical retrieval services for the Central West region. I commend the Central West communities for bringing this issue to this Chamber and I commend the members for Orange and Bathurst for their efforts in supporting their communities on this issue. It is abundantly clear that if ever there was a story to be told about Labor's neglect of regional New South Wales, this is that story. The Central West had an adequate helicopter service that operated 24-hours a day and, as the member for Orange has said, it operated with tremendous community support and the community was satisfied with that service. However, regional satisfaction with services, particularly in health, must not sit comfortably with the former Labor Government and in true style and form what happened? The 24-hour service was taken away, a new contract was entered into, and it was transferred to Wollongong to suit Labor's political needs. Those opposite should be ashamed. We are left with a lesser service that operates to suit Labor's political agenda; a service that was left behind for a regional area to use and operate west of the sandstone curtain.

If this petition does nothing else, it certainly highlights the neglect of Labor of western and central New South Wales and presents yet another challenge for the new O'Farrell-Stoner Government to clean up the mess left by those opposite. It is now up to our wonderful Minister for Health, who has turned the tide in health in regional New South Wales in the space of a number of months, when Labor let it die over 16 years. We now have to deal with this problem with significant economic constraints to again meet the aeromedical retrieval needs of the Central West. As the Minister for Health and the member for Orange have highlighted, the Ambulance Service of NSW has conducted a number of reviews since November 2009. The consultations have been done.

In the context of ensuring an integrated approach to emergency critical care retrievals, the response time performance from hospitals in our area is comparable to the statewide performance and demand for services. As the Minister for Health has indicated, an independent review will include a full review of helicopter operations across the State to ensure that we get this issue right when the Labor Government dug the absolute guts out of it. Shame on Labor. As the Minister outlined, new tender documents will be the subject of review by

an independent body. We will not make the same mistakes that Labor made of placing additional financial hardship on taxpayers of New South Wales by breaking yet another contract. This is a challenge that we will face head-on.

I am confident, after attending a meeting with the member for Orange and the Minister's wonderful staff Tom Kelleher and Alice Hardy, and after speaking to the Minister at length, that we can and will find a way forward on this issue to satisfy the needs of our communities. I will join with my colleagues the members for Bathurst and Orange in continuing to work with the Minister on this issue, to right the wrongs. Together we will find a solution that is sustainable and secures a 24-hour service in our electorates. This review will look at all known road, helicopter and fixed-wing inter-hospital retrieval activity in the response area of the Central West helicopter. It will also examine ambulance emergency road responses in the area, a critical issue. I also appreciate the wonderful work currently being done by medical clinicians and service providers, as alluded to by the Minister, in the Central West service, albeit in a limited capacity—a limitation of capacity that they do not want.

There are so many stories that can be told from across the Bathurst, Orange and Dubbo electorates of successful retrievals that have saved lives. Unfortunately, there are stories such as those raised by the member for Orange where the outcome has not been so great. Our communities are asking for equitable access to this service at any time of the night or day so that more successful stories can be told and we do not risk having to recount any tragic tales. The people of the Central West have spoken loudly on this issue. They want equity of access to services, they want an assurance that this service will be available at the most critical of times and they want back the service that Labor ripped away from them. They deserve an apology from Labor members: they should be ashamed. Only when the people of the Central West have what was unfairly stripped from them will they be duly satisfied.

**Mr PAUL TOOLE** (Bathurst—Parliamentary Secretary) [6.26 p.m.], by leave: I support the Orange helicopter retrieval service. At the outset I commend the dedication and hard work of paramedics, pilots and crew in responding to the critical care demand in this State, whether they do so through road, fixed-wing or helicopter medical retrievals. This has become an issue that is quite prevalent in the Central West and a large number of people have signed a petition. As the member for Orange and the member for Dubbo have said, this is about equity. Those members and I have spoken with the Minister, who has been to our electorates. This is a Minister who is concerned about health, a Minister who is listening to the needs of regional New South Wales. We have been neglected in the past. Former Labor Ministers did not even know that there were towns and people living west of the sandstone curtain. Finally we have a Minister who is interested and will get out there to hear what communities are saying.

Back in 2006 we had CareFlight services based in Orange. Every year the community raised funds necessary to maintain this fantastic service in the Central West. But Labor did not support the service. We lost the service when Labor moved it away. Where did it go? It went to Wollongong. Why was that? Because Wollongong was represented by a Labor member at that time. Instead of providing for the health needs of the State on the basis of equity in services it was about mate looking after mate. New South Wales is facing challenges, but in facing health challenges we know we have a Minister who knows how big the health issue is across New South Wales. We are starting to fix the problems left behind by the previous Government. The Minister is to be commended for meeting with the mayors of Central NSW Councils about this issue.

Tonight the Minister spoke about an external review of the Ambulance Service, including medical retrievals. If I could comment on that point a little further, the Minister said she will ask the Director General of Health to call for expressions of interest from independent consultants to undertake a wide review of the Ambulance Service. The Minister has asked that the review advise an appropriate organisational structure, management arrangements and a model of care to ensure the most timely access to appropriate health care for patients across this State. The review will be required to identify and make recommendations regarding the demand, coverage and responsiveness of medical retrieval services across New South Wales, for both emergency and non-urgent retrievals, by different retrieval modalities, including road, fixed-wing and rotary-wing retrievals. The review will also look at medical retrieval systems that ensure best patient outcomes, with financing and charging arrangements for the efficient and effective delivery of service. And the review will examine the roles of paramedics and whether they should be able to provide more care and make decisions to not transport or to transport to a "non-ED facility" where appropriate.

In relation to aeromedical operations, the consultants will be required to review and make recommendations regarding: current demand and whether it is being met under existing contractual arrangements; integration with other forms of medical retrieval; current coverage and responsiveness, including

gaps in services and how those may be met; identification of models of care that improve patient outcomes, including involvement of specialist medical teams, such as the head injury retrieval trial conducted by CareFlight, and specialist services such as the newborn and paediatric emergency transport service; and optimal aircraft and base locations, hours of operation and staffing requirements that ensure best coverage. That all of those matters will be part of the review clearly indicates that finally the people of New South Wales have a health Minister who is concerned about the whole of this State and is looking to fix the problems left by the previous Labor Government. So Opposition members who stand in this place and suggest that this Government should do something overnight should hang their heads in shame because of what they did not do over the past 16 years. I congratulate the Minister and the members for Orange and Dubbo on their support of this matter.

**Discussion concluded.**

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### RYDE RIVERS FESTIVAL

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS** (Lane Cove—Minister for Fair Trading) [6.35 p.m.]: This Sunday, September 17, I along with hundreds of other residents from suburbs around the Parramatta River foreshore will attend the Ryde Rivers Festival being held in my electorate at Kissing Point Park, Waterview Street, Putney. This fabulous annual family fun event was previously known as the Ryde Aquatic Festival but was renamed the Ryde Rivers Festival. It is organised by the Rotary Club of Gladesville to celebrate the historical significance of the waterways to the City of Ryde. The festival is a free, annual fun day for the whole family.

The City of Ryde is mostly surrounded by the Parramatta and Lane Cove rivers and in the 1850s in excess of 100,000 spectators travelled by foot, horse and cart or by boat to the place now known as Kissing Point Park in Putney to witness the Australian and World Rowing Regattas, which were then Australia's premier sporting events. The area was later named Kissing Point because when berthing the old vessels used to slide their bows onto the shallow beach until the bottom of the boat was kissing the sand. Kissing Point Park is also the site of the first brewery built in Australia.

The festival commences with the Bridge-to-Bridge Fun Run and Walk, of both five kilometres and ten kilometres, which I am privileged to start. It commences at 9.00 a.m. sharp and starts and finishes at Kissing Point Park. I will have the pleasure of firing the starting gun at 9 a.m., which I am very much looking forward to. Throughout the day events such as the spectacular dragon boat challenge, the billy cart derby, the kids Olympics and children's fun games continue until the conclusion at 4.00 p.m. Other fun activities in which children can participate include the three-legged races, sack races, the egg and spoon races and other children's novelty events, which commence at 11.30 a.m. The children's fun games will be hosted by three times Mo Award winning entertainer Ronny Monks. You cannot think of the Ryde Rivers Festival without thinking of John and Ulrike from the *Weekly Times*. John and Ulrike work long and hard with the Rotary Club of Gladesville to make this festival a great success.

The purpose of the festival is to raise funds for Ryde Hospital, Life Education, tertiary bursaries for children and other Rotary projects. Last year the Ryde Rivers Festival raised over \$100,000 for a number of charities, which is a remarkable effort and I would like to thank particularly this year the Minister for Sport and Recreation, the Hon. Graham Annesley, for recently providing the organisers with a grant to enable the festival to take place. Once again I say what an incredible job our new Minister for Sport and Recreation is doing.

A festival such as this cannot succeed without a number of dedicated volunteers. I pay tribute to the festival patrons: John Alexander, Federal Member for Bennelong; the Hon. Victor Dominello, member for Ryde; John Sidoti MP, member for Drummoyne; John Murphy, member for Reid; the Hon. Joe Hockey, member for North Sydney; the Hon. Greg Smith, member for Epping; Councillor Sue Hoopmann, Mayor of Hunters Hill; Councillor Artin Etmekdjian, Mayor of the City of Ryde; Councillor Angelo Tsirekas, Mayor of the City of Canada Bay; and Councillor Win Gaffney, Mayor of Lane Cove.

I pay particular tribute to the organising committee members, who do an incredible amount of work behind the scenes—as you would know, Mr Acting-Speaker, coming from the strong local community base that you do in representing the Kiama electorate. The organising committee members are: Victor Berger, who is the chairman; Connie Netterfield of the Rotary Club of Gladesville; John F. Booth, AM, managing editor of the *Weekly Times*; Ulrike Eichmeyer of the *Weekly Times* newspaper; Marlene Cole, stalls manager; and Stephen

Sim, promotions manager and master of ceremonies extraordinaire. In fact, when Steve Sims is in town everyone is in town. My particular thanks go to Steve, and also to Councillor Roy Maggio. There are also the subcommittee volunteers: Ronny Monks, who looks after entertainment; Melanie Cantwell of Dragon Boats New South Wales; Robert James of Marine Rescue NSW; and Graham Mitchell of Hunters Hill State Emergency Services. I particularly thank for this weekend the volunteers from Marine Rescue NSW and the Hunters Hill branch of State Emergency Services, and all those volunteers from Rotary and the community who assemble and organise the runners.

As I have said, a large amount of time and effort goes into the organisation of the festival to make it such a successful event. This event grows from year to year and is one of the pillars of my community. When things are difficult and times are tough it is important to have a free event that draws the community together. As the member for Pittwater knows, we live in a time when communities are somewhat dislocated and the communication that used to occur between neighbours no longer happens. I notice that the member for Blue Mountains is in the Chamber. This is a great opportunity for us to do what they do quite often in the Blue Mountains: build strong communities around strong events. I commend the Ryde Rivers Festival to the House.

**Mr ROB STOKES** (Pittwater—Parliamentary Secretary) [6.40 p.m.]: I commend the member for Lane Cove for a terrific speech about the importance of community and need for the Ryde Rivers Festival. His words reminded me of the work done by Robert Putnam in *Bowling Alone* around the need for community. Many communities are dislocated by distance and by people travelling long distances between work and home, so it is important to foster community and intergenerational opportunities for families to go out together. I join the member for Lane Cove in wishing revellers at the Ryde Rivers Festival all the very best for their celebrations.

### **ABSOLUTELY EVERYBODY SPRING BALL**

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON** (Tamworth) [6.41 p.m.]: Tonight I inform the House of a very special event held at the Tamworth Town Hall last Saturday night, 3 September. It was the Absolutely Everybody Spring Ball—a debutante ball for people with a disability over the age of 16. It was indeed a wonderful night. I was fortunate to be a guest of honour along with Lt Col Ron Cox, Commanding Officer, 12/16th Hunter River Lancers, Beersheeba Barracks, and Belle Freeman, who was the matron of honour. Twenty-one debutantes and their partners were presented to a sell-out crowd of more than 450 people who packed the town hall, including families, friends and carers.

This was a community event that was high on emotion. It was at times electric and many had tears in their eyes as they witnessed the laughter, the wide grins and complete joy that engulfed the debutantes and their partners. It was a carnival atmosphere as they whirled, twirled, skipped, rolled and glided across the dance floor, displaying their skill in a variety of dances. Music has the ability to touch the soul, remove inhibitions and allow us to embrace freedom. It was like *Dancing with the Stars*, complete with rehearsals in the lead-up to the night. Those taking part had to commit to fortnightly dance lessons from early June and then weekly dance lessons during August with our very own *Dancing with the Stars* instructor, choreographer Robyn Kaluder. When the big day arrived it was off to make-up and dress shops. The debs wore beautiful gowns, while for their partners it was strictly black tie.

We have a strong community spirit in Tamworth and often events such as this are run on a shoestring budget, and thankfully our local businesses are always there to help out. On this occasion they helped with transport, suits, gowns, hours at the hairdressers, make-up, jewellery and much more—even the live music with the maestro himself John Muller and his excellent band, including my good mates Phil, Lou and Kate. This was the first time a ball such as this had been held, and it was a great success. I congratulate the organising committee on having the passion and commitment to pull it all together. I know it took a lot of time and energy but it was well worth it and I encourage them to think about holding another ball next year. The ball committee was made up of Rebecca Wright, Matt Old and Janice Bartlett from Northcott Disability Services; Fiona Hemmings from Bullimbal School and her own bus company; Janice Roser from Newtrain; Penny Plowman and Ian Cupples from Sunnyfield Association; Graham Dooley from Challenge Disability Services; the Robyn Kaluder Dance School; Lyn McDonald; and Michelle Simmonds; and the very capable master of ceremonies was Mr Michael Ticehurst from Lifeline NSW.

The Absolutely Everybody Spring Ball for those with a disability over 16 was also important in another way. This is Spina Bifida Awareness Week and all proceeds from the event were donated to spina bifida awareness. Spina Bifida Awareness Week celebrates the abilities of people with spina bifida and raises

awareness of the disability. Spina bifida means split or divided spine and it occurs when the spinal cord fails to complete its development in the early weeks of pregnancy. The Absolutely Everybody Spring Ball achieved the outcome of celebration. It was a great success and it was indeed an honour for my wife and me to attend.

**Mr TROY GRANT** (Dubbo—Parliamentary Secretary) [6.44 p.m.]: On behalf of the Government I thank the member for Tamworth for bringing this event to the attention of the House, but, more importantly, for highlighting the disability of spina bifida and the great work that was done by the Tamworth community to contribute to efforts to address this terrible disability. I congratulate the member for Tamworth and his community on the contribution they have made and the moneys raised.

### **BANKSTOWN-BROKEN HILL SISTER CITY AGREEMENT**

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK** (Bankstown) [6.45 p.m.]: I inform the House about a longstanding friendship between the Bankstown and Broken Hill city councils. These two local government areas could not make for a greater study in contrasts, both in the lands they cover and the people who inhabit those lands. Yet they have established an enduring sister-city friendship, which this year celebrates its twenty-fifth anniversary. The Bankstown-Broken Hill Sister City Agreement was formally signed on 16 September 1986 but the real beginning of the exchange was earlier. In the late 1970s a group of artists from Broken Hill, called the Brushmen of the Bush, exhibited a series of artworks at Bankstown Town Hall.

They donated 25 per cent of the funds raised to a charity of Bankstown council's choice—a local youth refuge. The relationship was formalised in 1986 and established as an annual sporting exchange that has taken place every year since. The original members of the Bankstown Sister City Committee were Alderman Ian Stromborg; Alderman Kevin Hill; Mr Kevin McCormick, OMA, former President of Bankstown District Sports Club; Mr Jock Smith from Rotary Club of Bankstown; Mr John McKoen from Bankstown Lions Club; Mr John Engisch from the Torch Publishing Company; Mr Arthur Heiler, former Town Clerk; and Mr Martin Moore, former administrative officer.

I also acknowledge that former member for Bankstown Mr Doug Sheddon, in his then capacity as an alderman, led the original delegation to Broken Hill to sign the sister city contract in 1986. In the course of 25 years it is estimated that 2,500 Bankstown youths have benefited from this unique cultural exchange. The event peaked in 1991, when 450 people travelled from Sydney to take part in 12 different codes of sport as well as other events. A special train called the Bankstown Bullet was organised for the day. The Bankstown Bullet remains the only non-suburban train to have ever travelled from Bankstown station. Over the years, participants have played a variety of sports, including Australian Rules, basketball, soccer, rugby league, tennis, cricket and many others. Although the variety of sports has dwindled over the past few years, the event retains a strong youth presence and the keen presence of sporting organisations.

Last year, in my former capacity as the mayor of Bankstown, I held discussions with the mayor of Broken Hill, Wincent Guy, and the general manager, Frank Zaknich, to enter into a memorandum of understanding. This year the two councils will sign a 10-year memorandum of understanding. Over the next decade Bankstown and Broken Hill councils will commit to work together in the areas of resource; idea and data sharing, focusing on youth opportunities and the development of new skills, including leadership; and developing initiatives in areas including education, culture and sport—and of course the sporting exchange will continue. I congratulate the staff of both councils, Revesby Workers Club and Bankstown Sports Club, the many sporting organisations and the many volunteers on their commitment to this outstanding friendship. I take this opportunity to acknowledge that the Bankstown-Broken Hill sister city relationship's twenty-fifth anniversary will take place later in September.

I congratulate the members of the Bankstown-Broken Hill exchange working party, particularly Ms Chris Benham, Dennis and Margaret Hayward, Pat and Graham Pride, Ms Krys Rowland, Councillor Pam Gavin, and Mr Marcus Kearnes. I also acknowledge the former chair, Mrs Norma Smith, who sadly passed away a few months ago. I acknowledge the work that Broken Hill City Council is doing in coordinating activities. There is no doubt that organising activities for a week that involves hundreds of people attending from Bankstown will certainly keep it very busy. I have no doubt the celebrations will be long remembered post that week. The Bankstown and Broken Hill sister-city relationship offers tremendous value to both communities, and I have no doubt that it will continue to enrich them over the next 10 years and into the future.

**Mr TROY GRANT** (Dubbo—Parliamentary Secretary) [6.50 p.m.]: I thank the member for Bankstown for bringing this matter to the attention of the House. I offer the Government's condolences to the family and friends of Norma Smith. When metropolitan areas engage with regional areas, particularly those in the Far West and the outback, it gives our city cousins a unique and wonderful opportunity to understand the

issues and challenges facing regional New South Wales. This Government certainly supports all such endeavours—although I could not think of a more unlikely couple than the member for Bankstown and the member for Murray-Darling. I encourage and welcome their continued cooperation, and offer the Government's ongoing support and good wishes to the sister-city relationship between Bankstown and Broken Hill councils.

### **LISMORE ELECTORATE SERVICE CLUBS**

**Mr THOMAS GEORGE** (Lismore—The Deputy-Speaker) [6.51 p.m.]: I pay tribute to the service clubs in my electorate. As President of the Parliamentary Lions Club I was honoured to attend a celebration on 3 August of the appointment of the Second International Vice President, Lion Barry Palmer, AM, who was accompanied by his wife, Ann. Following his election in 2013, Barry will become the first Australian President of Lions Clubs International. Mr Acting-Speaker, I am aware that you know Barry. The event was held to celebrate the history that has created by the election of Barry Palmer, AM, as the Second International Vice President of Lions Clubs International. Although my involvement with Lions was minimal compared with other guests present that evening, I am proud of my history with the organisation.

The first Lions Club in Australia was started in Lismore in 1947 by Bill Tresise. I am President of the New South Wales Parliamentary Lions Club, which was the first State Parliamentary Lions Club in Australia. I am a foundation member. The Lismore, Kyogle, Murwillumbah clubs are listed as three of the first 10 Lions clubs in Australia, with Casino—which I used to represent in this place—the fourth. Recently the district governor presented certificates to three active foundation members of the Kyogle Lions Club, which will celebrate its sixtieth anniversary next year. Those members have been with the club for all that time, and another has been a member for 59 years. I doubt whether that record could be equalled by any other service club in Australia.

The members were honoured to be recognised with an international association presentation of letters of commendation. Bill Tresise would be very proud of Lismore Lions today. Lions clubs do a tremendous job not only in Lismore but across Australia and the world. All service clubs fall into the same category. I do not know how Australia would operate without its service clubs because they bring communities together better than any other organisation. On 4 June I attended the 50-year celebration of the Rotary Club of Lismore West Inc., which is great milestone. People dedicate themselves to service clubs. It was a tremendous night, attended by visitors from its sister club in Japan. Rotary is the world's oldest community service organisation of volunteers.

It is known as Rotary International and it was formed by Paul Harris. Rotary has 23 districts in Australia. The Rotary Club of Lismore West is one of 55 clubs in our region, which is district 9640. The five Rotary clubs in Lismore are: Lismore, Lismore West, Goonellabah, Lismore Central and Summerland Sunrise. There are also Lions clubs and Rotary clubs in Murwillumbah and Kyogle. Again, I do not know how our communities would operate without service clubs. I express my appreciation of the clubs in my electorate. I thank them for their contribution and for making life easier for those who live in our communities. It is an honour to represent them as their local member.

**Mr TROY GRANT** (Dubbo—Parliamentary Secretary) [6.56 p.m.]: On behalf of the Government I thank the member for Lismore for informing the House of Lions clubs' significant history of community service. It is a wonderful organisation. The member for Lismore has understated his contribution to the Parliamentary Lions Club. The Government supports all service organisations across our communities, both metropolitan and regional. They are the glue that holds our communities together at times. They make a significant contribution and they should be commended. On behalf of the Government, I join the member for Lismore in congratulating Barry Palmer, AM, on his outstanding achievement. He will take the Lions, New South Wales and Australia to the world stage.

### **ROTARY CLUB OF NARELLAN INC.**

**Mr CHRIS PATTERSON** (Camden) [6.57 p.m.]: Tonight I speak about the Rotary Club of Narellan Inc. in my electorate. With Narellan growing rapidly as a business hub and with so much residential growth, the Rotary Club of Camden saw the need to expand the work of Rotary beyond Camden. With just 12 prospective members, the first meeting was held at historical Struggletown on the 25 February 1992. By March that same year the club was formed, with 14 members. I hear Mr Acting-Speaker ask: Where did the name Struggletown come from? With the opening of the Cowpastures Bridge across the Nepean River in 1826, the township of Narellan was marked out to act as a service centre. The government town of Narellan did not thrive anywhere near as well as the private town of Camden, and spent the next century and a half playing second fiddle. Some called it Struggletown. That was until the growth boom of the 1990s made Narellan the new population hub of the municipality. The Struggletown complex was later adopted as the club's insignia and appears on the banner.

I assure members that the Rotary Club of Narellan has never been struggling. The club has gone from strength to strength, supporting more than 1,000 major and local charities and worthy causes. All money is raised locally through local sponsors and local business support. The founding president, Marcus Testoni, managed to steer the club to become one of the most active in our district. In 1995 it formed a sister-club relationship with the Rotary Club of Arcadia Sunrise, District 5300, California, United States of America, and is very active in student exchange and scholarship programs. The club was chartered with 26 members. Only one remains, Tony Perich, who is the longest continuously serving member. Many local business people have been involved with the club, such as Bob Gollan, Richard Leeman and Les Arnold. All members have a passion for the area and, with their businesses, are seeing Narellan grow to a business hub for the Camden area.

There are currently 31 active members of the Rotary Club of Narellan Inc: Les Arnold, Mal Brumfield, Malcolm Chyla, Roger Chater, Denis Cummins, Peter Douglas, Phil Dowd, Bernie Eid, Rob Elliott, Tony Estaphan, John Gannon, Bob Gollan, Terry Goldacre, Barrie Grimes, Paul Hutchinson, Dick Leeman, Marty Magro, Steve McKinstry, Jack Morris, Ruth Morrison, Drew Moyle, Chris Paul, Tony Perich, Greg Petith, Trudy Petith, Debbie Roberts, Peter Roberts, Simon Rorke, Tony Ross, Grahame Smith and Frank Spiteri. Twenty Paul Harris Fellow recognitions and 14 Paul Harris recognitions have been awarded to non-Rotarians, to people such as Margaret Appleby from Lifeline; David Fuller of Nepean Engineering; Terry Goldacre of the Harrington Park Foundation, who has since become a Rotarian; and local businessmen Barry Dickinson and Ron Perich.

The club has received 130 awards or citations in its history. The initial club's major fundraising event was the Symphony Under the Stars held at Catherine Field, but the club now holds a charity ball each August. To date, I am proud to say it has raised in excess of \$4.8 million for charities and worthy causes. I would like to acknowledge the ball committee: Les Arnold, Barrie Grimes, Debbie Roberts and Tony Perich for their hard work. From the ball fundraiser in August this year, they gave cheques of \$10,000 to Lifeline, Youth Solutions, Mater Dei, Training for the Disabled, Eggtober, Miracle Babies and Camp Quality. They also gave \$20,000 to the Royal Flying Doctor Service and \$21,000 for motor neurone disease.

They gave cheques for \$25,000 to the Kids of Macarthur Health Foundation, Royal Rehabilitation and the University of Western Sydney Medical Scholarship. They gave \$50,000 to the Asthma Foundation and \$75,000 to CareFlight. The Rotary Club of Narellan gave a cheque of \$1 million to the Ingham Research Institute at Liverpool Hospital. Every single member plays an important role in ensuring that the Rotary Club of Narellan supports and gives so much to our community. The club certainly thrives on the teamwork and dedication shown by every member, past and present. The Rotary Club of Narellan exists to make Narellan a successful and well-supported place. In addition, it assists any organisation that comes across its path. I commend Rotary President Barry Grimes for his achievements in the club as well as every single member of Narellan Rotary Club Inc.

**Mr TROY GRANT** (Dubbo—Parliamentary Secretary) [7.02 p.m.]: On behalf of the Government I support the member for Camden and thank him for bringing that information to the House. I have spoken previously about service groups and I will not repeat those remarks other than to commend the organisations for their outstanding contributions. That was an outstanding resume of the significant work by the Rotary Club of Narellan, which highlights the efforts of service clubs. I am not sure there would be much need for the Royal Flying Doctor Service in Camden, but the Rotary club has made an outstanding contribution to that iconic Australian service, which serves regional New South Wales so well. I ask the member for Camden to pass on the congratulations and thanks of the House to the Rotary Club of Narellan.

#### **KATOOMBA MEN'S SHED**

**Mrs ROZA SAGE** (Blue Mountains) [7.03 p.m.]: I recently visited the Katoomba Men's Shed. The Men's Shed organisation provides places where men of all ages and backgrounds can meet to share skills, knowledge, life experiences and work together on practical projects on a personal basis or for the community. Why a men's shed? It was explained to me that the shed for the Aussie bloke is that special space that he can call his own where he can spend time pottering, building and constructing. Men traditionally are not good at communicating about personal issues such as health.

**Mr Troy Grant:** No, that's not right.

**Mrs ROZA SAGE:** It is. At men's sheds men can join other men and share their stories and experiences in a non-threatening way. It gives a man a safe and busy environment where he can connect with

other men and form friendships. They work on projects together in a spirit of mateship. Men are usually not conscientious about their health and wellbeing, but having other men who can bring these issues to the fore is a big help with both physical and mental health. Men are generally less healthy than women, drink more alcohol, take more risks and suffer from isolation, loneliness and depression. The Katoomba Men's Shed was given its premises by Blue Mountains City Council. It was an old World War I military horse stable. Much renovation was needed to bring the old stable to an acceptable level, but the men took to the project with gusto. After about five years the council has approved the development application and they can now officially use the building.

They have received limited funding from government, with most materials being donated. In that time the men have made a deck at the back of the building, have created flowerbeds and of course a barbeque—each of these areas involving a diversity of skills and engaging those members who have interests in them. At Katoomba the members enjoy a wide range of activities such as woodwork, metalwork, welding, computers and electronics—all in keeping with what the members like. As more men with more skills join, the interests will evolve to suit their needs. I was particularly impressed by the wonderful way that things were recycled. Many of the woodworking and metalworking machinery was older, having been donated, and was often in need of repair in order to function. Due to the skills of the members, the shed has now acquired some very impressive industrial-quality equipment that now has a new lease on life.

The men have not only received equipment but have put items of furniture, computers and other bits and pieces to good use. Some of them have made wooden toys that they have given to various community groups. They have partnered with groups such as Rotary and the Blue Mountains College. I was inspired by the partnering with Blue Mountains College, which is a place where teenagers who do not fit into the normal school environment and often have disadvantaged backgrounds are taught in an informal environment. The men from the Katoomba Men's Shed have one-on-one contact with the boys and act as mentors and role models. Often these boys do not have a positive male role model, if any at all. The older men have enjoyed this opportunity.

At present Katoomba Men's Shed is open only two days a week, but with an official residence and as membership and demand increases it will open longer. I found it interesting that membership of the Katoomba Men's Shed is also open to women and has a few women members. But, as it is a Men's Shed, there are some events for men only. I was impressed with the whole concept of the Men's Shed organisation in looking after the needs of men, particularly older men, and promoting mental health and other health issues. I was impressed especially with the Katoomba Men's Shed and the great group of enthusiastic men whom I was privileged to meet.

### **TRIBUTE TO KENNETH SAMUEL CLARKE**

**Mr JOHN FLOWERS** (Rockdale) [7.08 p.m.]: I pay tribute to a greatly respected member of the Rockdale community, Mr Kenneth Clarke, who passed away on 14 July 2011 at the age of 87. Ken was an upstanding and highly regarded citizen in my electorate of Rockdale who will be fondly remembered by all those who had the pleasure of knowing him. Ken was born at Lewisham in Sydney in 1924. He spent his young life at Brighton-le-Sands, where he enjoyed a happy youth and especially loved taking the horses swimming, and fishing near Ramsgate Baths.

With the coming of the Second World War, Ken reported to Victoria Barracks and began his enlisted service at the age of 18. As an aircraft engineer he was posted to Port Moresby and then to Goodenough Island. Following the war, Ken and his wife, Mary, settled in Sydney and raised their four daughters, Rosemary, Diane, Brenda and Lynette. In his post war years, Ken worked for Sydney County Council for 30 years and for four years was responsible for the electricity and telephone on Norfolk Island.

Ken was keenly interested in his children's pursuits and together with a friend started the St George Soccer and Netball Club at Rockdale. That remains one of his many legacies. As President of the Kyeemagh RSL sub branch, Ken was well known for organising numerous Anzac Day services. Ken proudly took part in the education of the children at Kyeemagh Public School telling the story of Anzac Day and organising tree planting ceremonies honouring the battle of Lone Pine. Ken Clarke will be greatly missed by his local community. He is survived by his wife, Mary, and his daughters, Rosemary, Diane, Brenda and Lynette, his 10 grandchildren and 11 great grandchildren.

**Mr TROY GRANT** (Dubbo—Parliamentary Secretary) [7.11 p.m.]: I thank the member for Rockdale for bring to the attention of the House the sad passing of Ken Clarke. I am sure that the shadow Minister for Health will join me in expressing our condolences to his family and acknowledging the significant legacy he has left and the contribution he made to both the country and the community.

## SUTHERLAND BUSINESS EDUCATION NETWORK

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS** (Menai) [7.12 p.m.]: The Sutherland Business Education Network held a breakfast this week to recognise the participants in and winners of the Vocational Education and Training Excellence Awards. The Sutherland Business Education Network is a not for profit organisation servicing the Sutherland shire. It is part of a national network of organisations working to create partnerships between schools, businesses, community groups and families. The goal is to give our future generations the practical skills necessary to help them to realise their full potential. The breakfast was held to recognise the workplace learning program, which provides opportunities for students who study a vocational education and training course to practice the skills learnt at school or TAFE as part of their Higher School Certificate.

The Sutherland Business Education Network recognises and acknowledges the outstanding commitment and achievements of both students and employers participating in the workplace learning program. The program assists these young people to develop their skills by hosting them in workplaces and teaching them to use the tools of their trades. I stress that work placement is not the same as work experience. I learnt that when I hosted young people doing work placement. Apart from providing real life workplace experience, these courses also provide students with either a national qualification or a credit towards such a qualification under the Australian Qualifications Framework. Participating students work towards achieving industry recognised competencies and will use their experience to expand the knowledge and skills learnt in the classroom. They get to immerse themselves in the workplace, carry out real life tasks and are treated like any other employee. They get the chance to learn new skills, to push themselves outside their comfort zone and gain a real understanding of the industry in which they interested in working.

The Sutherland Business Education Network coordinates work placements for all vocational education and training students in the shire. The program is available in schools across the Menai electorate and beyond in partnership with local businesses, which are able to share their industry knowledge and to mentor their young temporary employees. Students who participate in a vocational education and training program can also access industry standard facilities, equipment and experienced staff. For some, this program may reveal that a long held career ambition is not as desirable as first thought. For many it may open the door to a career option not previously considered.

The vocational education and training program is also beneficial to the host employers. They become involved in the education and training of young people and contribute to the development of a committed and skilled workforce. Many employers even identify young people with potential to enhance their business while raising the profile of their enterprise. The vocational education and training program provides a voluntary unpaid position for students at no cost to the employer. Costs such as insurance are covered by the school and employers are simply there to mentor and to provide substantial work experience to the student. Students usually spend a week with the employer, but shorter or longer placements are also possible. The program is more than a week of shadowing an existing employee; it is also about real work and real experience.

We must ensure that young people are equipped with skills for now and the future. This can be achieved through the greater education and training options that are available. That is why Sutherland Business Education Network launched the shire parents' website in January this year. It brings together an abundance of resources for parents and carers about education, careers and family support services. The website is the first point of call for parents and students as it is regularly updated and provides new information about services as they become available. For example, today when I went to the site I learnt that today is International Literacy Day. It also had some great tips for Higher School Certificate students revising in preparation for the upcoming exams.

The great thing about the Sutherland Business Education Network program is the wide range of vocational education and training programs it makes available to students. I acknowledge the local businesses that took part in the program this year, including Greater Union Miranda, which has hosted students since 2004. It is close to home for the local students who are participating, offers flexible hours and takes the time to teach the various aspects of the business. The St George and Sutherland Community College has taught business skills and information technology to 35 students and it also hosts special needs students and students with disabilities. Tranquillity Landscapes has participated in the program since 2007 and has supervised 80 students. Tynan Motors staff have taught their trades to 20 students with varying abilities since 2002. John Paul College at Heathcote has given 70 students the opportunity to prepare meals and to learn catering since 2002. Doltone House has also looked after 150 students since 2002. It is home to the Biaggio Signorelli Foundation, which plays an important role in caring for people suffering from mesothelioma and asbestosis. As their local member, I acknowledge students from all over the Sutherland shire and particularly students from Aquinas College, Lucas Heights community High School, Menai High School and Jannali High School. I wish them all the best in their future careers and congratulate them on taking part in this program.

### WEAR IT PURPLE DAY

**Mr MATT KEAN** (Hornsby) [7.17 p.m.]: the attention of the House to the tens of thousands of constituents who participated in Wear It Purple Day on Friday 2 September. It is an important day to recognise the need for us as a community to stand up against discrimination of all types, including homophobia. On 22 September last year a young 18-year-old, Tyler Clementi, committed suicide. He did so after being subjected to homophobic bullying by being unwillingly outed via social media. It was just one of a number of tragic deaths of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender or intersex youth that had been reported by media worldwide as a result of homophobia. The death of any person as a result of suicide can only be described as a tragedy. When it is the direct result of bullying or discrimination of any form to me it is completely unacceptable.

In my inaugural speech to Parliament I informed the House that I wanted to be part of a government that led the nation in the area of suicide prevention. In a recent conversation with my colleague the Hon. Trevor Khan about this issue I told him that I wished to focus on providing more resources to mental health so that we could have an impact on this problem. The Hon. Trevor Khan correctly drew my attention to the fact that whilst the issue of mental illness was an important factor, various forms of homophobia have played a part in many young lives coming to an end far too soon.

Two campaigns started as a result of the continually increasing number of suicides as a result of homophobic bullying. One was the It Gets Better campaign started by newspaper columnist Dan Savage, which involved thousands of people recording their own videos to support young gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex people wherever possible. The other was Wear It Purple, which is a campaign that encourages people to wear items of purple clothing to highlight the increase in homophobic bullying and youth suicide in the gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex community. I am doing my bit today by wearing a purple shirt to support the cause.

Started by two of Sydney's own residents, Katherine Hudson and Scott Williams, Wear It Purple was established to create public awareness of this important issue. The campaign has since gone international, and many mainstream youth mental health services such as Headspace and ReachOut.com publicly support the initiative. The message of the annual day of awareness is a simple one: You have the right to be proud of who you are. The figures associated with mental health issues for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex community are damning: homosexuals are six times more likely to attempt suicide than their heterosexual counterparts and the number is higher for intersex and transgendered people. As many as one in two lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people aged between 12 and 25 will experience some kind of homophobic abuse, with almost three-quarters of that abuse being inflicted in an educational environment.

The adolescent phase of a person's life is difficult enough as it is. These figures recognise just how much tougher it is for those who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex. The risk of compromised mental health and wellbeing is very much higher, and we must take a stand wherever possible not only to prevent such homophobia but to support those unfortunate enough to experience such intolerance. I am proud to publicly support Wear it Purple Day and any campaign that is aimed at reducing the devastatingly high rate of suicide in our community. With lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people recently having been deemed a high-risk group by the Federal Government, the need for mental health services and suicide prevention campaigns to reach out to unwilling victims of homophobia has never been greater.

No person should ever have to doubt their own value to our society and no person should ever be in a position in which such unnecessary abuse is inflicted on them, regardless of their ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation. I take this opportunity to congratulate Katherine and Scott for providing the platform for such an important issue to be raised. The need for discussion and reform on mental health and suicide prevention is one of our greatest challenges. I am determined to play my part in finding a solution.

### CENTRAL COAST TOURISM

**Mr DARREN WEBBER** (Wyang) [7.22 p.m.]: I support the tourism industry on the Central Coast and wish to highlight the Government's support for tourism through Destination NSW. I also congratulate two local recipients of awards at the Bluetongue Brewery Hunter and Central Coast Awards for Excellence in Tourism. Tourism is a significant economic contributor to both the Hunter and Central Coast regions. It is one of the largest industries in New South Wales, accounting for an estimated \$40 million being injected into the economy annually and assisting in the creation of some 160,000 jobs statewide.

Why would anyone not want to visit New South Wales with its diverse tourist destinations, in particular the Central Coast with its beautiful beaches—the same beaches where I spend my summers volunteering as a surf lifesaver? The Central Coast has long been a tourist destination for people in Sydney and Newcastle and we pride ourselves on being the playground between the State's two biggest cities. However, we have challenges. Rather than taking the best part of the day to travel from Sydney to the Central Coast, by using the freeway it takes only hours—provided that the F3 is open—which means the Central Coast is a day trip destination rather than a weekender.

The O'Farrell Government is committed to supporting the long-term future of the New South Wales tourism sector through the Destination NSW initiative. This innovative venture will further boost the New South Wales tourism sector and rebuild the State's economy. The initiative will be allocated \$400 million over four years, which will go a long way in further developing New South Wales tourism ventures, creating jobs and marketing New South Wales tourism to attract visitors to the State and the Central Coast. Everyone enjoys a holiday and what better place is there to go than the stunningly diverse Central Coast? Last year tourism generated \$709 million for the local Central Coast economy, which is testament to the natural beauty of the area with its beaches, bushland and lakes. This ecologically diverse area is home to my electorate of Wyong.

Wyong has been a prominent tourist destination for decades. Tourism is an essential industry for the Wyong area because it provides employment and supports the establishment of many local businesses. More than \$250 million is injected into Wyong's economy from domestic and international visitors. The Wyong electorate has many amazing tourist attractions to cater for all tastes and all budgets. The town of Toukley, which is situated on Tuggerah Lake, has many restaurants and cafés and is a favourite for day trips. Tuggerah Lake provides a family playground for boating, fishing, picnicking on the foreshore or a bike ride around the lake along its many bike paths.

Recently the Bluetongue Brewery Hunter and Central Coast Awards for Excellence in Tourism recognised the outstanding contribution Central Coast tourism operators make to the area. The Wyong electorate was privileged to have two recipients of the prestigious award. The Norah Head Holiday Park, which is situated just a short walk from the magnificent Soldiers Beach and Norah Head Lighthouse, was awarded first place in the category of tourist and caravan parks. Kooindah Waters Golf and Spa Resort in Wyong, which our great Premier visited last year to attend an event on my behalf, was awarded first place in the category of meetings and business tourism, providing a new business destination for the area with facilities for business conferences and meetings. Those wins highlight the ongoing commitment by Wyong tourist operators to promoting our local community as a quality tourist destination. This is an astounding achievement and one of which I am extremely proud.

I congratulate both the Norah Head Holiday Park and Kooindah Waters Golf and Spa Resort on their tremendous wins. I look forward to seeing the benefits that the Destination NSW initiative provides for the whole of New South Wales and especially the Central Coast and the Wyong electorate. Tourism is an essential component of the New South Wales economy. Promotion of the amazing destinations that New South Wales has to offer will continue to drive the development of New South Wales tourism and help make New South Wales number one again.

### **TWEED ELECTORATE EYEWATCH PROJECT**

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST** (Tweed) [7.27 p.m.]: I am 100 per cent for the Tweed.

**Mr Richard Amery:** Can you give us 85 per cent?

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST:** No, 100 per cent. I inform the House of a great development that occurred recently in the Tweed. I pay credit to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services for this fine initiative. I refer to the introduction of Eyewatch. As members will know, for some time now I have praised the good work of Neighbourhood Watch in my local area. We have 17 units and well over 800 active volunteers. I have always been impressed by the Minister for Police and Emergency Services engendering community to support for police. Men and women who wear blue are our protectors and guardians and they need our support—from the highest level of government down to all levels of the local community.

The Tweed has a strong Neighbourhood Watch program that has been given a boost by its inclusion in the Government's new eyewatch pilot program. The basic premise of Eyewatch is to embrace the social networking site Facebook to make our State a safer place. The Tweed is proud to be part of the Eyewatch pilot

program, which is testing a three-pronged approach to a new form of Neighbourhood Watch. First, we will focus on community participation in policing and effective utilisation of the information that people provide. Second, we are attempting to engage the community in decision-making. Facilitation and support by trained coordinators, police and local government will ensure that this stage goes ahead. Finally, we will balance priorities in policing through recognition of community contribution and engagement with both developing issues and successes.

Tweed Neighbourhood Watch already has been online for two years, thanks to the generosity of our sponsors, The Good Guys. Members will recall that the previous Government cut all funding from Neighbourhood Watch. The program was just ignored, but we survived: We did not go silently into the night. We stood beside our local police and the local community. This is an initiative of The Good Guys, a local company run by Rory and Deb Curtis, who put their hands in their pockets and made sure it became a success. It is this innovative and progressive spirit that makes the Tweed such an asset to the Eyewatch program. Our secretary, Gordon Levenson, is able to constantly update and maintain the site, making important information about crime in the region available to the members of my electorate. By branching out to Facebook, our local Neighbourhood Watch can only become stronger. We will engage a whole new demographic—young people who are all on Facebook, but for whom the idea of regular community meetings is completely foreign. They will be able to get involved and improve their community through Eyewatch.

Eyewatch Chief Inspector, Joshua Maxwell, his great superintendent, Stuart Wilkins, and Detective Acting Inspector Saul Wiseman were all present at a local tutorial when Eyewatch was explained to the local community. I attended this tutorial and was very impressed with the professionalism of our local Police Force. Eyewatch is like a fresh breeze blowing through the Tweed. It will engage the local community and encourage them to support their local police. I was particularly impressed with the way that Eyewatch allows police communication with the community in real-time, which is something that Chief Inspector Maxwell observed as a world first. I congratulate our Minister for Police and Emergency Services for this fine initiative. The Tweed is forging ahead with the new program, which will meet twenty-first century law enforcement demands while maintaining the strong community feel and purpose of the superseded Neighbourhood Watch program.

I agree with the statement of the Parliamentary Secretary that the Eyewatch program, combined with the old Neighbourhood Watch, will bring it into the twenty-first century. We have been able to get the community to support the police and in turn the police will support the community, united in the goal of making that community safe for young and old. Under the previous Government the community suffered a lack of police numbers and a lack of police resources. The *7.30 Report* and other media outlets reported on the terrible neglect of the issue. I am impressed with the change that is being implemented by the Minister for Police and Emergency Services and his staff, by the Commissioner of Police, Andrew Scipione, and all the way down. The community has embraced it and will become stronger for it. People think it is tremendous and support it 100 per cent. Once again, I am 100 per cent for the Tweed.

#### **METROPOLITANATE DAY**

**Ms GABRIELLE UPTON** (Vaucluse—Parliamentary Secretary) [7.32 p.m.]: On the evening of Sunday 4 September I had the great honour of representing the Government at the Metropolitanate Day celebrations of the Serbian Orthodox Church at the La Montage function centre in Leichhardt. This event was hosted by His Grace, the Right Reverend Irinej, Bishop of the Serbian Orthodox Church of Australia and New Zealand. I was joined by my State parliamentary colleagues the Hon. Linda Burney, MP, and Mr Charles Casuscelli, MP, by my Federal parliamentary colleagues the Hon. Philip Ruddock, MP, and the Hon. Bronwyn Bishop, MP, and by various local councillors. Also in attendance were many distinguished guests, including bishops from other Orthodox denominations, members of the clergy, the Ambassador of the Republic of Serbia and the Consuls General of Serbia and Greece.

Metropolitanate Day is an annual celebration of Saint Irenaeus of Lyon, the patron saint of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Australia and New Zealand. Saint Irenaeus was a priest in Roman-occupied Gaul in the second century AD and is remembered for his many works of scholarship, which were formative in establishing the theological doctrines of the early Christian church. This year's event was particularly significant because it celebrated the formal administrative unification of two different branches of the Serbian Orthodox Church into a single Metropolitanate in Australia and New Zealand. This unification has finally ended many years of schism represented by two church hierarchies operating in this country. I congratulate His Grace, Bishop Irinej, the clergy and all members of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Australia on the adoption of a new constitution, which has resulted in the formal unification of their church.

Through my husband's family, who immigrated to Australia from Serbia in the 1950s, I have had the pleasure of getting to know Bishop Irinej and members of the Serbian Orthodox clergy in Sydney over many years. I have seen at first hand the important work they do in our community, including pastoral care, education, establishing and running aged care facilities, and raising desperately needed aid for the Serbian homeland. I thank His Grace and the Serbian Orthodox clergy for their tireless efforts on behalf of the people of New South Wales. Based on census data, there is estimated to be over 100,000 people of Serbian ancestry in Australia. Serbians in Australia represent a very diverse and vibrant group in our community. They can be found amongst our public servants, police officers, bricklayers, architects, steelworkers and computer programmers, and our elite tennis and soccer players.

This diversity was embodied in the musical entertainment program on Sunday evening. We heard an unforgettable performance from opera singer Milijana Nikolic, a Serbian-born mezzo soprano who made her operatic debut at the Belgrade National Theatre and since then has travelled the world from La Scala in Milan to the Sydney Opera House, where she sang the title role in *Carmen* for Opera Australia in February and March this year. We also heard a mesmerising performance from Ursula Jovich, the noted Australia actor and singer who grew up in Darwin, the daughter of a Serbian immigrant father and an Aboriginal mother. Ursula sang poignantly of a search for meaning and identity in her characteristic smoky blues style. Ursula followed this up with a traditional Serbian folk song, which left very few dry eyes in the audience.

The first major wave of immigration from Serbia to Australia came in the 1940s and 1950s. That generation was fleeing persecution from the totalitarian regime established in the country of Yugoslavia after World War II. Sadly, many of that first generation of migrants left their beloved Serbia and were never able to return. They came to Australia, not by choice or for economic opportunity, but through political exile from a totalitarian regime. The Australia they came to in that era was, of course, very different to the one we know today—life was hard and our society was not tolerant of ethnic diversity.

In spite of the challenges, those first migrants set about building a new life for themselves in Australia. They lost their country in a very real sense but they set about recreating the best aspects of what they had lost in the diaspora. The Serbian Orthodox church has played a major role in bringing people together and providing the spiritual, social and cultural nourishment necessary to sustain such a rich community in Australia. I thank and congratulate His Grace, Bishop Irinej, and the Serbian Orthodox clergy on this important occasion and offer them my best wishes as they continue their holy mission in Australia under their unified structure.

**Private members' statements concluded.**

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 7.36 p.m. until  
Friday 9 September 2011 at 10.00 a.m.**

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